

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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“Thy Word is Truth”

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

Scripture Truth.

O God, Thou art far other than men have dreamed and taught,
Unspoken in all language, unpictured in all thought.
Thou God art God—he only learns what that great Name must be
Whose raptured heart within him burns, because he walks with Thee.

The River of God's Grace.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

A FRIEND, recently returned from a visit to Egypt, was describing the view from the top of the Great Pyramid.

Said he: "What struck me most was the contrast between the country that lay along the banks of the Nile and the desert that stretched away beyond. By the river all was fresh, and full of life; there were fertile fields and well-stocked gardens. At a distance from the river everything seemed wrapped in the stillness of death; the ground was brown and barren, miles of arid waste, with nothing to break the monotony of the view but patches of bare rock, painfully reflecting the glare of the noonday sun."

As I listened, the lines of a well-known hymn came to my mind:—

"The river of God's grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er this barren place,
Where Jesus died"—

and I thought what a terrible place this world would be, how intolerable a place to live in, were it not for the grace of God. How great the difference which the river of grace has made in the lives of those who dwell upon its banks! In the world there is nothing in which the heart of man can really rest. Decay touches everything; death reigns everywhere; the whole scene is one of barrenness and dearth. But he who has tasted of the grace of God has learned the secret of life and of peace, of true rest and of lasting joy.

Let us speak together of this river,

the river of God's grace. Take your Bible in hand, kind reader, and turn to Ecclesiastes 1. 7:—

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

Have you ever stood on London Bridge and watched the great river as it rolls silently on beneath your feet? Whence comes all this water, and whither is it bound?

You will probably have the answer ready to hand. High up among the hills of Gloucestershire the Thames takes its rise in the "Seven Springs." Joined by innumerable other rivulets, it makes its way to the valley. Contributory streams flow into it, and it ultimately becomes the noble river that rolls past Oxford and Windsor and that at length, as it nears the ocean, is found bearing upon its broad bosom the ships of every nation under the sun.

And whither is the river bound? It flows into the sea, you reply. But is this a sufficient answer? If all the rivers merely run into the various seas, why do not these seas get fuller and fuller till at length they break their bounds and flood the earth? The verse that we have read gives us the truth of the matter. Science tells us the same. But the inspired words had revealed the secret long before science had made the discoveries upon which she bases her pronouncements.

The fact is that the rivers when they

arrive at the sea have not reached their ultimate goal. "Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." The water, drawn up by evaporation from the surface of the ocean, is formed into fleecy clouds. These gather volume, and at length are smitten by the lightnings.* The rain descends, and, by means of a thousand tiny rills, feeds the sources of the rivers, which in their turn flow on once more to the sea, for their water to be formed again into the clouds that float above our heads.

What is thus physically true of all rivers is true also of the river of the grace of God. Finding its source and spring in His own heart of eternal love, it flows down through the world, bringing refreshment and blessing: forgiveness for the guilty, salvation for the perishing, peace for the troubled, joy for the despondent, life for those who are dead in sins. Moreover, after thus cheering, healing, saving our stricken and needy souls, it picks us up and carries us onward, forward, and upward in its return to the source from whence it comes, and sets us down eventually in the very home of eternal love, the dwelling-place of God, where—as those who belong to Christ, the fruit of His soul's deep travail—we shall enjoy with Him that everlasting portion which it is His delight to share with us.

Now turn to Genesis 2. 10 :—

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."

Before sin entered, and death by sin, before man fell and became a needy creature, this wonderful fourfold river was rolling on its way. It reminds us of the fact that *it is not our sin, our need, that has given rise to the love*

which God has shown to us, though our deep need is the *occasion* of which His love has served itself to reach us in the form of *grace*. Grace, as has been well said, is love in activity. But the grace that has brought salvation to us, and which by and by will bring us to glory, is the activity of a love that is from everlasting. Before the world was that love had chosen us in Christ (Eph. 1. 4), and had determined to bless us with all spiritual blessings.

But when love speaks as grace, it speaks to all mankind. And so we read that the river was parted into four. Four is the number of universality. We use it thus in our everyday speech. We speak of the four quarters of the globe, the four winds of heaven, the four points of the compass. The river of God's grace makes salvation available for all (Titus 2. 11). Those who thankfully accept what it brings, when borne above to the source from whence it comes, sin and need behind them for ever, learn the fullness of that grace, not only in its active working *as* grace, in view of man's condition, but in its own essential nature as divine, infinite, eternal *love*.

The four heads into which the river was parted are suggestive of the various qualities of grace. These seem to be set forth in the very names that they bear. †

"PISON" means great abundance, and brings before us the grace of God in its infinite magnitude, abounding unto many (Rom. 5. 15). Like the river Amazon, which at its mouth is so broad that from a ship in mid-stream neither bank can be seen, the grace of

* The late Lord Kelvin clearly demonstrated that rain is produced in this way. The devout reader of Scripture will not be surprised to find this twentieth-century discovery anticipated by its ancient teachings. See Job 38. 25, 26; Psalm 135. 7; Jeremiah 10. 13, marginal reading; Zechariah 10. 1, marginal reading.

† In these matters we must be on our guard against giving rein to the mere ingenuity of the human mind. It is notoriously impossible to fix with final certainty the meanings of many of the old Hebrew names which in the original were written with no vowels. Learned commentators often differ widely in their interpretations of names of persons and places, and he who knows the most is the least likely to make dogmatic assertions as to these things. But as far as can be gathered there is a general agreement among scholars, with few exceptions, that the names of the four parts of the river have the significance here given to them.

God is without limit. There is no need that it cannot meet, no sin for which it cannot supply cleansing and pardon, no blessing that it cannot provide. It reaches us in lavish excess, not only making every possible provision for us in our spiritual poverty, but endowing us with the best that heaven has to give. God's grace keeps nothing back. The place it gives us is the place that Christ Himself has in the favour and love of God. We are accepted *in the Beloved*. This is the "grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5. 2).

Even in the olden times, when God's dealings were for the most part exclusively with Israel, His grace could not be wholly confined to the narrow channel of that one nation. The river overflowed its banks again and again, reaching out to Canaanitish Rahab, to Moabitish Ruth, to Syrian Naaman, to Ethiopian Ebed-melech. But at Calvary the flood-gates were lifted. Every let and hindrance to the free outflow of grace was removed, and to-day the Esquimaux in his snowbound home, the cannibal in his sun-bathed island of the south, the degraded villager of the Congo and the Niger, are reached by the majestic tide of the abounding grace of God, and counted among its choicest trophies.

"GIHON" means valley of grace. Rivers, of course, always flow in valleys. Lofty mountain peaks towering on either side are left dry and barren, while the valleys are filled with verdure or beauty. To drink of the river of God's grace, then, we must come down. We may cling to the heights of our imaginary goodness, comparing ourselves with others much to our own advantage. But there is no river there. We may linger on the arid hills of our self-righteousness; it will only mean that we shall remain parched and unsatisfied. To get to the river we must come down; down in true repentance and self-judgment, down in confessed need and emptiness. "*God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*" (1 Peter 5. 5).

"HIDDEKEL" is generally interpreted as meaning *swift*. The grace of God keeps no man waiting. The father "runs" to meet the returning prodigal. The message of grace is sent "*quickly*" to the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind (Luke 14. 21).

In the work of creation God made no haste. In six consecutive days His hand fashioned the heavens and the earth. There was no hurry.

Still more is this true with regard to *judgment*. The Elders of Israel were right when they said, "Thou art a God . . . SLOW to anger" (Neh. 9. 17). For long centuries grace has lingered, loath to give place to judgment, so much so that some men have counted it slackness (2 Peter 3. 9). But the very opposite is true of grace in its activities. It *hastens* to bring blessing to the needy and the sinful.

"EUPHRATES" means *making fruitful*, and this is just what the grace of God does. It produces fruit in our lives for His glory. It not only brings salvation, but it teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2. 12). Men are slow to believe that grace unfettered by human conditions will achieve this. So they bring their "buts" and "ifs," and seek to limit the workings of free grace. They will acknowledge, maybe, that a man is *saved* by grace alone, but they affirm that his subsequent life must be framed upon a mixture of grace and law. The ten commandments, they admit, have no place in the scheme of salvation, but must be adopted as the rule of life by those who are saved by grace. Otherwise, they declare, the Christian's life will be one of slipshod carelessness, and devoid of fruit for God's glory.

The Scriptures teach us otherwise. God's river of grace is a Euphrates. It makes fruitful without any mixture of law. Nothing is so effective in its working as pure, unadulterated grace; nothing produces such practical results.

These, then, are the characteristic qualities of the grace of God.

The Coming of the Lord for His Saints.

“I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR. And the Spirit and the bride say, COME. . . . He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”—Rev. 22. 16-20.

WHAT impresses me most as to the subject of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ for His saints is the wonderful fact that accounts for it—namely, *the love of Christ for the church that passeth knowledge*. He is longing for the day when He shall “present her to Himself,” and He has been exercising “patience” all these centuries in the gratification of His deep desire—waiting until His church is complete, the full number of His redeemed of this period made up. Then His assembling “shout” will wake “the dead in Christ” and change the living, and catch up all in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to meet Him in the air. His shout will be one of supreme joy—so long held in suspense—that at last the blessed meeting is to take place.

And as it is His love which inspires His coming for us, so it is only love in our hearts for Him that can make us look, and long, and wait, and watch for His return.

What a chill would come over our hearts were we really to accept the teaching, which is being assiduously pressed, that what we are to wait for and look for is Antichrist instead of Christ—Antichrist, through whose devilish instrumentality (governmentally permitted, no doubt) the Great Tribulation will come upon both Jew and Gentile.

The Christians at Thessalonica, by an epistle bearing the forged signature of the Apostle, had been deceived into thinking the day of Christ, the time of judgment on the earth, was already present. The Apostle reminds them that “our gathering together unto Christ” (the rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4.) must first take place, and the day of Christ cannot come until the “apostacy” takes place and the man of sin is revealed, so that “our gathering together” to the great open air meeting in the clouds is the very first thing to take place, and that may be at any moment; then the apostacy, then the revelation of the antichrist, whose acting leads to the Great Tribulation.

It would greatly delight the Devil if he could induce the Lord’s dear people to fall in with what the evil servant said in his heart (afraid to say it openly as is now done): “My Lord delayeth His coming,” and turn expectant eyes from the heavens to the earth to look for evil happenings here as necessary before the blessed Lord comes for His church.

(James C. Trench.)

* * * * *

The thought of the Lord’s coming should lift us outside the presence of men, whether great or small. It will if it is a living hope in our souls, and we shall labour only to be acceptable to HIM (2 Cor. 5. 9).

His coming will be the end, not only of a path of suffering, but, of privilege, and service, and testimony. Already we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph. 1. 3), and that cannot be improved upon. These are tasted now by the Holy Spirit in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4. 7); then we shall know them in an unspeakable fullness in a glorified body (1 Cor. 13. 12; 2 Cor. 5. 1; Phil. 3. 21).

CHRISTIANITY IS UNIQUE. We wait *for* Him, to be with Him in His *glory*, but we are with Him now in His *suffering*. David's followers shared his suffering and rejection, and afterwards his glorious reign, for David could not be suffering and reigning at the same moment. Our Lord is rejected here, and **HERE** we suffer with Him. He is accepted with the Father, and we are accepted **THERE** in Him, the Beloved.

He is "the Son," we are sons (Gal. 4. 6) ; one with Him in life and nature (John 14. 20 ; Hebrews 2. 11) : His body and His bride (Eph. 1. 22-23 ; 5. 25-27). We wait for Him ; but even now He dwells within our hearts, the cause and object of bridal affection which go forth to Him in the Spirit's power. He will come again, and that quickly, in answer to these affections (Rev. 22. 17). It was so at His first coming (Luke 1. 2).

The Creator and Incarnate Heir of all has been cut off and cast out of His inheritance, but at His coming He will put the church right, and afterwards the world also. He will unite heaven and earth under His glorious sway, and through the heavenly city, the holy Jerusalem, He will flood creation with the glory of God (Rev. 21. 22-27).
(James McBroom.)

* * * * *

The coming of the Lord **WITH** His saints to execute the wrath of God upon the wicked and to establish the will of God in the earth had been the subject of the testimony of all the prophets from Enoch to the Baptist, and the apostles of the Lord were commanded by Him to continue this same solemn preaching and testimony. But the coming of the Lord **FOR** His saints—this was a secret hidden in the heart of the Lord until the heavenly relationships in which they were to stand were revealed, and then it was made known to them to be a treasured hope within their hearts, a hope that the world can neither appreciate nor understand.

Twice only has the Lord spoken definitely as to His coming **FOR** His saints, and on both occasions it was to comfort them in sorrow. This is both interesting and instructive, for we learn from these instances that the way in which He comforts the disappointed and sorrowing is by presenting to them something infinitely more blessed than their hitherto highest thought ; and that which He presents becomes a bright hope *before* them, dispelling the gloom of their sorrow by its glorious light, and a strong hope *within* them, lifting them out of the slough of their despondency by its mighty moral power.

The first of these revelations as to His purpose in this regard is in the well-loved passage John 14. 1-3 : "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am ye may be also." The disciples were sorrowing greatly because He was to be parted from them, and He comforts their hearts by the assurance that this separation was for a time only. They were keenly disappointed also, for they had looked for the kingdom glory, the throne of David established again, and they to share it with Him, and Israel redeemed. He seizes the opportunity to present to them something better than this, something that, as we have said, went far beyond their most exalted conception of things. They were to be **WITH HIM** in the Father's house. Not in the realm of rule, though that would come also in due course, but in the circle of love—in that home, that secluded place, where divine affections flow forth without reserve. This will be entered upon when the Lord comes **FOR** His saints, and no human words can describe what the joy of it will be to the Father, to our Lord, and to us.

The second occasion is in 1 Thessalonians 4., where a direct word was given

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by the Lord to comfort His saints in their sorrow about their departed friends. They had feared, evidently, that those who had died in Christ would miss the glory of that coming kingdom. This word from the Lord assures them as to this ; but it does more, for the Lord again seizes the opportunity to present heavenly hopes before their souls, and reveals to them the manner of His coming, when the dead in Christ shall be raised, and the living saints shall be changed, to be caught up together, one glorious church, to meet the Lord in the air. And mark well the climax of the passage. He does not say, so shall we reign with Him, but "SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD." This is the new and grand hope, made known and given to the heavenly saints, a hope which, until it was thus revealed, did not enter, nor could have entered, into the heart of man.

It must be noticed that neither glory, power, nor reward come into these passages ; it is "MYSELF" and "HIMSELF." No question of responsibility intrudes to produce reserves. The love of Christ to His own, that love that will be satisfied with nothing but the company of the loved ones, floods the words of the Lord with a tender radiance, and stirs up the hearts of His saints to maintain their vigil of love.

The coming of the Lord FOR His saints does not belittle the importance of His appearing WITH them, nor will it weaken in the smallest degree their desire for this of which the Scriptures are so full. They know that nothing in this creation, grown hoary in its sorrow and pain, can be right until He comes into it, when He will with great power establish the rights of God in it. And those who look for Him to take them out of it, before He comes into it as sovereign Lord, will continue with increased earnestness to pray to the Father in heaven, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." (J. T. Dawson.)

1 Cor. 15. 51, and Phil. 3. 21 speak of the change to take place in the bodies of the saints at the coming of the Lord for them.

The Word of God.

The Word of God is perfect, all-comprehensive, and pure. It is above every age ; for it is written by the Eternal Spirit ; and our wisdom is to receive its teaching with absolute child-like faith, and to receive it according to its own method, not mixing it up with the enticing words of human wisdom and the thought and terminology of the temporary schools.

The Word reveals Christ to us, and it judges everything in us that prevents our walking by faith in Him. Solemn and stern as its voice may be, the blessed result, to the faithful and humble who tremble at the Word of God, is, that by it they are directed to look off unto Jesus, to look up unto Him who is the way of life above to the wise, and that thus they are kept from the evil that is in the world.

The Word speaks to the heart. The voice of the Lord is powerful and full of majesty ; the heart adores it and is filled with awe. The voice of the Lord is full of love and tenderness ; the heart trusts and rejoices. The voice of the Lord declares mercy ; and the heart forgives them that have trespassed against us. The voice of the Lord promises peace and glory ; the heart enjoys the festival of His grace, and becomes cheerful and patient in sorrow. (Saphir.)

The Prayers of the Ephesian Epistle. (J. ALFRED TRENCH),

Ephesians I. 15-23; 3. 13-21.

ADDRESS GIVEN IN EDINBURGH, OCTOBER 24TH. REVISED
BY THE SPEAKER.

I BELIEVE that the prayers to which the Apostle is led, in the unfolding of the wonderful truths of this Epistle, are of very great moment for our souls. I am sure that many of us have so responded to the thought that was presented to us this afternoon: * that it is only on our knees these great truths can be learned. This is exactly what seemed to impress the Apostle, the Spirit of God leading him to prayer that the truths he was inspired to communicate should take a deep hold of the hearts and consciences of the saints.

Now I think it is a help to us to see that there is a certain order in the thoughts of the prayer in this first chapter, depending upon and flowing from the truths that have been filling the Apostle's heart, and coming out to us in his testimony of them.

The first prayer is addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, "that He may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him; the eyes of your heart being enlightened, *that ye may KNOW.*" Now that is of first importance. There must be the intelligence of the mind of God as to the wonderful position the believer and the church has before God and the Father, before there can be any intelligent appreciation of a walk according to it here below. This, then, is what he seeks for the saints, that there may be the full knowledge of Him who is the object of all God's thoughts and counsels—but heart knowledge; not merely the eyes of the understanding, but "the eyes of your HEART (as it really is) being enlightened, that ye may know;" and then follow the three great subjects of the prayer:—first, the hope of His calling; secondly, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and lastly, what is the exceeding

greatness of the power that has wrought, to put us into the calling, and to make us heirs of the inheritance.

Now first as to the calling. We are the called ones indeed, but the calling is characterized as of God—"His calling"—as of His own blessed nature, and all the counsels of His love unfolded in it. The calling comes out in verses 4-6. But before he proceeds to the orderly communication to us of the great truths that are filling his heart, he worships the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that double name in which is contained all the blessing we have been brought into in Christianity. The Father of the Lord Jesus is our Father, His God, our God. The heart of the Apostle was too full to contain itself, and flows over in blessing to Him who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." This is just what worship is, and indeed it is in such a spirit only that we can truly enter into the character of the blessing presented to us. How blessed to be able to take our place in the faith of such blessing at the very outset; "all spiritual blessings"—of the highest order, "in the heavenlies"—the most exalted place, ours "in Christ." What else could we do but worship?

But now we are brought back to the standpoint of this wonderful blessing, and we must seek to put ourselves there to have any true thought of it. It is that of God's eternal counsels, as He saw us in Christ.

No thought of the first man enters here, as it has come before us this afternoon. The ages of his probation have closed in the cross, in the judgment pronounced indeed upon the flesh from the very first, but now endured for us by Christ. What infinite grace has brought us to learn that history in our own souls; and to bow to the necessary end of all we are after the flesh, in the judgment of

* See "The Secret of God," page 387, December, 1912 issue.

God ; not merely that our *sins* have been borne away by Christ in that judgment, but that in His being made *sin* for us, we ourselves are gone. The humbling history of man in the flesh has closed for ever in the cross of Christ for God and for faith. But this is not the truth of Ephesians, however necessary for our souls to enter into, that we may know anything of the calling of God.

Here we are carried back before the foundation of the world, countless ages, perhaps, before it was fitted for man's habitation, therefore before man's history opened—not to say closed in the cross of Christ. "According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Thus He is pleased to reveal to us the thoughts that were in His heart about us in a long back eternity. There is no activity of the divine counsel yet. It is simply what He chose for Himself. You choose what suits yourself, and so it is with the Blessed God : He chose what suited His own nature, and revealed Himself in the choice He made. And what was that wonderful choice ? He hath chosen us in Christ, holy, without blame before Him in love. And the most blessed word in that verse is "before Him," as though He would set us out before His own gaze, as the objects of His love. Oh, how blessed to be allowed to know it. As it is in Christ that we have been thus chosen, we have had the perfect expression of the character and object of His choice, when Christ was manifested here, as in Matthew 3. 16, 17. It is a wonderful help to our realization of what is so beyond all our thoughts, to have had the manifestation of all that was perfectly suited to the heart of God, in Christ down here. Four things are thus presented to us in Him—the heavens opened to Him, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and the Father's voice declared Him to be His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased, and all because of what He was personally in Himself.

Thus, then, it is that we have been chosen in Him before earth's foundation. The opened heavens ? There is where we have been blessed in Him. Holy and without blame ? That's what He was. "Before Him," with what delight His eye rested upon Him ; "in love," the

perfect object of His love. How sweet to think of it. God would have us ever near Him, and so He chose us in Christ, to be all that Christ is before Him, so that there might not be a cloud between our hearts and Him, that we might enjoy His presence, and that He might have His delight in us.

Next in this wondrous calling of God, we find the relationship He has been pleased to set us in ; only let us remember that it is no question yet of our being brought *into* these great things, but the revelation of what was in the heart of God as to us from eternity. "Having predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Note, "to Himself"—the most precious word in this verse. It was not merely something to make us happy and blessed, to fill and satisfy our hearts in the sense of relationship with Him ; but it was what He counselled for Himself, and what alone could satisfy His own heart for us in the relationship of sons before the Father. If we had been predestinated to the position of angels, how wonderful it would have been, for rebel sinners such as we ; but angels would never have satisfied the counsels of eternal love. Myriads of them are there that ever do His pleasure, but they are but servants. Not one of them could ever call Him Father ; and He wants to surround Himself in His own home with the cry of "Abba Father." It was according to the good pleasure of His will, that we should be His sons. Nor is this all ; there is that which God counted upon to be to the glory of His grace ; in which all His grace would be so expressed that it would be to the praise of the glory of it for ever. What was it ? That in that grace "He has (according to the full force of the word) taken us into favour in the Beloved." The Spirit of God changes the expression which is really the keynote of the Epistle. "In Christ" will not suffice here ; it is "in the Beloved." It recalls the voice from the opened heavens, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In nothing less than all the favour that rests upon the beloved Son of the Father, we are before Him. The next verse brings in redemption through His blood, the basis of the whole position in righteousness, and which alone made it possible for us as

sinners; but that was according to the riches of His grace. Our place in divine favour was to be "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Such then in its whole extent is this wondrous calling of God.

But the Apostle prays that we may know the hope of it (ver. 18). What then is "the hope of His calling?" It is not the Lord's coming in Ephesians; and this because of the height of the position in which we are set, as made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ (chap. 2. ver. 6). His coming would, as it were, disturb the seated ones. The hope of it is the full realization in the eternal glory of all that God has called us into in Christ, as the fruit of His eternal counsels. Would that we were more deeply impressed with the wholly heavenly and eternal character of such a calling; counselled for us in Christ from all eternity, possessed in Him in the heavenlies, and to be realized in full conformity to Him in the glory of God for ever. No link with time or the course of this world, the Christian belongs to eternity.

Now we come to the second object of His desire for us, that we may know "what the riches of the glory of His inheritance." In His calling, we look up above; the inheritance, as it were, stretches out beneath our feet. Verses 10 and 11 give it to us, in a marvellous way, in connection with the revelation of the mystery of His will; that is of what God had purposed in Himself from eternity for the glory of Christ, but which had never been disclosed before. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times (when the dispensations had run their course, succeeding one another until the end for which they had been started had been reached), the end would be that all things in heaven and upon earth would be found to be headed up (for such is the force of the expression) in Christ. We know that according to Psalm 8., quoted in verse 22 of this chapter, all things shall be put under His feet. He must reign till all enemies are put under His feet (see 1 Cor. 15. 25). It is characteristic of the kingdom. But that is not the mystery here revealed, which brings us to the magnificent result of all God's ways in government in the dispensations of time, including the kingdom; that the whole universe—"all things which are in the heavens, and which are

on earth"—should be headed up in blessing in Christ. That is the glory of His inheritance. It is His first—only in Him that we shall enter into it, as made heirs of that whole inheritance of glory. What a prospect opens out before the eyes of faith! "In whom we also have obtained inheritance (or been made heirs) being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsels of His own will."

Attention has to be called specially to the force of the passage (ver. 11), as through misunderstanding the bearing of the truth the Revised version has made us the inheritance. No, we are the heirs, heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ; and there is no possibility of confounding the heirs and the inheritance. And there is nothing that would more confirm this, and at the same time bring out the wonderful character of the inheritance, than what comes out in verses 13, 14. That in Christ—having heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, and believed in Him—we "were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The moment we believed in Christ according to the glad tidings of His accomplished work, we received the Holy Ghost to dwell within us—the seal for God that we were His, and the earnest for us of all that is before us in the glory of the inheritance. The earnest is not for the inheritance, but for the heirs, as any one can see. We have received nothing of the inheritance yet. Christ has not received it. Though He has purchased it with His blood, redemption has yet to be applied in power to the purchased possession. It is in Him we pass into the inheritance. But until and in view of that moment, nothing short of the Spirit of God dwelling in us is the earnest of it. What must be the glory of the inheritance of which the Holy Ghost is the earnest! The same blessed Spirit that descended and abode upon Christ, as we have seen in Matthew 3., and by whom He was sealed as the perfect object of the Father's delight, is now the seal of God upon us in Him, completing the whole wonderful position in which Christ was in Matthew 3., only that then He was absolutely alone in that position, in His personal perfection.

But now, as the result of the precious corn of wheat having fallen into the ground and died, all is made ours in resurrection in Him; to be known and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But why, it may be asked, does it say "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?" Because it is in the saints He takes possession of the inheritance. We have seen it set out before us in all its boundless extent—all things in heaven and in earth (ver. 10). It is the inheritance of Christ. But, as Jehovah took possession of Canaan, as His inheritance, by putting Israel into possession; so when Christ takes possession of all things as Head of the universe, He does so by putting the heavenly saints into possession, and it becomes the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

So far we have seen then how the prayer depends upon (as it refers to) the two great parts of the preceding instruction. Now He seeks that we may know the power that has been operative to put us into the calling, and make us heirs of the inheritance, as has been said.

What is that power? It is nothing short of the power that wrought in raising Christ from the dead, that is to usward who believe. What a conception is afforded us of the exceeding greatness of it, "according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." That was a scene of universal death, in which God began to work, to carry out the counsels of eternity and reveal Himself as never before—all men dead in trespasses and sins, and the Lord of life and glory Himself in the sepulchre, made as sure as man could make it that he should never have anything more to do with the Son of God. In that world of death the power of God "wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come." If only we could enter into the character of the scene as presented to the eye of God, now come out fully as the result of the long trial of the ages—not a leaf of moral life stirring in the whole creation, men alive and active enough in

the pursuit of anything Satan as the prince of it had to present to them, but perfectly dead in sins before God, and to God, and the blessed Lord Himself in death as the full expression of that condition under the judgment of God—we should be able the better to estimate the display of the power of God as presented in raising that one Man from the dead to the highest point of heavenly glory. It is the first action of God in the Epistle, in so raising Christ. We have not here God giving Him to go down to death, to charge Himself with our sins and be made sin for us, and end the whole history of the race, in the judgment He endured. We have seen that that history is not within the scope of the Epistle. It is simply God acting by His power in a world of death, to make good the thoughts and counsels of eternal love that He had as to Christ, and us in Him, in what is a wholly new creation, of which Christ, raised from the dead is Head—given to be "the Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Before the day when He takes His headship over all things (ver. 10), the church recognizes Him in that headship in her own relationship to Him as His body; He filling all things not only by His Godhead glory, but by the glory of His redemption work, and the church His fullness in that day of glory.

And now we see what was faintly shadowed forth in Eden realized in all this wonderful work of power and love and glory. When God set Adam at the head of all subordinate creation, He gave him Eve to share his position. So now, when Christ is raised from the dead to take His place as the last Adam, Head of everything in heaven and on earth, He has given Him the church, His heavenly Eve, to share with Him the whole inheritance of glory. What a wonderful place! How blessed the power that has wrought to set us there, reaching down to us where we were in all our death and sins; even the same mighty power that wrought to raise Christ from the dead, now put forth that we might be quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. I do not attempt to go into the detail of that work of divine power as it applies to us. But it is blessed to know that one result of it is "that in

the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." That God should have wrought out of such material to form the church as the body of Christ makes us the expression, in the ages to come, of how far His grace could go, of how great the extent of it; while another and present object in that work is seen in verse 10. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them:" the Epistle from chapter 4. opening out to us this fore-ordained path and the works that flow from our new creation in Christ, according to His eternal counsels.

But now I want that we should see the connection of the truth that leads the Apostle again to prayer for us in chapter 3. The first part of chapter 1. has been the revelation of our individual place in Christ before God and the Father in eternity; the latter part bringing in also our corporate relationship to Christ as His body, in connection with the work of God in time to accomplish what He counselled in eternity; with the result that we have the formed existing assembly upon earth, and this in its relationship also to God, who has taken up His dwelling-place in it by the Spirit, as the habitation of God.

In chapter 3. the Apostle brings out his own part in the work as we had it before us this afternoon, in connection with the mystery. There was his double ministry; first of the gospel, verses 7, 8, "To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." This is the wonderful scope of the gospel, the riches of Christ, beyond all that can be traced out. What an inexhaustible theme for the evangelist!

Then, besides, there was his ministry of the mystery, verses 9-12, "To make all men see what is the administration"—it is a fuller word than "fellowship," though fellowship is a very sweet part of that administration. But the larger word takes in all that pertains to the practical carrying out of the truth of the church as the body of Christ on earth.

The truths of this twofold ministry of the gospel and the mystery are not merely for heaven. No ministry of them will be needed there. They are to form the whole practical life of the Christian here. This was what lay before the

Apostle now from chapter 4. to the end. Think of the interests of God and of Christ in such a result—the immensity of it all. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." These exalted intelligencies of the heavens had never seen anything like the church before. They were familiar with the display of Godhead power in creation; they had seen His judgments, His providence, His works of grace, and—beyond all—God manifest in the flesh, the object of their worship thus taking form for them for the first time. But here was an entirely new part of the ways of God; "that the Gentiles should be co-heirs and of a co-body, and co-partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." That out of such heterogeneous elements, racial animosities, and opposed nationalities—Jew and Gentile—should be formed one body of all who are Christ's, united to Him their Head in glory, and walking as the members of His body on the earth. The like of this had never been seen on earth before. It was as though God, who created all things, had now put forth all the resources of His power in the formation of this body upon earth, that to the principalities and the powers of the heavenlies might therein be known, as in a masterpiece, His manifold wisdom "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." And I do not doubt that it is so still, in spite of the most humbling failure of the assembly from almost the first, to answer to what it is before God; these powers in the heavenlies would be able to distinguish between the wonderful work of God and the miserable mess we have made of it.

How necessary then it would seem that the Apostle should once more betake himself to prayer for us, before entering into the detail of the practical walk of the assembly and the saints that compose it, and how we need to seek to enter into what becomes in reality the inspired desires of the heart of God for us. His prayer is now to the Father. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in heaven and earth is named"; whether it be angelic, or those of Jew and Gentile, or the church of God, all come, each in its distinct place, under the Name of the

Father of our Lord Jesus in the divine scheme of blessing. "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."

The prayer is not now "that we may know," as in chapter 1.—not for the intelligence of our place in Christ; of primary importance as is the intelligent entrance into the counsels of God that have given us that place, there is a yet deeper need if the truth is to be held in freshness and formative power, i.e. the dwelling in our hearts in communion, of the Christ in whom our place is. And what resources are available for this! There are "the riches of His glory," that is, of all the wonderful revelation of the Father in the Son—the only measure of the power by which we may be strengthened "by His (the Father's) Spirit in the inner man." I know not if the blessed Spirit is anywhere else so presented; but how perfectly in keeping here, when it is by the Father's Spirit that He who dwells in the Father's heart may now dwell in our hearts by faith.

The prayer in chapter 1. was connected with our being in Christ; here it is with His being in us, and not merely as life, but now as the centre and object of that life. He is the centre of all the Father's thoughts and counsels of eternity. He would bring that centre into our hearts by the power of His Spirit: "That ye being rooted and grounded in love"—in all the love that has been revealed to us in these counsels—"may be able to apprehend with all saints"—for the love of Christ would not leave out one—"what is the breadth and length and depth and height"—of what? Nay, it cannot be defined. If Christ is the centre there is no circumference to that boundless sphere of glory—"all things that the Father hath," that are Christ's according to the Father's will, and the work that has given effect to it, in which all the glory of God the Father has been revealed and made good.

"And to know the love of Christ." This might seem to bring our hearts back from what has been so infinitely beyond us to what is more within our reach. But it is at once to let us know that it passeth all that we can know. His love is as boundless as the vast infinity of

God's counsels and revelation of Himself in them. Yet how sweet it is to know that His love surpasses (we have had the word already in chapter 1. verse 19, and chapter 2. verse 7) knowledge in its greatness. Truly it needed that the inner man be strengthened with might by His Spirit, that we may enter with ever-increasing measure into what has no limit or end, "that ye might be filled into all the fulness of God." For thus has He revealed Himself. And dwelling in love we dwell in God and God in us. Every thought of the prayer is so wonderful. But let us not forget the divine resources that are presented to us that there may be a little progress in the appreciation of the thoughts that are revealed, and, in our entrance into them, which alone can fit us for a walk worthy of such a calling.

Thus we have come to the Apostle's closing words, "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." This brings out the force of the prayer; it is not for the objective knowledge of the great truths of God's calling, but for our subjective realization and entrance into them. It is not now simply the exceeding greatness of the power that wrought to give effect to the will of God in that calling by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, now *to usward* who believe. That was the prayer of chapter 1. It is a power that works *in us*, which is such that if God is able to do superlatively above all not only that we ask but even think of asking, it is according to that power. How often that last clause of the verse is left out. It need hardly be said that no ruin can touch these things, that have all the stability of the eternal counsels of God. They are revealed and remain to-day for all the saints of God to give form and character to their path. And how immeasurable are the resources that God presents to us, as available for our entrance in communion with Him into His thoughts and counsels for the glory of Christ in the church, that the precious truths of it may be wrought out in us, to His glory in it for ever. The last verse assures us of the full final accomplishment of this. "Now unto Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Gleanings from the Past.

From a Sermon on "The Name of JESUS," by Benjamin Grosvenor, D.D.
(1676-1758).

"And thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."—Matt. 1. 21.

IT cost Him dear to put on this name and be called JESUS. It cost Him His life and blood. He had before many great and glorious names. The name Jehovah was His; the "Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," "the Word" that was "with God" and "was God." He had the worship of angels, and glory with the Father before the world began. But if He will wear the name JESUS among the rest, He must pay for it; and He did so—the price of His most precious blood, as of a "Lamb without spot;" and so He became our Saviour: at the same price by which He bought our souls, and heaven for us, He bought this name for Himself.

* * * * *

It must be something a person values himself upon, and glories in, that is worked up into his name. Sometimes the noble actions of ancestors, sometimes the eminent qualities that distinguish their own character—these are blazoned in coats of arms, drawn in paintings, artfully woven into hangings, or added to the name, and made a part of the royal style and state of the person, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*. Salvation is woven into the name and style of our Sovereign Lord JESUS, to show what it is His heart was set upon—what He aims at and glories in. With this name He came into the world. With this He went through it. With this He went out of it. And with this He lives above and bears it about Him always; not so much a memento to Himself as a pledge to us of the business He came down and went up for, viz. "to save His people from their sins."

When a great prince is born into this world he usually takes his name from some province or principality. . . . But when the God that made all worlds puts on the nature of man and the name JESUS, He had not one foot of land to take a denomination from, as He was the Man JESUS: for though the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof, yet the Son of man had not where to lay His head.

Some have taken their names from the devastation and ruin they have carried with them wherever they went. . . . Scipio takes the name Africanus from the havoc he made in Africa. . . . Germanicus from his exploits in Germany. These men carried the blood and ruin of thousands in their formidable names. But when the Lord Jesus comes into the world—no mean person neither, for the angel said of Him, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David"—what's the name this great person fits on to Himself? Whence does He take His Name? Does He borrow it from the destruction of the fallen angels? or from the final victory He will gain over all His enemies, that "would not that He should reign over them?" No, but from something that lay nearer His heart than all this—the "salvation of His people from their sins."

What Themistius said once to Valens the Emperor, in order to inspire him with compassion towards a city that had so highly incurred his displeasure, that

he was resolved it should be destroyed—"How much more excellent, great Prince, is it that you should derive your name from a people that you have spared than from a people you have destroyed?"—is here infinitely outdone; for, "Blessed JESUS! how much more excellent is Thy name, which Thou hast derived from a people Thou hast saved, rather than from a people Thou couldst so easily destroy. A name, like Thyself, all sweetness, and goodness, and love—it carries no blood in it but Thine own, shed in order to accomplish the salvation it imports."

* * * * *

"Lord! remember me," says the penitent thief, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." One of the ancient writers addresses the petitioner after this manner: "Whence didst thou know that that same person that died in thy company, and passed for a malefactor like thyself, how didst thou know that He was thy Lord and Saviour?" And he makes him answer thus: "Oh!" says he, "I could discern it by the very testimony of his enemies. Those words which they flung upon Him in reproach, 'He saved others—Himself He cannot save'; this looks so like a Saviour—to save others by giving up Himself!" * . . . So when Pilate gave this testimony to our Lord, "I find no cause of death in this Man," St. Ambrose has this remark upon it. Says he, "There was no cause of death in the Man, for He was innocent; but there was cause of death in His name, which He must die in order to make good. His name JESUS upon the cross was a certificate of the cause, end, and design of His death."

The inscription over a malefactor usually signifies what he has done; that over our Saviour signified what He must do, viz. "save His people from their sins," as a sacrifice. "O ye Jews," continues he, "when you said, 'Let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe.' Had He come down He would have left His name JESUS behind Him, and we should have had reason to have inverted the argument, and to have said, 'He hath saved Himself, and therefore He cannot save us.'"

He would not abandon His character. No; that inscription was written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: three languages that would then have gone over all the world, as if designed to express that He died to save out of "all kindreds, tongues, and people." In a word, had He come down from the cross and "saved Himself," He might have been our Lord, or any other name, becoming so great a person; but JESUS, in the sense of the text, He could not be.

* * * * *

"There is no other name given under heaven whereby you can be saved." . . . All the other names He wears will signify nothing to you without this—nothing that you can take any comfort in. They will all be against you; and this name, too, will be against you if it be not for you, if "you neglect so great salvation."
(Selected by Hamilton Smith.)

* Bernard, de; *Epiph. Ser.*, 2nd.

"Holy and rev'rend is His name;
How glorious and how sweet!
All greatness, and all goodness too,
I' th' name of JESUS meet.

"All that's within me bless and praise
My Saviour and my King!
When He's the subject of the song,
Who can forbear to sing?"

J. STENNET.

The Second Coming of Christ.—No. 1.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Appearing.

THE Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which had such a large place in the preaching of the apostles and in the hearts of their converts, became, when decay set in upon the profession, and spiritual sleep sealed the vision of faith, quickly given up; the spiritual mind gave place to the fleshly, and carnality and worldliness spread a mantle of thick darkness over the slumbering host of the redeemed.

But when, almost a century ago, the "*midnight cry*" went forth, there was movement within the ranks of that which had more the outward appearance of "*dry bones*" than living "*members of Christ*;" here and there the cords of the world dropped off as though they had been touched with fire, affection for Christ was awakened in the hearts of thousands, truth long forgotten was brought to heart and mind, and Christ and His interests became paramount. Again the hope of the Lord's return took possession of the soul, gave colour to the language of the lip, and filled libraries with wholesome reading.

But again the soporific character of the present darkness laid hold of many hearts, and drowsiness, if not actual sleep, stole afresh over the weary watchers. Not that the bright hope was forgotten, or even ceased to be a subject of spiritual ministry, but it had lost much of its primitive power and brightness, and had become more a dry doctrine than a living energy in the soul. If there was the *waiting*, it is to be feared there was not much of the *watching*. We perhaps have found it hard to keep awake through the black and dark night while the Sun of Righteousness delays His appearing.

But once more the unwearied grace of our God seems to be calling our

attention to that blessed hope. As to the manner of His coming, and as to the order of events in connection with that bright prospect, not all the saints of God are of one mind, but no one can truthfully deny that the fact of His coming is being at the present moment greatly emphasized. The church is calling out for Christ, and the world is calling out for a man to take the helm of the government of the nations. The Christ of Christians is the Christ of God, the man the world is looking for is the antichrist, the son of perdition. Alas, that any of the people of God should be found following the lead of the world. And yet it is to be feared that many saints are ardently following the course of this world, with their eye upon the devil's *ignis fatuus*, which leads, they think, to a millennium of bliss, but which, they will assuredly find, leads only to wrath divine and regions of despair.

How good it is, in the midst of this Christless profession and confusion of tongues, to be able to fall back upon the Holy Scriptures, as upon a tower of strength, well knowing that God will stand by all that He has said, and that no question that can arise has been unforeseen by Him, but that He has anticipated every evil way that the mind of the flesh, as under the influence of the evil one, may take, and has made provision in the Scriptures for its detection, exposure, and defeat. He will vindicate every utterance that He has caused to be put on record, for He has magnified His word above all His name. The Scriptures are a rock unshakeable, and however wildly the winds may blow, and whatever threatening voices may mingle with the fury of the tempest, we are always able to say confidently, "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven."

In these days, thank God, Bibles are plentiful, the poorest have direct access to the utterances of the Holy Spirit, the gospel is proclaimed with a measure of clearness, and people are informed that God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that He is no respecter of persons. If men will not have the gospel it is their own fault; if they are without the Spirit the blame lies at their own door. To be able to use the Scriptures aright a man must have faith in Christ and be anointed by the Holy Spirit. But every one who has come to Christ has received the anointing. The only important thing for such to look to is that they may be under the influence of that anointing, and if they are, they will be intelligent in the mind of God, and they will not be found giving a loose rein to the fleshly mind, and wandering in paths not defined for us in the Scriptures. Such will have an outline of sound words, and the *spirit* of Scripture will be the joy and rejoicing of their hearts, and they will not be found in subject to the *letter*.

I am not writing to set forth the peculiar views of a section of professing Christians, but I have before me the whole assembly of God, and indeed the whole profession of Christ upon earth. Some who read will possibly find truth set forth with which they have been long familiar, others may find that I have cut at the roots of long and deeply-cherished theories which have been woven into the very texture of their moral being; and on this account I feel, as I ever do in setting before the people of God the truth as I see it, a kind of natural timidity that has always to be overcome before I can proceed. No one ought to wish to unsettle the minds of saints, unless they are seen to be grounded upon what is really profitless to their spiritual welfare; and it is only by bringing in the truth that souls are to be helped, not by attacking error.

I wish to put before the reader, as

clearly and as concisely as I can, the Lord helping me, what the prospect of the believer is as I see it. Various theories are afloat concerning this important subject, and firmly imbedded in the minds of true believers. The death of the body, and the passage of the spirit to be with Christ, is the prominent thought in most minds, and though it be true that to be "*absent from the body*" is to be "*present with the Lord,*" I trust every one who may read this paper will see that this is not our *hope*; it is not set before us as something for which we are to look. A general resurrection is added to the above to complete and perfect this doctrine, in which, by the power of God, all the human race shall come out of their graves at the close of the history of this earth, and stand before the great white throne to be judged according to their works, the righteous being then justified and the wicked condemned. The eternal state will then be begun. This theory is, I am happy to say, through the diffusion of Scripture knowledge, being rapidly driven to the winds. But I will hasten to set before the reader the way in which, as it appears to me, the hope is presented.

It is plain enough that the effect which the gospel, as preached by the apostles, had upon those who believed it was that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Where the gospel is faithfully and clearly presented this must always be the effect, for the grace which carries with it salvation for all men teaches us "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2. 12, 13). And Peter desires for those to whom he writes that the trial of their faith "might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ"

(1 Peter 1. 7); and he exhorts them to "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (ver. 13). The Corinthians were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 7). The Colossians were told that "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4). Timothy was enjoined to keep the commandment "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6. 14). The Hebrews are exhorted to patience, and encouraged by the announcement that "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37); and "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (chap. 9. 28). I need not multiply passages of Scripture, the object of this paper being only to encourage the reader to search for himself in the fear of God.

But I can very well understand some one saying that when Christ comes it will be the last day, the end of the world, the complete wind-up of everything as far as earth is concerned. But Scripture presents things in a very different light. "The last day" does not mean the last day of time, upon which the sun shall set to rise no more, but the last day of the present age; and the end of the world does not mean the destruction of the heavens and the earth by fire, but the end of this present age, which will be concluded when He, whose voice as the Lawgiver once shook the earth, will shake heaven and earth when He comes in the thunder of His power. The appearing of Christ will bring the present age to an end, and will also introduce an age which all who had faith looked forward to since the world began. The Old Testament is full of references to that age, and the reign of Christ, as also is the New. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," Christ says, "and he saw it, and was glad"

(John 8. 56). Peter speaks of it as the times of the restoring of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since time began (Acts 3. 21). Paul speaks of it as the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things in the heavens and upon the earth shall be gathered under the headship of Christ (Eph. 1. 10). Everything that has been foreshadowed in the past ages will be found realized in Christ. In the past ages God was casting shadows beforehand of what would be accomplished in Christ. This is why nothing that He ever set up in the man after the flesh stood for any length of time. No man was able to bear for a moment one of the least of Christ's glories. Dominion over this creation was given to Adam, but he fell the moment he was tested. Noah was to execute judgment in the earth and the government of it was committed to him, but the next thing recorded of him is his drunkenness and degradation. Abraham got the promises, but they are confirmed to his seed, and that seed is not Isaac but Christ. Moses the apostle, and Aaron the priest, and the tabernacle, and the ark of testimony, and all the sacrifices—what did all these things do for the people? Moses gave Israel a law that brought upon them condemnation and the curse, and he was unable to make atonement for them, or lead them into the land. Aaron, God's high priest, made for the people a calf of gold, and became high priest to that idol. David was anointed with the holy oil, and placed upon the throne, but he soon stained it with innocent blood. Solomon built the temple, but no sooner are its glories described than we read of its desecration. The throne of David became utterly polluted, and all the power passed into the hands of the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar; but the idolatrous monarch usurped the place of God, made an image of gold to be worshipped, and a furnace of fire for all who refused to bow down to it. Every one of these men failed God.

Not one could support a single glory placed upon him by God. But these were all shadows of what Christ shall take up in the next age—the dispensation of the fullness of all these times. In the coming age you will find Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, the tabernacle and all connected with it, Joshua, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, and many other *shadows* which I have not mentioned. But where will all these be found? In Christ. Everything that was shadowed forth in these past ages will have its fulfilment in the next age in Christ. He will take up everything that each of these men failed in, and maintain all to the glory and praise of God. Hence the appearing of Christ was the great hope of the saints of God in all ages; and the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11. were led by the light of that day to abandon every earthly prospect; and all the works of power wrought by them, through faith, were only samples of the powers of the world to come, by which everything will be subdued under the feet of man in the Person of Christ. The writer of the Hebrew Epistle tells those to whom he writes not to cast away their confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; “For,” he says, “ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” And then he points them to the fulfilment of the promise, “For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith” (Heb. 10. 37, 38); and then in chapter 11. we have the cloud of witnesses, who lived by faith in the light of the coming of Christ and of the world which would be placed under Him. “These all,” he says, “having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (vers. 39, 40).

Those who believed the gospel, when at the beginning it was preached in its purity, were, as Scripture informs

us, set in an attitude of expectancy with reference to the coming of Christ, and the introduction of the “world to come.” It was that which was preached to them in the gospel message. Peter says, “He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10. 42). And Paul: “He (God) hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (chap. 17. 31). The world had nothing to do with the taking up of the saints, commonly called “*the rapture.*” What was necessary for it to know was the fact that a day was appointed for its judgment, and that Christ was the One to whom that judgment was committed; but that in the meantime, while as yet that day of judgment was future, an opportunity for repentance toward God and for faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ was held out, in order that men might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus. With the rapture of the church the world neither has, nor will have, anything to do, nor is it told anything about the matter.

That those converted had, at the beginning of their Christian career, very hazy ideas as to what would take place when the Lord would come, and how they themselves would enter the kingdom, is evident. They seem to have had little more than Jewish notions regarding the form the kingdom for which they waited and suffered would take; though certainly the Thessalonians were not left for long in this state of mind. Still, to begin with, the appearing of Christ was the one great hope for which they waited. This, I think, is so well established by Scripture, that it is impossible, apart from great prejudice and selfwill, to deny it.

There seems to be an unhealthy kind of nervous fear in the hearts of some who rightly look for the taking up of the Church, that to give the *manifestation* of our Lord the least prominence, as that for which the believer waits, is to endanger the hope of that blessed expectation. But this is a very childish and baseless fear, and requires no other antidote for its banishment than the fact that the Holy Spirit of God has given it such a large place in the Scriptures. Indeed, as to the "*rapture*" and the introduction of the "*world to come*," both are brought about by the one coming of Christ. And for that one coming of Christ we look, though now that we have the full and perfect revelation of God, we know that we shall be with Him when that coming

bursts upon the world; and though this involves our being with Him before He appears, it does not alter the fact that—

"We look for Thine appearing,
Thy presence here to bless;
We greet the day that's nearing,
When all this woe shall cease."

That appearing, I trust, is greatly loved and longed for, by both reader and writer; and, I trust, we also know that "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4). This would, to my mind, be impossible, were we not with Him previous to His appearing. But the consideration of this subject I must leave for another chapter. May we be like those who wait for their Lord.

Phases of Babylon.

(T. OLIVER, GALA)

TO the gleaner, there is no more interesting field than the book of the prophet Daniel. In the recorded histories of the three Babylonish rulers—Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius—we can see a striking analogy with the history of the world in its relation to Christianity.

In Nebuchadnezzar (chap. 3.) we see an intolerant persecuting power setting up an image and requiring universal worship. Those who feared God refused to worship, and as a consequence were cast into the fiery furnace. In the earlier stages of Christian history, persecution and idol worship were prominent features. In the heyday of the power of Romanism, image worship was rampant, and those who refused to bow were put to death. When in turn Protestantism gained the ascendancy, the persecuting spirit was still in evidence. Anglicanism persecuted Dissent and there were the martyrs of the Covenant. Then when the descendants of the Cove-

nanters came into power, the same intolerant spirit asserted itself. Down through the centuries until recent times professed orthodoxy has been intolerant of the existence of that which it deemed heterodox.

In Belshazzar we see an easy-going, pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent worldling, with contempt for God and His things. He made a feast and worshipped only what ministered to his lusts. In his reign the path of the godly did not lie through suffering and death; they were simply ignored, they were strangers.

Belshazzar's kingdom is analogous to what we find around us to-day. Persecution has given place to an easy tolerance. A man may believe anything or he may believe nothing at all.

The late Senator Gifford, in laying the foundation of lectures in the Scottish Universities "for promoting and diffusing the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term," looked forward to a day when

his principles would be widely accepted. That day has come. How aptly his foundation principles express the attitude of modern theology! "The lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, nor any oath, nor to subscribe any declaration of belief, nor to make any promise; they may be of any denomination whatever or of none at all; they may be of any religion or of no religion; or they may be sceptics or agnostics or freethinkers." It is quite a matter of indifference to the man of the world what his fellow-man believes. If a Christian takes to street-preaching, he is not molested; he is merely looked upon with good-natured contempt. In the world's eyes, his vagaries are his hobby, in the same way that another man seeks relaxation from physical and mental pressure in golfing, bowling, and such like.

In Darius, we see again a persecuting power, in connection not with an image, but with self-exaltation. He issued a decree and set himself in the place of God for thirty days. The godly Daniel did not honour his edict and as a result paid the penalty of the lion's den.

Belshazzar's easy day was followed by the rigid day of Darius, and so it has ever been; the resilience of the bent lath causes it to spring when released far beyond its free position. In government, republics have paved the way for more autocratic rule than that which they replaced. The iron foot of the Cæsars crushed down the ruins of the Roman republics. The French Revolution, the greatest democratic movement in history, ended in the rise of Napoleon Buonaparte, the greatest autocrat the world has ever seen.

It was believed by Christians in that day that "the Man of Sin" was being revealed. A century has passed since then and "the Man of Sin" has not yet come. But the evidences of His advent are incomparably stronger than they were in the days of

Napoleon. The easy tolerance and democracy of the present is but a prelude to the consummation of intolerance and autocracy when that "Wicked One shall be revealed;" when no man will be allowed to "buy or sell, save he that has the mark . . . of the beast" (Rev. 13. 15-18.) But his ascendancy will be short-lived, because "the Lord shall consume [him] with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2. 8).

The inference we may draw, and the lesson we may learn from these analogies for our present help is very simple. Daniel was not at Belshazzar's feast (chap. 6.), neither was the queen. She came into the banquet house at the critical moment, and with what assurance she could tell the king, "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods." She was in the secret of the Lord, and could be unmoved when countenances were changing and knees were knocking together. The king was ignorant of or careless about the existence of the man of God. He had forgotten all about the wonderful works of God in the reign of his predecessor. But the remembrance was still abiding with the queen and so she was a stranger to the feast. Daniel and she were children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. They did not require to see the mystic fingers tracing out the divine condemnation on the wall to put them in their proper place relative to the feast. They were in harmony in their spirits with the place from whence the fingers came, and hence foresaw the coming judgment.

In the closing hour of this great drama of the world's history, man is purveying a feast. All the resources of the world are shown and gloried in. The gods of gold and iron are lauded to the sky. Man's work is the topic at the feast. Social comforts, conveniences, and delights are made the great aim of man's effort.

Even as the captivity of Israel was forgotten by Belshazzar and his minions, so the rejection of Christ is by mutual consent ignored. Men, whatever their professed beliefs, are sinking their differences. Atheist and professing Christian are meeting on the broad platform of "natural theology," greeting each other with a common joy because of the same kindred and the same world.

In view of the solemn issues involved in the world's feast, it is of prime importance that we, who are children of the day, sleep not as do others, but that we should watch with sobriety, for they that sleep sleep in the night (1 Thess. 5. 6, 7).

Although the rejection of Christ is glossed over or hidden under a veil, the attitude of the world is still ex-

pressed as at first in the words, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19. 14). The servants of the rejected nobleman were well aware of the resources of the country, but during his absence and rejection they were not partners in its social advancement, their business being to trade for Him.

Babylon, the woman of Revelation 17., glorifies herself and lives deliciously with the great in the earth, heedless of the handwriting on the wall. The new Jerusalem, the woman of Revelation 21., will not be manifested till the earth has been cleansed and is ready for the presence of the glory of the Lord. Meanwhile, we who by grace will be incorporated in that glorious bride of Christ cannot be true to Him if we glory in Babylon's jubilee.

Heaven and Earth shall Praise Him. (DAVID SCUGAL).

HARK how the great eternal song
Throbs through the courts above!
Hark how the vast redeemed throng
Tells out the Saviour's love!

Like sound of distant thunderings
The mighty chorus swells,
And rising high it sweetly rings
Like peals of golden bells.

In deepest tones the glorious choir
Sing of redemption done,
And their exultant notes aspire
To praise th' Eternal Son.

Golgotha's woes, Golgotha's pains
Are all remembered there,
For He who groaned and suffered reigns,
And they His glory share.

The Lamb who died to save His own
On dark Golgotha's hill

Is Victor now, and He the throne
In righteousness doth fill.

The sceptre glitters in His hand,
The crown upon His brow;
Peoples and kings of every land
Yield Him full homage now.

The glowing orbs that shine in space
In myriads circling far,
Declare the glories of His grace
To the remotest star.

And every strand by Ocean laved
On Earth's fair em'rald round—
No more by sin and death enslaved—
Re-echoes with the sound:

"To Him"—whose praises fill the sky,
"To Him"—whom we adore,
"Be honour, strength, and majesty,
And glory evermore."

Peace in the Saviour, rest at His feet,
Smile of His countenance, radiant and sweet;
Joy in His presence, Christ ever near—
These will ensure thee a happy New Year.

(Haverghal.)

The Ages.

(EDWARD CROSS).

THE word "world" in the A.V. represents two words in the original of the N.T., *cosmos* and *aiōn*.

1. *Cosmos* (*κόσμος*), having for its root the idea of ornament, by which it is so translated in 1 Peter 3. 3, "whose adorning," etc., means the universal framework of God's creatorial glory, the world in which that glory is displayed, the portraiture in which the order and beauty of the material universe is set forth.

From that it comes to mean the world in which man lives; and from that, again, the men who live in it; and in this manner it is used in John's writings as denoting all men, as the object of divine consideration, in contrast to the circumscribed monopoly of Jewish thought. It is this which lends significance to the title, twice given to the Lord, "Saviour of the world" (John 4. 42; 1 John 4. 14).

2. *Aiōn* (*αἰών*), again, represents the world with regard to time, duration, as *Cosmos* refers to order, space. The word is derived by some from *ἀεί ὄν*, and so would mean "always existing," permanent being; hence eternity. By others it is derived from *ἄω*, to breathe; hence the whole period, or duration of human life, the time condition of created things, their moral course, the age so characterized; and hence the whole "age," "eternity." The two words are found in proximity in 1 Corinthians 1. 20, "where is the disputer of this age? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"; and in dependence, in Ephesians 2. 2, "according to the course [or age] of this world." It is thus used as a whole period with a special characterizing feature, as we say "the golden age," "the iron age," and so forth. The Apostle speaks of this age as "this present evil age" (Gal. 1. 4). The Jews spoke of two ages, "the present age," *olām hazeh*, and "the future age," *olām havo*, the age

of the coming Messiah, when all their prophetic hopes would be fulfilled. This latter is constantly referred to in the N.T., e.g. Mark 10. 30; Luke 18. 30; Matthew 19. 28; see also Hebrews 2. 5; 6. 5; 9. 11; 10. 1. Then "the Son of Man will sit upon the throne of His glory;" but meanwhile Satan is the prince of this world (John 12. 31), the god of this age (2 Cor. 4. 4), and the contrast between the two is complete. The age in which we live is not the age in which Christ reigns; and between the children of this age and the children of that age the contrast is equally striking (cf. Luke 16. 8; 20. 34, 35; Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 4-7). This fact we do not sufficiently appreciate. And why? Because we are practically so much "of" what we are naturally, and so little "of" what we are spiritually: and we spend our energies on a world to which we don't belong, instead of in the pursuit of those things that are "our own."

Now the advent of Christ into this world was the closing up, the ending, morally, of this age. His enthronement would have been the beginning of the new. But He was refused a place, any recognition in the world, at all. They crucified Him. Still less did He get His place as King. And so the course of this world goes on, the same as ever it was, only more pronounced; and so it will continue, "evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse," until the Lord's return. It began when Adam fell through disobedience, and its course ever since is the sequence of that act. The principles that operate in it are evil, and every power that is active in it is opposed to God; and when Christ enters into His kingdom, when He "takes to Himself His great power" and reigns, He must begin by putting down all rule of every kind, and all authority without exception, and all power that is in operation, for it is all opposed to God (1 Cor. 15. 24), in direct revolt and

apostacy from Him. They were all His creatures, formed for His glory, as they will be in result in the world to come ; but they are all, in this present age, in the enemy's hand. Let it be well understood—but how little it is understood !—in the face of things that we naturally hold in such high esteem, that “ the course of this world ”—not a part of it, but the whole—is controlled by “ the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience ” (Eph. 2. 2) ; and of His disciples the Lord says, “ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world ” (John 17. 16).

Now, each “ age ” may be likened to a circle circumscribing a centre, which gives its character to the whole. That there were ages before this present age we know, for Scripture speaks of the “ hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages to our glory ” (1 Cor. 2. 7). How many of these there were we know not ; nor what was the characterizing feature of any one of them. That there are succeeding ages we also know, for Scripture speaks of them likewise ; and some, at least, of the issues that will be evolved in them are declared to us. Each age has its own characteristic feature, while also one preponderating feature may extend its influence to many more ; and thus we may so dispose the centre of our circle, and extend its circumference, as to include other ages in the group ; or we may finally so place the centre and describe the circle as to embrace the whole.

Thus in Ephesians 1. 21 we have the present age and that which is to come. Christ came into this world, was rejected, outcast, and crucified. This age refused Him, and chose a robber in His stead. Let it be well understood that that is this age, however men may boast in its progress. But God raised Him from the dead ; and Psalm 110. is fulfilled, in that He now sits at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high, “ far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in

this age, but also in the coming age.” That is the place He holds for faith to-day ; that will be His public place in the day to come. This day is the day of man's supremacy, the day of his judgment (1 Cor. 4. 3) ; the coming day will be the day of the supremacy of Christ.

But there are “ ages to come,” more than this one ; and if we change the centre of our circle we can embrace those other “ ages ” in which He will “ show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus ” (Eph. 2. 7). The controlling power of Christ has now done its work ; evil is put down. “ I beheld Satan,” He says, “ as lightning fall from heaven ” (Luke 10. 18). But, greatly as that is to be desired, it is not there the heart finds rest ; and so He turns the minds of the disciples from the display of power to the excellency of grace and the delight of the Father's heart therein. God could not rest in the display of power, for that is extraneous to Himself. He will surely work deliverance for His people ; but He will not rest in their deliverance, but in the love that has delivered them (Zeph. 3. 17).

But if we dispose our centre once again we shall find a new circumference in Ephesians 3. 21. It is here no longer ages counted one by one ; but “ all the generations of the age of the ages ; ” i.e. all the proceeds of periods multiplying themselves indefinitely in their evolution, where the unit of number is not years nor decades, but ages. And as before the Apostle spoke of the exceeding (hyperbolic, *ὑπερβάλλον*) greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and set Him in the heavens, far above all principality, and power, etc., and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all ; so here, he speaks of “ the love of Christ that surpasseth knowledge (the same word, hyperbolic), that ye might be filled into all the fullness of God ” ; and the grace begun now is consummated in glory without end (ver. 21).

These are wonderful things, past all mere human thought. Yet they are not too great to think of, too great to realize, too great to reduce from their bespoken greatness into the practical details of daily life, seeing that they are revealed for the glory of God in the first place, and then for our furtherance in joy and hope, as by His grace, and the power of His Spirit dwelling in us, we set ourselves diligently to seek them out. We may well say :

“O Lord, enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought ;
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable.”

Again, this expression of indefinite greatness, leading the thought captive in its whirling flight, is akin to another of similar, though not the same form in Hebrew 1. 8 : “Unto the Son, He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” —to the age of the age. This is a quotation from Psalm 45. 6, 7. A note to this verse in the “Speaker’s Commentary” says, “The strongest possible terms are here used to denote absolute eternity.” He is not here speaking of the terrestrial throne of Christ (Ps. 2), nor of the mediatorial, universal throne of the Son of Man (Ps. 8. ; 1 Cor. 15.) ;

thrones which are not dissolved in judgment, as are the four Gentile monarchies (Dan. 7.), but thrones which abide until the accomplishment of their purpose, and are then handed back to God who gave them (cf. Dan. 7. 14 ; 1 Cor. 15. 24). The Messiah fills both those thrones mediatorially and temporarily ; but He has a throne held in another title, which does not pass away, a throne which, like Him who sits upon it, is eternal. The others are human thrones occupied in human right from God ; while also He who occupies them is in Himself none less than God ; but this is a divine throne, occupied by Him in His title as God : “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;” (cf. in this connection Psalm 145. as celebrating the divine Person of the King). And very fitting is this expression as declaring the unity of the Godhead and all else in *unison* with Him. Ephesians 3. 21 speaks of the accomplishment of His purpose through the ages in indefinite detail. Hebrews 1. 8 speaks of the supremacy of the Son, in the unity of His divine essence, holding all things in the supremacy of His own will in the age of the ages as they subserve the glory of His eternal purpose.

“The slippery path of sin is always trodden with accelerated steps, because the first sin tends to weaken in the soul the authority and power of that which alone can prevent our committing still greater sins—that is, the word of God, as well as the consciousness of His presence, which imparts to the word all its practical power over us.”

(J. N. D.)

2 Cor. 3. 18. “Looking now upon the glory of the Lord, a glory now unveiled, not hidden, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. We have only as it were to sit in the sun to be bathed in its brightness. The power to enjoy Him is the power to reflect Him. The reflection is no effort, but the necessary effect of the enjoyment.”

(F. W. G.)

For ever Thou remainest—Thou whose name
Is Alpha and Omega, First and Last ;
Jehovah-Jesus, changelessly the same
In future, present, past.

Thou, Lord, remainest ; through the lifting gates
Of the New Year we pass ; our hearts grow strong
In the blest hope for which creation waits—
The new eternal song.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 1.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

WE derive the title "Psalms," meaning songs, from the Septuagint translators of the Old Testament; in the Hebrew Bible the title is "Tehillim," or praises. Repentant Israel are bidden by Hosea (chap. 14.) to take with them *words* and return unto the Lord; so the whole collection of Psalms consists of the inspired *words* of prayer and praise for the use of the faithful in Israel in all the circumstances of their chequered history. Generally the vessels of inspiration were men who had been put through certain circumstances and had been so taught of God in them as to qualify them to encourage others by their writings with the encouragement wherewith they had been themselves encouraged of God (2 Cor. 1.; 2 Sam. 23. 2). The knowledge of the mystery, or secret, of the judicial setting aside of Israel nationally (Rom. 11. 25), while the remnant according to the election of grace of the present time (ver. 5), is blessed with the believing Gentiles, both forming God's assembly on earth, is essential for an intelligent and profitable use of the Psalms. The present time is the interval, unknown in duration, between the cutting off of Messiah at the close of Daniel's sixty-ninth week, and the beginning of the seventieth. This last week is marked by the making of a covenant between the mass of the Jews and "the prince that shall come."* This important episode in Israel's history seems clearly the outcome of a return to the land of Canaan on the part of the Jews and of their acquiring a national position in it. During the present interval, "the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" are being gathered out of this world, and enjoy the use of the Psalms and other Old Testament scriptures while Israel is still in darkness. What the converted remnant of that nation will have in the future the church has now.

That *our* use of the Psalms may be

spiritual, and therefore profitable, is the object before us in the present Studies. The need is great, for possibly no portion of Holy Scripture has been more misused than the one we are considering. Not only have the Psalms been, by erroneous application, the means of keeping souls in legal bondage, who are fully entitled to know the liberty of grace; but they have been also misused to inflame the warlike passions of those who should have been the exponents of the life of Jesus, of the gentleness and meekness of Christ. The soldiers of Cromwell, whose backs no foe ever saw, sang the Psalms of David before their victories, and went to them for authority to have "the praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand . . . to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written" (Ps. 149. 6-8). They are also largely considered amongst both Protestants and Catholics the divinely given expression for Christian worship; but such worship should be in the consciousness of relationship to the FATHER (John 4.)—a name unknown in the Psalms except in one case by way of illustration (103. 13)—and in the knowledge of God fully revealed in the person and work of His Son (Heb. 10.).

Let none think, from this attempt to judge of and approve things that differ that the Psalms form an unimportant portion of Holy Scripture; they are as other sacred writings "able to make wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 3. 15), and the inspired writers of the New Testament quote from them more frequently than from any other book of the Old Testament.

A few words on the distinction between the earthly calling of the Jew and the heavenly calling of the Christian will simplify the points which it is sought to emphasize. The calling of the Christian is exquisitely and plainly set forth in Stephen (Acts 7.). The straight (in a moral sense) path between the martyr on earth and the

* Not Christ, as some have thought, but rather the head of the revived Roman empire—the first wild beast of Revelation 13 (cf. Is. 28. 15).

Saviour in heaven is the pathway of the Christian calling. In the words, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," he says in effect, "I am coming to where Thou art." He soon reached the goal towards which Paul is seen with one purpose stretching forward, for the prize of the calling on high in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3.).

The soul thus called has nothing whatever to do with putting this world right by means of power; on the contrary he leaves it behind him; his chief exercise on the road being to more truly represent and express in his life his absent Lord. The Jew, on the other hand, is called to enjoy an earthly inheritance under the rule of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. In order that this should be brought to pass, the wicked, who have usurped the inheritance and are oppressing the righteous, must be removed. Perhaps no Scripture illustrates this point more clearly than Psalm 37. In this it is five times repeated that the faithful, under various titles "shall inherit the earth" (vers. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). It becomes a righteous thing then for the saint with an earthly calling to seek the removal of the wicked, that God may accomplish His purpose and manifest His glory in the kingdom of the Son of man.

This line of truth is not entirely wanting in the New Testament, for even in the Gospel of Luke, specially characterized by grace, we find in the parable of the unjust judge (chap. 18.) that, in answer to the cry, "avenge me of mine adversary," the Lord says, "and shall not God *avenge* His own elect which cry day and night unto Him though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Let the parable in the following chapter of the same Gospel be carefully considered (vers. 12-27). How could Christ take the kingdom He had received in the clouds of heaven (Dan. 7. 13), while enemies were in possession? They must necessarily and righteously be excluded (Ps. 144.). Accordingly it is the citizens of the parable, who prove themselves enemies, that are by the King's own commandment *slain* before Him (ver. 27). These two scriptures in Luke throw a flood of light on much that is perplex-

ing to a Christian in the Psalms. But the avenging of the widow and the slaughter of Christ's enemies are evidently future, and do not belong to the period when grace reigns.

In this period the government of God is exercised providentially, and is recognized by faith; in the coming age it will be direct and manifested to sight. In both cases the fundamental principles on which He governs remain the same, though the dispensations differ. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is Father to the Christian, and deals with His children in holy, while at the same merciful, government (see Heb. 12. and 1 Peter 1. 17). Moreover, if the faithful in Israel are to pass through the dread moments of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30.), the Christian, too, lives in an evil day (Eph. 6.). His conflict is with the leagued forces of Satan, operating by various agents and subtle means to besnare or intimidate, so that he may fall, and in his fall the Name of his Master be dishonoured. To the soul who realizes this conflict the Psalms are a storehouse of armour, offensive and defensive; his faith is educated, his conscience adjusted to the divine standard; encouragement is ministered, and the ways of the enemy exposed. While using the Psalms thus, it is of the deepest importance that the Christian should know and enjoy those relationships with the Father and the Son proper to Christianity, of which the Psalms contain no mention. He will delight to hear in them the voice of Jesus, to trace His footsteps, and to behold His glories; he will find true spiritual food in the contemplation of Him who, while maintaining in absolute perfection the place He had taken in relation to Jehovah, speaks of the saints as the excellent of the earth in whom is all His delight (Ps. 16.). Surely such a scripture should direct our affections now towards those who we know as fellow-members of one body.

Let us then in studying the Psalms not lose our Christianity, but read them in the light of that supreme revelation, leaving to the Jew of the future the direct and primary application of many passages.

What Glorifies God.

THE clean animals of the law of Moses were those that chewed the cud and divided the hoof ; all others were forbidden to them, and if an Israelite so much as touched what had not this twofold character he was defiled.

This teaches us what is suitable to God. The Christian must meditate. One who is fed by the Lord is never satisfied until he goes over what he has acquired in the presence of the Lord. He ruminates, and then he is able to practice in his walk that which he has assimilated. We seek too seldom the quietude of the Lord's presence, and in consequence are so little moulded after His gentleness, and so little able to walk worthy of Him.

God is glorified when we draw largely upon our resources in Him. It is right that we should feel our responsibilities whether in the home life or towards others ; but these responsibilities and claims should only awaken in our souls a deep sense of God's care and succour. Then they become the opportunities of disclosing the greatness of the supplies. It was the vessels to receive the oil which failed with the poor widow, and not the oil (2 Kings 4. 6). The supply of grace only ceases when the need, or the place, for it no longer exists ; so that need or responsibility, if used as a vessel, is only an occasion or opening for the mercy and goodness of God. As our pressure and responsibility increases, so do the means to meet it increase, if our hearts are simply dependent upon God. Our springs are in God.

Let us learn from the birds of the air ; they discharge their duties of going in quest of material for the nest first, and then for food. They have nothing of their own. They go and look for it, and

they look until they find it, and this is just what we must do. We feel our responsibilities ; well, we have no power in ourselves to meet them, but, like the parent bird, we go in quest of the means, only with this great difference—the bird does not know where to find it, and we do.

When Martha and Mary felt their powerlessness they sent for Jesus (John 2. 3). Let us send for Him to bear us company in our responsibilities, and then our responsibilities will only be occasions for us to know more of His love to us and of the fertility and greatness of His resources. If we want anything, let us fly off to Him, and the oftener we fly to Him the more we shall get, and the more we shall find that the need is a great occasion of blessing because of the way He meets us in every need.

As we use His love we learn what it is. Settle with the Lord that He can do everything, and then you will come to this : " He doeth all things for me."

Sir Michael Costa, the celebrated music conductor, was holding a rehearsal. As the mighty

Our chorus rang out, accompanied by hundreds of instrumental performers, the piccolo player ceased playing, thinking perhaps that his contribution would not be missed amid so much music. Suddenly the great conductor stopped, and cried out, " Where is the piccolo ? " The sound of that one small instrument was necessary to the harmony, and his ear had missed it.

We are often like that player, silent amid the sweet praise that is ascending to God. If this is so, if we are dumb in the presence of all His grace which has been revealed in Christ Jesus, it shows sinfully unresponsive hearts. May His great love awaken the music in our hearts, for He knows if we are silent, and, he that offereth praise glorifieth God.

"Much Cattle."

(J. WILSON SMITH)

THE book of Jonah closes by telling us that in the city of Nineveh there were six score thousand people who could not discern their right hand and their left hand ; and also much cattle.

Doth God take care for oxen ?

Yes, He does ; and that is the reason why the book of Jonah ends by informing us that there were also "much cattle" in Nineveh. Had Nineveh been destroyed, the cattle therein would have perished ; but God showed mercy on the men and on the poor brute creation too.

One of the most charming of truths shines before us on every page of this foolishly discredited story, and that is *the care of God*.

First, God took care of the disobedient prophet by saving him miraculously from a watery grave.

Second, God took care of the mariners in whose ship the prophet sailed as a passenger. "The sea ceased from her raging," and the shipwreck was averted.

Third, God took care of the inhabitants of Nineveh when they repented of their wicked ways on the preaching of Jonah, and He destroyed them not.

And, fourth, God took care of the cattle. God acted in beautiful consideration in each case.

He ever does ; but one point in the deeply interesting book of Jonah is the precious fact of God's care for His creatures.

This care penetrates the whole of His creation. The man who has not apprehended the care and pity of God is dull indeed.

See how the consciousness of this weighed with Jonah all through. "I knew," said he, "that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil" (chap. 4. 2).

Before leaving his country, on his

prophetic errand, he knew that God was of "great kindness." He knew the tender heart of God, and had the premonition that his announcement and judgment would, somehow, be nullified by the grace of God, and he himself stultified in the presence of those whose doom he had come to foretell.

Poor Jonah ! He is a sorry servant who cares more for his own paltry reputation than he does for the life and welfare of others.

But if Jonah cared not for the souls of the Ninevites, God did ; and, as the prophet prophesied, God wrought repentance in the heart of the people, from the king downwards ; and thus Nineveh was spared ; and also "much cattle."

The very oxen escaped the doom which overhung the human beings of Assyria's mighty and wicked metropolis.

God was slow of anger, slow to strike. Forty days were the truce, and then destruction ; the mill ground slowly ; the messenger of coming judgment moved slowly, too, and falteringly ; he preached his eight telling words, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," half-heartedly.

He began to enter a day's journey into the city. Enough ! His first call sufficed. One day was more than necessary. The people "believed God." The dead bones began to move. God's "great kindness" withheld the stroke.

Jonah was credited before the people, discredited in the region of his own pride and self-esteem.

Destruction did not come. God spared the city, its men and cattle ; but Jonah was "displeased and very angry."

But the gourd which sprang up to shelter Jonah's unworthy head was but a further proof of the care of God, even where that care was least deserved and God's "great kindness" might have been least expected.

Cyrus and the Servant.

Isaiah (2). Section 1. Chapters 41. to 48.

Cyrus, the Lord's Servant.

GOD raised up Cyrus to overthrow the Babylonish idolatry, and also to restore Israel to the land. Righteousness called him to its foot (41. 2). This is the first mention of this great warrior king; the last being in chapter 48., where we are told, "he will do his pleasure on the Babylonians" (vers. 14, 15).

Long before he was born, God surnamed Cyrus, though he knew not Jehovah, and *providentially* he was used of God as His shepherd and His anointed. He was called to overthrow idolatry, which was such a snare to Israel. He was chosen "for Jacob *My servant's sake*, and Israel Mine elect" (45. 1-4). By him God taught Israel the impotence of idols. In a moving appeal to Israel, God shows them how that He had called and prospered Cyrus to do His pleasure for their sakes (see 48. 12-15).

That God used him in the way here foretold is now a matter of history; but there lies in it a deeper meaning for us, for Cyrus is a type of Him who comes out of heaven upon the white horse in Revelation 19.: THE KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. He will overthrow the idolatrous kings and their armies of the future; the beast, the false prophet, and their evil associates.

Cyrus is never called "*the servant*" of the Lord. He was His *providential* shepherd, for Israel His servant's sake. As to this Delitzsch and others have been in error. Nor is it difficult to see the importance of this distinction; for even now God raises up *providential* authority in the world for the sake of the elect. Such authorities are

called *ministers of God*; but never *servants of Christ*. They are God's ministers to us for good (Rom. 13. 4). If we understood this important truth, we should carry out the exhortation to pray for all in authority (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2) with grace and intelligence. In the restoration of the Jews through Cyrus, God used Jeremiah *prophetically*, and Daniel was used in *prayer*, whilst Cyrus was used of God *providentially*, as we have said.

Israel, the National Servant.

Consequent upon the introduction of Cyrus (41. 2) as the warrior to be used of God, to destroy idolatrous nations, Israel is addressed by God as His national servant, in whom He will glorify Himself. The ends of the earth are afraid, and the idolaters are seen in their senseless dilemma (vers. 5-7). "*But thou, Israel, art My servant!*" This is a high distinction for a nation, a distinction peculiar to Israel. Here we find the first mention of the servant nation—the key-word of Isaiah (2). This servant *nation* is "the seed of Abraham" (ver. 8), for it is promised that through his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. We know that *personally* our Lord Jesus Christ is the Seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many; but as of one, "And to thy seed, *which is Christ*" (Gal. 3. 16). It is, therefore, when the nation is truly brought to Christ, raised from among the dead—seed of David and seed of Abraham—that the nation will become, according to God's purpose for them, the honoured *national servant*.

This nation is also called, "thou *worm Jacob*"; the "new threshing instrument" to "thresh the moun-

tains, and beat them small" (vers. 14-15). Christ came to where they were to save them, and in His suffering He cried, "I am a worm" (Ps. 22. 6). He had to take that way—to go to the cross, into the dust of death—before either ourselves or Israel could be delivered. But not only are we saved, and all Israel shall be by and by, but the proud mountains, the governments of men, are beaten small. The *worm* Jacob, Israel the servant nation, is used in this work specially. Scientists tell us that it is an established fact that the best and most fruitful earth has all passed through the body of the worm; so will the great governments of the earth be dealt with by Israel before they are fruitful for God's praise in the coming day. Then Israel shall "rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel" (ver. 16).

Away from the Lord they had sunken into an utterly vain and sinful state. When God beheld, there was "NO MAN," "NO COUNSELLOR" among them; NO ONE to answer God a word. They had become "vanity, their works nothing; their molten images wind and emptiness" (vers. 28, 29). But when they turn again to Him, then indeed shall they rejoice in THE ONE whose name is COUNSELLOR; upon whose strong shoulder the government shall be safe: THE MAN CHRIST JESUS, in whom the nation shall find itself richly blessed; and who shall answer every divine question.

The Faithful Servant.

Chapter 42. therefore opens by inviting us to behold this glorious and gracious Servant who shall bring all triumphantly to pass; the servant of Jehovah's pleasure. Here the flesh cannot follow; here the eyes of the unrenewed mind cannot see. The Holy Spirit of God will only lead in this way those who have accepted God's judgment of the flesh at the cross: only those eyes which have been anointed with divine eyesalve are able to behold

the moral lustre of this faithful Servant: the truth, the meekness, the wisdom, the nobility, the prudence, the purity, the equity, the gentleness, the goodness, the virtue, and the majestic dignity;—the moral glories shining in this lowly, suffering Servant, are only discerned and delighted in by those who are led of the Spirit.

When God says, "Behold My servant, whom I uphold," we may be sure there is abundance of grace to enable us so to do. We cannot, however, claim grace to run in the direction which the imagination of the natural mind would indicate; but we can follow in the way in which God's Spirit guides. God loves us too well to encourage us in a wrong and hurtful path. We are to behold the glory of His Son.

His First and Second Comings.

As is often the case in the prophets, the first and second comings of our Lord Jesus Christ are seen together in verse 1. The past coming of the sufferings of Christ; and the future coming, in the glories that follow, are put together. The present period in between, when the assembly is being formed in Christ, whilst He Himself is out of sight, is passed right over. The prophets see, as it were, two mountain peaks rising before their enraptured view; one nearer, the other towering in brilliant glory beyond; but the broad, rich, lowly valley between, in the which is the assembly, God's habitation in the Spirit, is out of their sight. It is vain, therefore, to look for the assembly—the body of Christ—in the prophets. And in this connection, the headings of many chapters of Isaiah, put there by men, are very misleading. They read the assembly in, where God is speaking of the nation of Israel.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is here shown to us coming in humiliation, as recorded in the four gospels; and also, as coming again in glory, to bring

blessing to Israel, and to the nations of the Gentiles; when righteousness, equity, and judgment shall prevail in the earth.

The faithfulness of Christ has been proved fully as we see in the gospels. He is the Elect-Servant of God; the delight of His soul:

“Faithful amidst unfaithfulness,
Mid darkness only Light;
He did His Father’s Name confess,
And in His will delight.”

The Spirit of God rested upon Him; His words and works were by His grace and power, as He trod that path of perfection. No word had ever to be withdrawn; no work to be undone; no step to be retraced.

Unlike the warrior kings of old, or the present-day politicians, He did not strive or cry out (ver. 2), appealing to the passions of men. With tender and thoughtful consideration for the weak, He produces “judgment for the truth” (ver. 3); causing it eventually to spring up and flourish in the earth, where it has long been trodden under the foot of rebellious man. He may be despised and rejected of men; yet, after long patience, He will “set judgment in the earth.” His law, waited for by “the isles,” shall then obtain in the world. What good reason has the believer, who now knows Him as his Saviour, his Lord, and Head, to rejoice in Him? “He shall not fail!” (ver. 4). This faithful Servant shall

surely establish all that God has committed to Him.

The Four Gospels.

Mark, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas, might, like others, prove himself a *failing servant*; yet, such is the way of grace, he is the one used of God to show us *the unfailing Servant*, the Son of God, sounding out the sweet and joyful tidings of mercy and grace. *Matthew*, guided by the Holy Spirit, sounds the high soprano note of *the kingship* of our Lord Jesus Christ; *Mark*, the dulcet alto note of *the Service* of Christ; *Luke*, the sweet, strong, inspiring tenor note of His perfect *Manhood*; and *John*, as he sounds the full, deep bass note of His *Diety*, striking back into the depths of eternity, begins: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and THE WORD WAS GOD.” Each note of the four gospels is distinct in its precious meaning; yet, in sweet harmonious chords their rich and heavenly music sounds out in divinest tones the name of JESUS; the name of the One whoses praises we shall sing for ever. This is the true harmony of the gospels. The believer can sing even now in faith:

“Lord I believe Thou hast prepared—
Unworthy though I be—
For me, a blood-bought, free reward,
A harp of God for me.
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And formed by power divine,
To sound in God the Father’s ears
No other Name but Thine.”

Oh, what will be the day when we shall stand
Irradiate with God’s eternal light !
First tread as sinless saints the sinless land,
No shade nor stain upon our garments white ;
No fears, no shame upon our faces then,
No mark of sin—oh, joy beyond all thought !
A son of God, a free-born citizen
Of that bright city where the curse is not !

Demas, Luke, and Mark.

“Demas hath forsaken me. . . . Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee.”—
2 Timothy 4. 10, 11.

Here are three typical men, such as are common amongst those who make profession of Christ. *Demas* finds the tide too strong for him. He sets out, possibly with the best of intentions, on the Christian path, but finds that the majority are against him, and as such men as he believe in being—as they imagine—on the winning side, he deserts the lonely prisoner Paul, who is without influence, position, or wealth. Poor dupe of an evil world! He chooses present advantage, he loses eternal reward—and there are many such to-day.

Luke is the beloved physician, able to minister to Paul's infirmities, and always at hand to do so; the steady, reliable brother, who was glad to stand by Paul when all others had left him. The price of such men is above

rubies, though they make no great show in the world: they are content to *wait* for their reward. God raise up many Lukes!

Mark was the man who turned back, and afterwards wrote the story of the One who *never* turned back, but set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. He is typical of a timid servant turned from the path of service to a rejected Christ for a time but afterwards graciously restored. It is wonderful what God can do with men of his stamp, who have learnt to mistrust themselves. They are usually so humbled and penitent that any service, however menial, is welcomed by them, and so the highest service may be safely entrusted to them. Hence Paul sends for Mark, now profitable to him for the ministry. (W. B. Westcott.)

Repentance.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”—2 Cor. 7. 10.

There are two kinds of sorrow for sin, one is the abhorrence of the thing itself, and this will be very keen in the heart that fears the Lord, and is centred in Christ; indeed, it is this heart alone that will sorrow rightly because of sin.

The second is the sorrow that goes with the fear of the consequences, and not because of the hatefulness of the sin itself. This is an entirely selfish experience, it is not “godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of,” but it is the sorrow of the world which worketh death (2 Cor. 7. 10). In this sorrow the devil seems very near to mock the soul in its distress, and increase its fears, as again and again the vow is made that, if the consequences can be escaped, that

particular snare will be avoided in the future; he can mock confidently, for he knows as long as the soul is self-centred there will be a return to the special besetment, as the dog returns to its vomit.

Despair does not enter into true sorrow for sin, for along and with it there is a sense of the nearness of the Lord. He stands by in tender grace to lead the soul into full restoration to Himself. Sin appears in its exceeding sinfulness in contrast to His faithfulness and love; His grace becomes a greater reality than ever; the sin is confessed and forgiven; the root of it exposed and judged; and the soul is cleansed from all unrighteousness.

(J. T. Mawson.)

From a Doctor's Note-Book.

(T. PEARSON).

God is no Man's Debtor.

"FOR what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, *when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God*" (1 Peter, 2. 20).

During the process of spiritual education we are often confounded, and at a loss to understand why, if we are His children, God should allow certain things to take place which seem altogether against us; but we are reminded in 1 Peter 1. 7: "The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Every trial means exercise of soul; the metal must go into the crucible, and this seems to be God's peculiar method of teaching us eternal lessons.

During my visits to a dying woman some years ago I believe I learned the practical meaning of the scripture at the head of this paper.

She was an incurable consumptive, about forty years of age, discharged from Brompton Hospital.

She had an attack of pulmonary hæmorrhage immediately on her arrival at home from the hospital, and I was sent for to attend her.

It was obvious at first sight that her days were numbered, but the sad part was, she seemed quite unconcerned about her grave condition. She greeted me with a feeble handshake, saying how troublesome her cough was, but she felt sure that with rest in her own home and medicine she would soon be well again.

After I had made a cursory examination of her chest, she said to me: "Doctor, I have just received a legacy of two hundred and fifty pounds, and I am

wondering how to invest it. Could you advise me in any way?" I felt that this was an opportunity to speak to her seriously about her precious soul, for I felt how sad it was that one who was soon to pass out of this world into the presence of God should have her whole interest concentrated on a small death legacy. "Well, now, Mrs. M—," I said, "you are very ill, and the moments are fleeting; soon you will have to pass out of this life into God's presence, and do you give this matter less consideration than the legacy?"

A disappointed look, like a dark cloud, passed over her countenance, and she said, "Oh, doctor, please don't make me more miserable, for I am miserable enough as it is. We did not send for you to talk like that."

Before leaving her, I talked briefly to her of the work of Christ, and of her need of His saving grace.

The next morning I was told by the nurse that she had had a restless night, and that she thought it was due to the conversation of yesterday. I found the word had awakened her conscience, and she was in real soul exercise. Her sins had come up before her during the night, and the thought of them had sorely troubled her, and she reprimanded me severely for speaking to her on such a topic.

Another day and night passed, and her soul's misery increased, and I received a letter from her husband asking me to resign from the case, as he wished to have another medical man. This was a great blow, as it meant a substantial loss to me, being a young practitioner. It seemed so very hard that in seeking to be faithful to God I should lose a client. The question arose in my mind—Where can God be in this matter? I must never again speak to people in this way, for it is a

losing business. For many days these misgivings filled my mind, then 1 Peter 2. 20 broke in upon my disappointment. and I felt that this was God's way of ministering to me a never-to-be-forgotten truth.

A few weeks afterwards the joy came.

A clergyman, who was with her when she died, told me that she was full of joy, resting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. She had expressed the wish to see me several times, to tell me that her soul's misery had ended in perfect joy, but I had not the pleasure of hearing an account of this from her, because of her husband's objections.

The blessing did not end here. A

sister of Mrs. M—, who had listened behind the door to the conversation which took place at my first visit, also came to the Saviour as a result of it.

Nor was I a loser, finally; for several Christians in the neighbourhood, having heard of the dying woman's conversion, came to me for treatment; so that God fully made up to me more than I feared I might lose.

He will be no man's debtor.

May I ask my readers, in conclusion, to be faithful to Him who has called us, and to remember what this calling means (1 Pet. 2. 21): "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."

We may be technical. We may like to see the order of divine service pursued in a certain way. We are strong upon these points. We may be rigid in ecclesiasticism. But what if we can go home and do a sneaking action? We may be critical. We may say the preacher's grammar was not very exact; his teaching at a low level. Up to that point we are noble men. But what if we oppress the hireling and lay a heavy hand on the weak? We are fond of traditions. We like to talk about those "dear old days of years ago;" and that "nice old Christian friend" that used to do so many beautiful things. We have a great reverence for these men and their way of doing things. But what if to-morrow morning we speak a savage word to a lonely creature, and drive into despair some soul that would be thankful for one ray of light? Let us beware lest we "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

Imagine a dark night, and an observer who has never seen the sun. A star suddenly shows itself, and the observer hails it with delight. Presently the moon shines with all her gentle strength, and the observer says, "This is the fulfilment of the promise; can aught be lovelier, can the sky possibly be brighter?" In due course the sun comes up; every cloud is filled with light; every mountain is crowned with a strange glory; every leaf in the forest is silvered; the sea becomes as burnished glass, and secrecy is chased from the face of the earth: under such a vision, the observer knows that this is the true light—the sovereign, all-dominating flame. It is so in the revelation of Jesus Christ. When the eyes of men are opened to see Him in all His grace and wisdom and sympathy—in all the sufficiency of His sacrifice and the comfort of His Spirit—the heart is satisfied, and every rival light is lost in the infinite splendour of God the Son.

Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching (1 Tim. 4. 16. *R.V.*).

Your life cannot be good if your teaching is bad. Doctrine lies at the basis of life. You may profess to believe a good many things, but, in reality, what you believe is the very substance and inspiration of your character.

Why we do not Pray for the Dead.

(H. P. BARKER).

[An answer to a Tract entitled "Why we Pray for the Dead,"
by an Anglican Clergyman.]

IN caring for their sheep, it sometimes becomes necessary for the shepherds to chase the wolf. In seeking the welfare of the beloved sheep of Christ this is often needful. There are many wolves: not only those which howl from without, but those who have gained an entrance into the circle that bears Christ's name and harass the flock from within. The Apostle predicted the coming of such in his memorable farewell address at Miletus:

"After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20. 29).

Never were there more "wolves" than in these latter days. Never was there greater need for vigilance on the part of the watchmen. And perhaps there is a danger, while guarding against attacks from without, of our ceasing to be on the alert against the wolves that are within.

Amongst these we must count the propagandists of ritualism, who, without being actual Papists, are diligently spreading the corrupt doctrines of Rome. As an instance of what we mean we will refer to a tract that has suggested the title of this article, and which has been sent us for review from a Yorkshire mining village, where it has been widely circulated. It is called "Why we Pray for the Dead," and is by a clergyman of the Anglican church in Canada.

If one notices this tract in detail one is but following apostolic precedent. The great Epistle to the Galatians had in view the exposure of error introduced among the churches of that province by ritualists from Judea.

We are thankful to observe that the writer, Canon Simpson, refers to the Scriptures as "God's Word." We are at one with him in recognizing the

divine nature of that holy book, the inspired Word of God, and in acknowledging it as the final court of appeal in all matters of faith. The Canon's admission of this is, however, heavily discounted by his sneer, on page 5, at any one who ventures to demand scriptural authority for the practice of praying for the departed. "We might reply," he says, "by demanding the scriptural authority for going to sleep at night and for waking up in the morning. It is not a matter for Scripture, but for common sense." So that in grave matters of this kind, fraught with such far-reaching consequences, where Scripture by its very silence is eloquent, it is to be ruled out of court as having no jurisdiction, and the final appeal made to common sense!

But, in spite of this, the writer of the tract cites certain scriptures in support of seven so-called "facts," which are supposed to prove that the souls of the departed should be prayed for. One does not wish to be discourteous, but it is difficult to refrain from expressing surprise at the amazing ignorance of the teaching of Scripture here displayed. Let us examine these "facts" and see if they deserve the name!

(1) First, we are told that "it is a fact that nowhere in God's Word are we told that the souls of the good go straight to heaven when they die." We suppose Canon Simpson would include the Apostle Paul among those he terms "the good," though he considered himself the chief of sinners. Did he not anticipate being "with Christ" when he departed this life? "*To be with Christ; which is far better,*" he says (Phil. 1. 23). And where is Christ? Let one passage suffice for an answer: "*Who is gone into heaven*" (1 Peter 3. 22). If Christ is in heaven, and those who die in Christ go, when in the dis-

embodied state, to be with Him, surely it is evident that the Word of God teaches the very thing that this writer denies.

But we are told that "our Lord declared to Nicodemus, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven.'" Here we have an Anglican clergyman taking the same ground as Mr. Russell, of "Millennial Dawn" notoriety, quoting the same scripture to prove the same thing. Both fail to notice the very illuminating context of the passage. The Lord is speaking of competence to bear witness of heavenly things. No man on earth was in a position to do this, save only Himself, for no man that could be summoned as a witness had ascended to heaven and come back to report its glories. He was the only One who could speak with authority on the subject.

This is most evidently the bearing of the passage. To make it mean, as this tract does, that no man has ever been taken to heaven would involve the direct contradiction of such a verse as 2 Kings 2. 11: "*Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*"

(2) We are next informed that "it is a fact that nowhere in God's Word are we told that the souls of the wicked go straight to hell." Canon Simpson has not explained in what sense he uses the word "hell." If he means the eternal lake of fire, then we agree with him, for none are cast therein until the great final judgment (except the two individuals mentioned in Revelation 19.). If he means the place of torment to which the souls of the wicked, while in the disembodied, "Hades" state, go, then it is sufficient to quote our Lord's words in Luke 16. 22, 23: "the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell [Hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments." No prayer can avail for such a soul, for between him and the place of the blessed there is a great gulf fixed.

(3) We pass over the author's third "fact" as to the beliefs of the Jews in our Lord's time with the remark that his view of Hades as a place seems to

underlie much of the confusion found in his tract. Hades simply means "the temporary state of departed spirits, the unseen world" (*Darby*), whether those in that state are in heaven with Christ or in the place of torment.

(4) The preaching to the spirits in prison is brought forward to prove that the Lord did not go to heaven when He died. It is said that He went after His death to preach. Scripture says He did this, by His Spirit, *in the days of Noah*. But it is freely granted that our Lord did not ascend to heaven while His body lay in the grave. His soul was in the Hades state (Acts 2. 31); in Paradise (Luke 23. 43).

But Canon Simpson refers to the fact that David had not ascended into the heavens (Acts 2. 34). But "if the context, and especially verse 29, be compared, it is plain that the question is of David's body, not of his soul" (*Kelly*). The verb is in the aorist. "Peter simply says, 'For David ascended not into the heavens;' and a consideration of the whole paragraph plainly shows that there is no intention either to affirm or deny anything respecting the soul's state. . . . There is in this passage no reference to the state or condition of the righteous after death" (*Burditt*, "Christian Annotator," Vol. I., page 287).

Reference is also made to the souls of the martyrs (Rev. 6. 9), and the tract says they were "not in the full glory of heaven, but 'under the altar.'" No one affirms, we should suppose, that any who die in the Lord have *the full glory of heaven*. For that they must wait till the resurrection day, when they will get their glorified bodies. But are not the souls seen in the vision at Patmos, "under the altar," in heaven? Revelation 4. 1 distinctly states: "*A door was opened in heaven.*" The scene is thenceforth laid in heaven. "*Behold, a throne was set IN HEAVEN, and One sat on the throne. . . . And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book . . . sealed with seven seals. . . . And when*

He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God" (Rev. 4. 2 ; 5. 1 ; 6. 9). Surely the Canon must have been much at a loss for a scripture to support his theory when he quotes such a one as this.

(5) Canon Simpson's fifth "fact" really is a fact, only it does not prove what he takes for granted that it does. He says : "It is a fact that our Lord whenever He spoke of future rewards : . . . always said that these would be given at the day of judgment, not at the hour of death." If by the "day of judgment" is meant the day when Christ's judgment-seat is set up, not for the wicked to be judged for their sins (which will take place at the great white throne), but for His servants to have their course reviewed, and rewarded or otherwise, we quite agree. Rewards are not given to the Christian when he dies, but in "that day." But heaven is not a reward!!! It is not given to us because of our faithfulness or good works. We are admitted to heaven solely because of the merits of our Saviour's atoning work, and it is the *grace* of God, apart from all deeds of ours, that thus blesses us. Rewards are a different matter, and are rather connected with the day of Christ's kingdom, when His saints will come with Him to reign and their place be apportioned to them according to their faithfulness (Luke 19. 16-20).

Passing by the remaining two "facts" as being merely repetitions, in other words, of what has gone before, we come to the heart of the matter, and here we find great and lamentable ignorance of the very foundation truths of the gospel. We read : "It must be admitted that the majority of people are far from perfect when they die. They may not deserve the everlasting punishments of hell, but they are certainly not fit for the presence of God."

This is strange language. Who are these people, not deserving to go to hell, yet unfit for God's presence? Where

are they to be found? What do they deserve? and what are they fit for?

Those who have received by faith the gospel of God's salvation will claim that both these qualifications are theirs! Heartily do we confess that we *do* deserve the punishments of hell. Our sins exposed us to that just penalty. If we had what we *deserve*, that would be our fate. But though this be so, we also claim with all confidence that we are made *perfectly* fit for God's presence.

Let me hasten to explain. We are not insane enough to suppose that our fitness depends on our personal perfection. If that were so, we should be in a sorry plight indeed. Conscious we ever are—and must be as long as we remain on earth—of our many imperfections. Yet so perfect in its results is the work our Saviour has done for us on the cross that in virtue thereof we have been made entirely fit for God's holy presence. "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin*" (1 John 1. 7). So that we can give "*thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*" (Col. 1. 12). Glorious truth! According to this verse we have not even to pray for this meetness. It is ours! We have to give thanks for it!

Of whom is this predicated? Not of everybody, but of those who have "faith in Christ Jesus" (ver. 3). Not that they were personally perfect. There were many defects in them, and they needed such elementary admonitions as "Put off . . . anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy" and "Lie not one to another." They were in danger of being seduced by ritualists who would fain have occupied them with matters of meat and drink, holy days and new moons, and various "ordinances" (chap. 2. 16, 20), yet, because of their faith in Christ, they were "saints" (chap. 1. 2). And this is true of every believer. We notice that Canon Simpson speaks of S. Mark, S. Luke, S. Peter, etc., but he does not speak of S. Abraham and S. Moses when he refers to

those men of God. But not only were they saints equally with the apostles and evangelists, but the humblest follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is one also.

"We must be perfect before we enter heaven," says the tract we are reviewing. Yes; but one cannot but wonder if its writer has read with any care the fourteenth verse of Hebrews 10. That one verse, rightly understood, is enough to overthrow the very foundations of ritualism.

The verse deals with "the sanctified." Who are they? A previous verse shall tell us: "By the which will *WE* are sanctified" (ver. 10). And who are the *WE*? "We . . . who have fled for refuge" (chap. 6. 18). We who "believe to the saving of the soul" (chap. 10. 39). It is affirmed of us Christians that *we are*, by God's will, sanctified. The statement is absolute and unqualified. It cannot therefore refer to what we are personally in ourselves, but the fact that we are *set apart* by God's gracious will and by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." We are sanctified in this sense.

The statement in verse 14 is equally absolute. It affirms the present and everlasting perfection of those thus set apart. "HATH perfected for ever" are the words. And this perfection is brought about not through any change in our character or conduct, but "by one offering," *i.e.* the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary.

Here, then, is the perfection that constitutes our fitness for heaven. Personally full of imperfections, we glory in the fact that a perfection which we could never, never attain to ourselves is ours through our Saviour's work. Could the years of Methuselah be ours, and could we spend them with the zeal of an apostle in the service of God, we could not reach personal perfection. *Nor by this means could we add one jot or tittle to the perfection that is ours already through the blood of Christ.*

Is personal perfection, then, an unimportant matter? Far from it. But

how can perfection be brought out of that which is imperfect? The flesh, our evil nature, contains no atom of good (Rom. 7. 18). The carnal mind *is*, in its very essence, enmity against God (Rom. 8. 7). Thank God, He gives us a new nature, and puts His Holy Spirit within us, but He does not eradicate the old. We are still liable to temptation and failure, and still have need of watchfulness and prayer.

What happens, then, at the death of a Christian? Canon Simpson asks: "Have we any reason to suppose that death works a moral miracle, and the act of gasping out the last breath transforms a sinner into a saint?" No; but in dying the Christian leaves behind him what has been the source of all his trouble, the irremediably corrupt flesh. Rid for ever of its disturbing presence, he passes into the presence of His Saviour with no fear of its ever intruding again. Delivered from the *penalty* of sin when he claimed the Saviour by faith as his own, delivered from its power by having that risen and glorified Saviour as his heart's object, he is at length delivered from its *very presence*, the last hindrance to his full enjoyment of the love that has saved him.

Again we are told in this tract: "The deeper your spirituality, the greater would be your sense of God's glory and your own unworthiness. Surely, no one but a presumptuous fool would attempt to rush into God's presence, even if his sins were forgiven." Assuredly it is good that we should ever cherish the thought of God's greatness and holiness and our own unworthiness, and thus have "reverence and godly fear." But what if we have learned that He is our *Father*, and that He loves us with a love infinite and eternal, that He has found a way whereby He may have us in His presence in full accordance with His holiness, and that He delights to have us near Himself? What then? Surely we shall not be slow to enter that holy presence for which the atoning blood of His Son has

made us perfectly fit. We shall draw near to God, conscious of the relationship in which He has been pleased to set us as sons to Himself. Taught by the Spirit of Sonship whom we have received, the cry of "Abba, Father," will be upon our lips, and we shall rejoice with unspeakable joy in that love which rests upon us even as it rests upon Christ (John 17. 23). Instead of it being presumptuous folly for such as we to approach God, we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10. 19).

What does the ritualist know of all this? By his ceremonies and ordinances, his fleshly order of priesthood and all connected with it, he is but erecting a barrier to keep God and man apart, so that He cannot be approached directly. How different is true Christianity, which teaches us that every barrier has been removed in the death of Christ, and that God can find His deep delight in having those whom He has made His beloved children near to Himself, to enjoy along with the Son of His love the place of sons and all the divine affection that belongs to that relationship!

And into the joy of all this the believer goes when he leaves the earth, though he does not get the full glory of it all till the day of "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8. 19). It is all implied in the words "with Christ." How different from the prospect which Canon Simpson holds out to the dying believer! He does not quite know *where* he will be when his spirit leaves his body, but he quotes with approval the hymn:

"Somewhere thou livest, and hast need of Him:
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb;
And somewhere still there may be valleys dim
That thou must pass, to reach the hill sublime!"

Dying Christian! do you hear? You are going off into *somewhere*; exactly where the Canon cannot tell you, but

probably into some "valleys dim" through which you must pass. This is all that the "gospel" of advanced ritualism can tell you!

But listen to the Word of God! You are going to be "with Christ." You have walked with Him on earth and have feasted on His love. Many a time your joy has been too great for words. But now your portion is to be "far better" (Phil. 1. 23). "Absent from the body," you will "be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8).

All that Canon Simpson says in his tract is with the object of persuading his readers that it is right and desirable to pray for our departed friends. Apparently not satisfied with his references to Scripture, he appeals to the custom of the first Christians. "*They all prayed for the departed*," he affirms. But on what conceivable basis does he found such an assertion. The truth is, praying for the dead was a corruption that found its way into the Church during the fourth century.

The best evidence as to the practice of the early Christians is afforded by the inscriptions in the catacombs at Rome, used by them as a burying-place. The inscriptions cover a period of some four centuries, and it is most noticeable that only among the later ones do we find any hint of such a practice as praying for the dead, in sentences like the following:

"Sweet Faustina, may you live in God."

"Bolosa, may God refresh thee."

"Zoticus, be of good cheer."

But even inscriptions of this kind (and it is extremely doubtful if they imply that prayers for the dead were customary) are entirely wanting among those of an early date. Among such we do not once find even the letters R.I.P. (*Requiescat in pace*—May he rest in peace); but such words as "In Peace," "Resting," "In Christ," "In the Home of the Eternal God," "He lives above the Stars."

So the appeal to early custom is as futile as the appeal to Scripture.

* * * * *

We do not wait for death. We wait for the coming of our Lord (1 Thess. 1. 10). But we sorrow not over our loved ones who sleep in Jesus as those who know not where they are. When the day for which we wait dawns at last,

they, with us, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (chap. 4. 17) and to subsequently share the glory of His kingdom. Meanwhile we rejoice to think of them as being in the serene calm of their Saviour's presence waiting with Him for the day of His advent, "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

Christian Worship.

(JAMES GREEN).

Is the Father to be the *exclusive* object of our worship in this Church period?

THE Father is undoubtedly the One to whom our worship should be addressed, but not to the *exclusion* of the Son. He is "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5). "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1. 19). Saluted as God, all the angels are called to worship Him (Heb. 1. 6, 8); all judgment is committed to Him "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 23). These scriptures will suffice to show that being equally God with the Father, worship is rightly addressed to Him also in this church period, as it will be in heaven, when all will own that He is worthy (Rev. 5. 9, 12).

We must not forget that while in the days of His flesh, He did not assume to Himself Divine honours, saying, "My Father is greater than I;" yet whenever faith in any one discovered that He was none other than "God with us," such fell at His feet in adoring worship (John 9. 38 and 20. 28). In incarnation and resurrection He was an object of worship, and rightly so, as He is now and will be in His future glory.

The Holy Ghost having taken the place of servant to the Father and the Son, does not set Himself forward as the object of worship, although equally worthy of it in the unity of the Godhead, but He has become the power of worship in the believer. So that worship is

addressed to God the Father, in the truth revealed in God the Son, and in spirit, through the power of God the Holy Ghost.

But this may well lead to the inquiry as to what worship is, and what is its true character in the present time? In the first place let it be noted that much service for God that is called worship is not so viewed in Scripture. Preaching the gospel, ministry of the Word, prayer for daily grace, or for the soul prosperity of others, these are things very precious in their place, but they are not worship. They may be used to produce it, and be the means, under God's hand, to the great end that He has in view, that the soul should know the blessedness of Himself. Worship is the overflow of the heart in the consciousness of infinite blessedness, giving its full homage and adoring reverence to the One who alone is worthy—that is God. He has revealed Himself in the Person of His Son, that His name of Father might be known to those brought near to Himself by redemption, and this gives its true character to their adoring praise.

Worship must take character from the manner in which God is pleased to reveal Himself. The thought that God was ALMIGHTY filled the souls of the Patriarchs, and to Him their simple altars were raised. As strangers and pilgrims they were dependent upon His

power for their journeying needs, and for the fulfilment of the magnificent promises made to them when as yet they possessed nothing. But when God revealed Himself as JEHOVAH, standing in definite covenant relation to the nation of Israel, in order to put them in possession of the land of Canaan, then a distinct character of worship was set forth. This consisted in the outward observance of ritual forms and ceremonies, typical in meaning and vested in a priesthood which formed a separate class from the rest of the people. This lapsed into a condition bereft of all moral value in God's sight (see Isa. 1. 10-15). The hearts of the people became corrupted from their true allegiance, and turned to yield their homage to other objects. Then was brought to light the great fact that heaven was God's throne and earth His footstool (Isa. 66. 1), and that He, the Most High, dwelt not in temples made with hands (Acts 7. 48), neither was worshipped by men's hands as though He needed anything (Acts 17. 25). Still for a time the order was acknowledged that God had ordained, but only until He came, who could speak of His body as being the one true temple (John 2. 21).

Now in the full revelation of God in Christ, worship has passed entirely from the material to the spiritual; and so distinct are these the one from the other, that any attempt to combine them only diverts the soul from true worship to matters of form and ceremony, devoid of life and meaning. For to set up the type when the reality has come, is to substitute shadow for substance; and to seek to worship God now by outward forms is to present that which has no value in His eyes, the adoration which flows from the affections of the heart in response to His love being that which He alone esteems.

In the Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria (John 4. 20-24). God's mind as to worship in the present time is unfolded. She thought to raise the question as to the relative importance of Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem as centres

of worship. Jerusalem had been such until she filled up the measure of her sin; now there was to be no earthly centre where God would manifest His more immediate presence. "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." These words reveal a character of worship not known before. They involve the revelation of the relationship of the Father and the Son, and that the right, through grace, to take the place of children in that relationship would be given to all who receive Him, even to those who believe in His name. Such are constituted the true worshippers: born by the sovereign act of God, a new generation, in which all being children, and all set in nearness to the Father, all knowing His name and adoring Him in that character, need no longer a separate order of representative priests, for all believers are of the one family of God. The Samaritan worship was ignorance; the earthly order belonged to the Jews, and salvation was of them. But now the hour was coming—the Lord could add "and now is"—for He was the first of that order of true worshippers whom the Father was seeking to worship Him in spirit and in truth; from His heart ever ascended the sweet odour of worship to God, in the relationship of Son of God; and He is now the Leader of the praises of a generation entirely of His own order, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren. (Heb. 2. 11).

God finds His deep joy in the blessing of His children, and as His purpose is to do so in the very highest way, so He seeks for the heart to be given to Him in responsive affection. True Christian worship then is the delight of the soul in all that God is, revealed and known as Father in the consciousness of being before Him in Christ risen and glorified.

The place of worship is entirely heavenly, and the worshippers heavenly too. Not a people on earth looking up to heaven and addressing God as their heavenly Father (although this may have its place in respect of daily needs),

but as those who *in spirit* are beyond death, in a heavenly position in Christ, knowing His God as their God, His Father as their Father. It is the condition of the relationship, that it is Christ's own, which gives its peculiar character to the worship, for we have received the Spirit of Sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Holy Ghost being the power of this, the worship is therefore in spirit and in truth.

But then the subject of worship is the presentation to the Father of the perfections of Christ, Divine as well as human, and hence He also is worshipped, for in the sharing of the Father's thoughts of the Son, and the Son's thoughts of the Father, the soul learns only to adore.

The consideration of this must produce exercise of soul, lest there be great poverty of worship on the part of His people ; for if the heart has gathered up but little of all that Christ is, in the worth of His Person and work, there will be scanty material for the spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ; the offering up of which is the happy occupation of the holy priesthood. So also if there is anything that is grieving or quenching the Spirit in the life, ways or associations, worship will be correspondingly hindered.

"God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." There is now no other worship ; the "must" is emphatic and exclusive of all else. So in Philippians 3. 3 the Apostle says, "we are the circumcision," those who have no standing before God in connection with Adam ; "which worship God in the Spirit," the word for worship here

signifying the yielding of the whole being to Him in willing priestly service, by the Holy Ghost ; "and have no confidence in the flesh" nothing to present to Him that could attach credit to ourselves, or be worthy of His acceptance.

Blessed occupation indeed to be joying in God ; not only thanksgiving for what He has given to us, not only praise for the bounty of His grace, but filled with the blessedness of what He is, revealed in love. It is individually that this must be first known, but the highest joy of worship possible to us now is when gathered to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself in the midst, He leads the song to His God and Father. The remembrance of how He has gone down to death calls forth the deepest adoration of all hearts, and rises in highest notes to the Father, whose unfathomable love has been unfolded in the gift of His own beloved Son. No heart can take in all the blessedness of God ; it needs the whole body, the assembly, and the greatness of its glorious Head, to render Him worthy homage. Therefore the fullness of worship will only be realized when in glory He shall present the many sons to the Father, all the counsel of His will effected, and every heart knowing as it is known. Then "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22. 3), they shall render Him priestly service (same word as in Phil. 3. 3) ; "they shall see His face," nothing to hinder the full appreciation of all the glorious revelation of Himself ; "and His name is in their foreheads," the blessedness of the relationship in which they stand shall be manifest, in that they are conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren.

Though the everlasting mountains
 And the earth itself remove,
 Nought can change His "lovingkindness"
 Or His "everlasting love."

Steadfastness.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

STEADFASTNESS is one of the most prominent characteristics of vital Christianity. It was first manifested in the Lord, for when the time was come that He should be offered up, He *steadfastly* set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9. 51). When He parted from His disciples and a cloud received Him out of their sight, they looked *steadfastly* toward heaven (Acts 1. 10). He had been their Comforter and stay while on earth, and now that He had gone it is no wonder that they became engrossed with the glory which had enveloped Him. Then those who gladly received the Apostle's word, continued *steadfastly* in the Apostle's doctrine, in fellowship, "in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 42).

When Stephen was confronted by his supreme test he looked steadfastly into heaven and saw Jesus there and the glory of God (Acts 7. 55). It was this that made Him so triumphantly like His Master.

The disciples could not see through to the highest place in heaven, for the Holy Spirit had not descended, and Israel had yet to have the test of His witness to Christ's glory. To Stephen, however, the heavens were opened right through, and he, full of the Holy Ghost,

was able to behold of the glory of God and Jesus. Stephen did not have this experience because he was better than others. His experience was simply a pattern of that which may be the portion, morally, of every believer in this Church period. The heavens are opened right through and we "see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9). If our affections are fixed on the One who is the centre of the glory of God, we shall be transformed into the same image and we shall continue steadily to give expression to what Christ is here below,

"And, filled with Thee, the *constant* mind Eternally is blest."

It will be readily admitted that there is nothing we lack so much as steadfast continuance. It will also be readily admitted that there was never a day in which steadfastness was so much needed. From time to time we get our hearts opened by touches from the glory, and it is a blessed thing that we get these touches, otherwise our Christianity would be very tame and commonplace. In response to divine impulses we make spiritual progress, but if our souls do not remain in steadfast contact with the Lord to whom these impulses move us we gradually sink under the deadening influences of the world.

"A Christian who has heaven before him and a Saviour in glory as the object of his affections will walk well upon the earth; he who has only the earthly path for his rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it; he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently, will glorify Him and make Him known in the world. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive *above* our path to be able to walk in it."—J.N.D.

The wise deep-sea fisherman when he has taken his catch keeps his sail set, and the bow of his boat pointing to port, even though he feels no wind on the deck where he stands, for, notwithstanding that he does not feel it, there may be wind a little higher up, and in the morning he often finds himself nearer home than he thought. The Christian must be like the fisherman, always ready for the heavenly breezes and ever turned towards the looked-for port.

Incidents and Illustrations.

(EDITOR).

IT PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

WE were talking together, a young man in deep soul trouble and I, and I quoted to him the wonderful words from Isaiah 53: "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." He said, "I haven't cared anything about Him, I've thought a great deal more about — (mentioning the name of a public man) than I have about Jesus, and I *can't understand why He should have been so interested in me as to die for me.*" I had to tell him that this was outside the range of our understanding entirely, and so the Scripture spoke of it as "*the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*" That helped him, and he believed what he could not understand.

THE POWER OF SIN.

I heard a story the other day, a story that is told at the hearth-stone of the Boer homesteads. It ran as follows: A certain part of the South African veldt is said to be haunted by a strange demon from whose power some have barely escaped with their lives, and others have actually fallen victims to its malignity. A horseman rode, as the daylight declined, through the haunted area, when he heard what seemed to be a child's cry. He reined in his horse and saw in the dim light a small child lying by the bridle-road. It looked so helpless and yet so attractive that he dismounted and taking it in his arms placed it in his saddle and rode on. As he travelled homeward, he was alarmed to find that this thing that he had taken to his heart, began to grow, nor could he cast it off; it grew and grew until at last with the hands of a giant it seized him at the throat and strangled him.

A strange story and altogether incredible to our less romantic minds,

and yet tragedies, which this story does but faintly figure, are being enacted a thousand times over and that daily, and not in one part of the world only but wherever men are found.

SIN appears small, a little thing, and so attractive, men take it to their bosoms, youths and maidens embrace it and hug it to their hearts, and it grows in strength, imperceptibly at first, perhaps. Yet it grows and grows, until at last with a vice-like grip it holds its victims and strangles their souls. It is the smiling child at the start, it is the giant at the end, binding its dupes with thongs of steel when they would escape from its power, and casting them down at last to everlasting destruction.

There is one Deliverer from its power, and one only. His Name is JESUS. "He shall save His people from their sins."

WHY WE SHOULD SING.

"I have walked up and down my house many a time and wept because I do not belong to Jesus." I rejoiced as I heard those words from the lips of one who had many earthly things to make her happy. I rejoiced because I knew that her tears proved that she longed to know the Saviour, and He always satisfies the longing soul. He did it for her that very day. But I reasoned about it afterwards in this way: If one wept because she did not belong to Jesus, how much those ought to rejoice who do; if one sorrowed because she did not know His saving grace, what songs of thanksgiving should ring through the homes of those who do. No wonder that we are exhorted to speak to ourselves "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

If in spiritual health we shall be doing this, for the magnificence of the blessing of belonging to the Lord and being loved by Him is beyond all human thought.

trines of free grace, the Deity of Christ, the atoning blood shed for guilty men, and the glorious resurrection of the crucified Saviour are not compatible with their pride and they cannot away with them.

THE WAY OF THE CRITICS.

Textile experts have a process by which they can discover the amount of cotton woven into a piece of cloth. A sample of it is taken and boiled with a solution of caustic soda, the animal fibre (the wool) is all destroyed thereby, leaving a skeleton of vegetable fibre (the cotton) behind.

So they submit God's Revelation to their own criticism and tests, destroying these great verities which glorify God and make nothing of men—only for themselves be it said, for the truth of God is indestructible, it liveth and abideth for ever. But for themselves they make the word of God of none effect by their impious criticisms of it ; and refusing that which would be as a covering for them for ever, they clothe themselves in the cotton skeleton of *their own conception of Christian ethics.*

There are those who cannot bear the whole web of Divine truth. They would like to take its ethical teachings according to their own notions of them, and clothe themselves with these, for they imagine that, because of their moral excellence, they may by them make themselves more satisfactory to themselves and others, and so increase their self-complacency. But the doc-

What dismay will fill them, poor, proud critics of Almighty God, when they discover, in the day of God's judgment, that their boasted garment is a thread skeleton indeed, and cannot cover their unwashed and naked souls.

GRACE AND ITS EFFECTS.

Grace divine makes gracious men. The grace-saved sinner works out the salvation that has been wrought in him. He is the Saviour's willing bond-slave. He cannot be content with triumphing in Christ's grace ; he must grace His triumph too. It is with him as it is with the inhabitants of the City of Bath, who record their appreciation of its healing waters on a tablet inscribed as follows :

Their volume unabated ; they explain the origin,
Account for the progress, and demand the gratitude
Of the City of Bath."

"These healing waters have flowed on
from time immemorial
Their virtue unimpaired, their heat un-
diminished,

The analogy is nearly perfect. God's grace may well be likened to flowing waters, to streams hot and health-giving, to streams that never cool or fail. Moreover "they account for our origin and progress," that is, we owe our spiritual being and well-being to them. And as for demanding gratitude—well, "streams of mercy never ceasing call for songs of loudest praise." (*Surgeon.*)

God never moves a man to say,
"Thank God I am so good ;"
But turns his eye another way—
To Jesus and His blood.

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart.

(EDWARD CROSS).

MAN'S heart naturally throws the blame on God. "I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." It is the inset of an evil nature, unbelieving and rebellious, common to all ages since the fall. Many pleas are offered to justify this evil spirit, for man claims the right of resistance to the will of God. But it is all in vain, for God is sovereign. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4. 35). And seeing this is so, how happy it is for us to be assured that His will is only and always good.

Scripture tells us that "He has no pleasure in the death (even) of the wicked" (Ezek. 33. 11); that "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9); that He wills that all should be saved, and that therefore Christ gave Himself a ransom, and died for all (2 Cor. 5. 14; 1 Tim. 2. 3-5). These and similar Scriptures sufficiently attest that no one can lay the blame of his damnation on the mere arbitrariness of the will of God. His pleadings and beseechings, both in the O.T. (Ezek. 18. 23, 32), and in the N.T. (2 Cor. 5. 20), disprove the thought, and show incontrovertibly that He is pure of the judgment, which the ungodly provoke against themselves. Yet, this being so, it is also true that He will maintain His majesty, and the authority of His Word: and woe be to him who sets himself defiantly in opposition to His will. Truly it might be said: "Good for that man if he had never been born." And there is no inconsistency between these great principles: the rather must they be regarded as handmaidens of the truth.

But while we start with this, there are, unquestionably, passages in Scripture

which present difficulties to many minds, as they seem to imply an arbitrary harshness on God's part, contradictory to the goodness and righteousness of character in which we like to think of Him, and in which the gospel sets Him forth before us. But such thoughts have no just foundation, as they arise from our own ignorance and incompetency rightly to interpret His acts.

This question is boldly faced and fully explained by the Apostle (Rom. 9. 13), where he quotes from Malachi 1. 2, 3, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," a passage which puts the matter in its most uncompromising light. Is, then, God to be charged with unrighteousness? God forbid. There can be no unrighteousness with Him. Let that be postulated, spite of all appearances to the contrary. Then, how account for the fact that He has mercy and compassion for whom He wills, and as He wills? while, as regards Pharaoh, He says: "And for this purpose I have raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee?" But, first, has He not power and right, as the potter over the clay, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, as it pleases Him? And, secondly, is it in unrighteousness that "He has mercy on whom He wills to have mercy, and whom He wills to harden He hardens?" Let us look a little more closely into the meaning of this latter term, as illustrated in the history of Pharaoh.

The charge of unrighteousness has been often adduced from the way in which the Lord dealt with him; and where it has not been openly preferred, it has, nevertheless, created honest difficulty in many minds. But since it is to the book of Exodus, indited by the Spirit of God, that we owe all we know about this story we may at once dismiss from our minds the idea of unrighteousness, in the record thus handed down to us.

Turning now to the book itself.

Exodus 1. The Pharaoh of Genesis was a different type of man from the Pharaoh here. The former was a helper of the people of God towards the position they will yet occupy under Christ, of whom Joseph was a type, in the coming age of glory. The Pharaoh here is the opposer of God's right over His people, a figure of the god of this world, holding captive the people for his own ends.

Chapter 2 records the birth of Moses, their deliverer to be.

Chapter 3 describes their affliction and oppression; and also the commission given to Moses to deliver them. And now note, verse 19, what God says at the outset: "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand." This precedes all that we read afterwards about His hardening Pharaoh's heart, and explains at once the meaning of that expression. It is often regarded as an arbitrary act of God towards Pharaoh, compelling him to a resistance, the blame of which is thus thrown entirely upon God. This is alike a slander of the enemy, and contrary to the story as recorded in Scripture.

In chapter 4. 21 we read, for the first time, that God says: "But I will harden his heart." As we have seen, the Lord knew from the beginning what was in his heart, and it comes out very plainly on the first appeal made to him by Moses to let Israel go. "Who is the Lord," he says, "that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exod. 5. 2). And it is on this ground exactly that the Lord treats him from the beginning of this great, and long-drawn-out controversy (Exod. 4. 21), right on to the end (Exod. 14. 4, 8, 17).

Three times the A.V. says, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart" (chap. 4. 21; 10. 20, 27). In all these cases the original is "and," as in chapters 7. 3, 13; 9. 12; 11. 10; 14. 4, 8, 17.

The adversative particle "but" represents an inference too oppositious, and tends to create in the mind of the reader, as possibly it existed in the mind of the translator, the idea that Pharaoh's hardness of heart was to be attributed to the compulsory action of God on him. But such is not at all the meaning of the expression.

Scripture affords us abundant proof that in the governmental ways of God with man, He deals with him as He finds him. Thus the Psalmist says: "I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight. With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; With the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward" (Ps. 18. 23-26). This is a most important principle, and it runs throughout Scripture. It is quite another thing from the idea of God's first making a man wicked and then punishing him because he is so. Moreover, the Scripture itself, as we shall see, leaves no doubt on the matter.

According to the A.V. the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed to the Lord ten times; and eight times Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart. Also in Joshua 11. 20 we read: "it was of the Lord to harden their hearts"—of their enemies.

Now the meaning of these words, in the form in which we find them in these passages will be best understood by a comparison with a similar form of word in Leviticus 13. 3, 6, etc., the priest shall pronounce him clean, or unclean. It is evident here that the priest in no-wise *makes* him either clean or unclean. He merely pronounces on the man's state as he appears before him, and he *treats him accordingly*. There is no word for "pronounce" in the original; but it is involved in the *form* of the words which, literally translated, would be,

“he cleans him,” or, “he uncleans, him” by his priestly judgment, *i.e.* the man is what he is, and he is treated accordingly. This is contained in the form of the word; and in a similar way, the words used in respect of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart represent a similar idea. It is not said that the Lord *made* Pharaoh anything; but finding him what he was He treated him accordingly.

The same form of words is found in Isaiah 6. 10: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” Here the command seems definite, and, reading on the surface, we might gather that they were not in that state before, until the judgment passed on them by the prophet. But that such is not the meaning of the passage we learn from the Lord Himself (Matt. 13. 13-15), where He says: “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” Here the whole responsibility of their state, and the judgment consequent thereon, is thrown on the people themselves, as their own doing, whatever hasty deductions we might draw from a superficial reading of Isaiah 6. 10. And again in Acts 28. 25, etc., we find the Apostle commenting on this same Scripture in precisely the same words as those used by the Lord in the Gospel.

Now all this is conveyed in the form of the original, and must be borne in

mind in the interpretation of these and similar Scriptures, and in the light of it we can better understand the argument of the Apostle in Romans 9. Moreover, the inspired reference to the Lord’s “righteousnesses,” from Egypt to Gilgal (Micah 6. 4, 5), precludes the idea of unrighteousness on His part, even against His enemies.

The following remarks from the “Bible Students’ Guide,” by Dr. Wilson, will interest the reader:—“Chasag. This word is used of the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, and implies his strengthening himself against all fear and alarm, stoutly resisting the warnings and motives urged upon him, and the terrors of God’s judgments, *cf.* Psalm 95. 8. It is in ‘Piel’ that this word is used of God’s hardening his heart, when He left him to his own obstinacy and rebellion, and withdrew that favour or benevolence by which alone he might have been brought to relent.”

On the Hebrew forms of the words in reference to the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, Prof. Lee remarks, in his “Hebrew Grammar”: “Another property of this form is the *becoming*, either in *reality*, or in *estimation* only, that which the primitive word signifies; as, he *became*, or *was adopted* as the firstborn. Under this head may be placed those cases in which is intimated a *Declaration, Announcement, Accusation*, etc., of what the primitive word signifies; as *pronouncing*, or *accusing* another of being clean, or unclean. Of this kind are, “call me blessed” (Gen. 30. 13), *i.e.* “they shall declare that I am blessed.” The same may be said in all those passages, given in this form, in which God is said to have hardened Pharaoh’s heart.”

And again to the property of *exhibiting, declaring, esteeming*, is to be “inferred all those passages in ‘Hiphil,’ wherein God is said to have hardened the heart, blinded the eyes, deceived the people, etc.—where nothing more than declaring this to be the case can be meant.”

The Revolt against Authority.

(W. B. WESTCOTT).

THERE is no feature of the present day more striking or arresting than the attempt to overthrow Authority.

Monarchies that have stood the test of hundreds of years disappear in as many hours. The autocrat whose nod has fixed men's destinies is ruthlessly removed from his gilded throne and becomes the puppet of his former slaves. No person, no place, no hoary system is held sacred. In the name of Progress what is old is false and what is new is true. The engine of democracy long since began to batter at the structure of old-time Constitutions, and demolition is now almost complete.

Our own land of Britain has been by no means exempt from the spirit to which we have referred. Gradually, and now more rapidly, gathering momentum in its steep descent, the democratic movement is sweeping all before it. "The working man," "the people," "the man in the street," "Labour"—these are the watchwords of the party that bids fair to swallow up all other parties.

Along with this is heard the frenzied outcry of frantic females for "The Vote," leading some of the maddest of them to resort to tactics that would have made the women of the "Commune" blush.

The cause of this condition of upheaval lies beneath the surface of things visible. The mind of man is naturally lawless, and the pride of his heart makes him intolerant of control.

At the same time it is obvious from the teaching of Scripture that men are unwittingly under the domination of the prince and god of this world, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2. 2).

The aim of Satan, using men as his instrument, has always been to over-

throw Divine authority, and when the hindrance ("he who now letteth") is removed, he will throw off his mask for the time allowed to him, and men will become his willing dupes (2 Thess. 2).

In the present day there is a strong restraining element, but the trend of things is strongly in the direction above indicated, and the problems of the hour are, beyond all question, serious enough.

Yet the cure for "strikes" and "labour troubles" is as simple as it is profound. Remove the cause and the effect will naturally disappear. The only possible hope lies in the practical application of the truths of Christianity to masters and men, to employers and employed. The gospel is an old-time remedy, but it has never yet been tested and found wanting. The Epistle to Philemon contains no profound teaching or subtle argument, but the spirit that breathes from first to last in it would speedily put an end to oppression and to strikes.

The Christian master is appealed to by "Paul the Aged" on behalf of the runaway slave Onesimus, and is exhorted to receive him "as a brother beloved" since both master and servant have the faith of Christ.

If the gospel were generally accepted and all classes came under the influence of Christ the most beautiful harmony would prevail. Employers would consider the welfare of the men and promote their interests, mingling with them as "brethren" and maintaining authority in grace, while the men—not taking advantage of a "believing master,"—would do their work willingly, in the fear of God and in submission to their Master—Christ.

Granted that this is an ideal and impossible state of things, men being what they are, it must at the same time be admitted that *there is no other cure*. The breach will widen, unrest will

increase, and things generally go from bad to worse because men will persist in relying upon human devices and "statesmanship" instead of submitting to God's remedy.

Turning for a moment to a narrower circle, it must be admitted that the secret of much that is causing such heart-searching to thoughtful men to-day is to be found in the absence of proper discipline *in the home*. The writer has it on the authority of an able Inspector of Police that the great problem of the hour is the lawless behaviour of young people of both sexes between the ages of fourteen and twenty. In any of our large towns they may be seen parading the streets and lanes until a late hour, and the question naturally arises—What of the parents who allow their children such unpardonable licence?

The fact is—and it is useless to deny it—that *parental control* is appallingly deficient. The young people in numberless instances are allowed to wander where they please, and naturally take full advantage of their liberty.

To make the home an institution for the suppression of nature and high spirits is a deplorable mistake, as many parents have discovered, but of the two evils the allowance of unchecked liberty is probably the worse.

More serious than all the foregoing, and at the root of many troubles, is the subtle attempt to undermine the authority of the Word of God. At one time—not far removed from the present—an appeal to the sacred page of Holy Scripture was sufficient at least to command the reverent attention of all who professed the name of Christ. Now, it is undeniable that, with the majority, the Bible has lost this honourable place: it is no longer regarded as authoritative or infallible, and hence the mind of man can range unchecked over the fields of human speculation. The old-time "Thus saith the Lord"

is seldom the basis of a discourse from the pulpit: the preacher's opinion usurps the place of Divine revelation, and who shall decide when preachers disagree?

The Christian who understands these things will be on his guard. It is no part of his business to "reform" the world, even if he saw clearly how it could be done. He is to be a light, a witness, a well-doer to the world, while maintaining separation from it. Like his Master, who went about doing good, he will not mingle in its pursuits, or identify himself with its politics.

This is a difficult position to assume, having regard to the federations, trade unions, and organizations of various kinds for the assertion of men's rights and the airing of their grievances. The cry of "down tools" on the most slender pretext is becoming increasingly common: as witness a recent railway strike, promoted upon grounds which no unbiassed person could possibly support. The working-man who holds aloof is an object of suspicion, and the deadly weapon of the boycott is mercilessly used against him.

At such a time the Christian must be wholly cast upon God as to what course he should take, and it is no part of our purport in writing thus to suggest in detail what he should do. "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of GOD."

Taking a broader view of the matter, the instructions to the Christian in everyday life in this time of unrest are clear and precise enough:—

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all.

Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King " (1 Pet. 2. 13-17).

There is no room for misunderstanding here, nor is it a question of the character of those whom we are called upon to "honour," for the king at the time of Peter's writing was probably the notorious Nero. It is clearly the office that is to be respected; or rather, perhaps, the man for the sake of his office. The thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans enlarges upon this important principle, and will well repay the most careful study.

The powers that be—apart altogether from their personal character—are God's ministers, ordained by him for the punishment of evil-doers and the maintenance of law and order.

The Christian, therefore, should be at all times loyal and law-abiding, the first to show respect to authority in the person of rulers and magistrates. In these days of radicalism, when "Jack is as good as his master," even the common courtesies of life are often disregarded, but the Christian must never forget or overlook them.

The bearing of the Apostle Paul is very noticeable in this connection. In his defence before the council at Jerusalem he speaks hastily to the High Priest—under great provocation—not knowing who he was, but on this being pointed out to him, he at once retracts on the ground that it was written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy people." His bearing, also, before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa was a model of Christian courtesy and true nobility. As an instance of it, when Festus exclaims with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad," the reply from the prisoner comes at once: "I am not mad, *most noble Festus,*" ungrudgingly giving him the

title properly belonging to a Roman governor.

As to these and all other problems of the day, the authority of Scripture must be absolute. The only alternative is to be left in the bewilderment caused by a thousand varying opinions. In the latter case how can we reach finality?

It is a notable fact that the devout believer, well versed in—and obedient to—the Word of God, is more reliable in his judgment of men and events than many another intellectually his superior, who relies upon his own ability.

In this connection the Psalmist boldly says: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation" (Ps. 119. 99).

It only remains now to be stated that every power and dignity will presently be subordinated to *GOD'S AUTOCRAT*, the Man, Christ Jesus. It is right that all authority should be vested in a single man, but there is only One who is equal to the task. Every problem that baffles the statesman of to-day will be solved with ease by Him: all wrong will be put right, all misrule swept away, the cruel oppressors of their fellow-men will be taken in hand by the Judge of all the earth. What does the Preacher say? (Eccles. 5. 8). "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is *higher than the highest* regardeth."

When Christ has His rights, it will be time for us to claim ours: in the meantime He has left us an example that we should "follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; *but committed Himself to him that judgeth righteously.*"

Gleanings from the Past.—No. 2.

Extracts from a Treatise concerning **MEDITATION**, by Thomas Watson
(d. 1686).

MEDITATION is the soul's retiring of itself, that by thinking upon God the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections. . . .

The World spoils Meditation. The world spoils meditation; Christ went "apart" into the mountain to pray (Matt. 14. 23). So, go apart when you are to meditate; "Isaac went out to meditate in the field" (Gen. 24. 63); he sequestered and retired himself, that he might take a walk with God by meditation.

Meditation and study differ. . . . Study is the work of the brain, meditation of the heart; study sets the invention on work, meditation sets the affection on work. Study is like a winter's sun that hath little warmth and influence; meditation leaves one in an holy frame; it melts the heart when it is frozen, and makes it drop into tears of love.

The best time to converse with God is before worldly occasions stand knocking at the door to be let in: the morning is, as it were, the cream of the day; let the cream be taken off, and let God have it.

David was with God before the break of day (Ps. 119. 147). "I prevented the dawning of the day." . . .

Wind up thy heart towards heaven in the beginning of the day, and it will go the better all the day. . . .

He that loseth his heart in the morning in the world, will hardly find it again all the day. . . .

Oh Christian! let God have your morning meditations. . . . He takes it in disdain to have the world served before him. Suppose a king and a yeoman were to dine in the same room,

and to sit at two tables; if the yeoman have his meat brought up and be served first, the king might take it in high disdain, and look upon it as a contempt done to his person. When the world shall be served first, all our morning thoughts attending it, and the Lord shall be put off with the dregs of the day, is not this a contempt done to the glory of God? . . .

Read before you meditate: "Give attendance to reading" (1 Tim. 4. 13).

Then it follows: "meditate upon these things" **Reading is necessary.** (ver. 15). Reading doth furnish with matter; it is the oil that feeds the lamp of meditation. Be sure your meditation is grounded upon Scripture . . . that you may say "It is written." . . . Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is dangerous.

We had being in God's thoughts before we had a being; He thought upon us "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1. 4). **We were Early in God's Thoughts.** Before we fell, He was thinking how to raise us. We had the morning of His thoughts. . . . If we have some of God's first thoughts, well may He have our first thoughts. . . .

"In the morning" the dew fell (Exod. 16. 13). The dew of a blessing falls early; then are we likeliest to have God's company. If you would meet with a friend, you go betimes in the morning before he be gone out.

I would not by this wholly exclude evening meditation. Isaac went out to meditate in the eventide (Gen. 24. 63). **Evening Meditation.** When business is over, and everything calm, it is good to take a turn with God in the evening.

God has his evening sacrifice as well as his morning (Exod. 29. 39). As the cream at the top is sweet, so the sugar at the bottom.

Meditation is an excellent means to profit by the Word: reading may bring a truth into the head, meditation brings it into the heart; better meditate on one sermon than hear five.

There is a disease in children called the rickets, when they have great heads, but their lower parts are small and thrive not. I **The Danger of Truth in the Head only.** fear many professors have the spiritual rickets: they have great heads, much knowledge, but yet they thrive not in godliness; their heart is faint, their feet feeble, they walk not vigorously in the ways of God; and the cause of this disease is the want of meditation. Illumination without meditation makes us no better than the devils. Satan is an angel of light, yet black enough.

Meditation is the bellows of the affections. . . . We light affection at the fire of meditation, **Meditation Stirs the Heart.** "While I was musing the fire burned" (Ps. 39. 3). Illumination makes us shining lamps, meditation makes us burning lamps. . . . When David had meditated on God's law, he could not choose but love it. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119. 97).

Meditation fits for prayer. . . . "I muse on the works of Thy hands: I

stretch forth my hands unto Thee" (Ps. 143. 5, 6). The musing of his head made way for the stretching forth of his hands in prayer. . . . Prayer is the child of meditation: meditation leads the van, and prayer brings up the rear.

Meditate not on too many things at once. . . . One truth driven home by meditation will most kindly affect the heart. **One at a Time.** Drive but one wedge of meditation at a time, but be sure you drive it home to the heart. Those who aim at a whole flock of birds hit none.

Let meditation be reduced to practice: live over your meditation. "Thou shalt meditate [in this book], **Reduce the Truth to Practice.** that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein" (Josh. 1. 8). They who meditate on God's law and observe not to do . . . are no better than the devil; he knows much, but still he is the devil.

The devil is an enemy to meditation; he cares not how much people read and hear, nor how *little* they meditate; he knows that **The Devil hates Meditation.** meditation is a means to compose the heart, and bring it into a gracious frame. Now the devil is against that; Satan is content that you should be hearing Christians, so that ye be not meditating Christians. He can stand your small shot, provided you do not put in this bullet.

(Selected by Hamilton Smith.)

As for God, his way is perfect (Ps. 18. 30).

Mere common sense ought to tell us that He whose "way is perfect" can make no mistakes; that He who has promised to "perfect that which concerneth" us, must know better than we the way to forward our truest interests and to glorify His own name.—*J. Hudson Taylor.*

Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us . . . and He will deliver us (Dan. 3. 17).

The joys of victory are not greater than the joys of faith—a faith that rests and delights itself in the living God, and glories in Him as much before the conflict has begun as it rejoices in Him when the victory is achieved.—*J. Hudson Taylor.*

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 2.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

TO readers of the Revised Version it will be familiar that the Psalms are divided into five books. The author of this arrangement, and of the order in which the individual psalms are found, is not known, although the name of Ezra, so frequently called "the Scribe," is with some reason connected with it. It is certain, however, that the old Greek version, known as the Septuagint, as well as the Peshito-Syriac, contain the Psalms in the order in which we have them now in the Hebrew MSS. That this order is not historical, but of the Spirit of God is also certain. Evidence of this will be given as we proceed. To the writer it is one of the greater wonders of inspiration that this collection of songs, the dates of whose composition extend from the time of Moses (Ps. 90.) to the captivity (Ps. 137.) should come to us in an order which authenticates itself as of Divine origin.

Jewish Rabbis have called these five books "the Pentateuch of David," and there seems undoubtedly to be an analogy between them and the Pentateuch of Moses. They all testify to the sufferings and the subsequent glories of Christ, but each has its own way of presenting the circumstances of the faithful, with whom Christ associates Himself in grace, and for whose experiences the Spirit of Christ provides a suitable utterance in the Psalms.

FIRST BOOK

As Genesis is the seed plot of the whole Bible, so the first Book of Psalms (1.-41.) is the foundation of all the rest, and contains a more full and detailed presentation of Christ than any of the other four. He is seen in Psalm 2. as King in Zion, and in Psalm 8. as Head over all things, according to Divine purpose, while in Psalm 16. He is viewed as the dependent Man, taking His place with the saints, "the excellent of the earth," and walking before Jehovah in obedience, as in the next Psalm, and in righteousness. Thus He defines the pathway for all those of whom it could be written long ages after: "these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Indeed, these so characterized in Revelations 14. are probably the saints of the first book of Psalms, viewed

in the place of victory and triumph in association with the Lamb, their testimony in suffering ended. Then Psalm 22. shows the foundation of all blessing for Israel, as for all the families of the redeemed, in the atoning work of Calvary; while in Psalm 24. which celebrates the earth and its fullness as belonging to Jehovah, He Himself is seen entering His own Holy Place as the God of Sabaoth mighty in battle (*cf.* Isa. 63. ; Ezek. 43. 1, etc., and 44. 2). In this Psalm, the last of a series of nine, we reach the glorious climax of the reunion of Jehovah and His people, as in the last verses of Ezekiel and Joel. Psalms 40. and 41. conclude the book. In the former, Christ, at the close of His life of *perfect* service, takes on Himself the sins of His people in order to put them away. The righteousness of God having been thus vindicated, He leads in singing the new song, praise to our God (ver. 3), and in the next Psalm the result is seen in perpetuity of blessing: "as for me, Thou upholdest me in my integrity, and settest me before Thy face for ever" (ver. 12). A suited doxology concludes the book, which may be summarized as revealing the Messiah, through whom God's purposes for Israel and the world (Ps. 8.) are to be brought to pass, joining Himself in grace to the faithful in Israel, during the time of their oppression in the Land, and laying the foundation in righteousness for their association with Him in blessing.

SECOND BOOK

The second book (Ps. 42.-72.) is much simpler in character. It gives the bringing out of the people of God, after the pattern of Exodus, from an oppressed and outcast condition (42.-44.) into union with the victorious King (45.). The prayer of Psalm 43. 3, is thus answered, and blessing flows freely (46.-48.). But this deliverance must be wrought more deeply in the souls of the faithful. Accordingly, in Psalm 51. 14, they are seen seeking to escape the penalty of blood-guiltiness, and passing through deep waters of affliction, with various encouragements till Psalm 68. is reached. In the triumphant strain of this the climax is found in verse 18 (cited in Eph. 4.), which describes the ascension of One who, as Man, receives gifts for

men* so that in result "Jah Elohim may dwell among them." The book closes with the sufferings and glories of Christ (Ps. 69. and 72.). The sufferings are specially at the hand of enemies (vers. 4, 18, 19, 21), the glories are those of the earthly kingdom, of which Solomon's reign was the type. Here the prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended (*cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 4, 5). The second book may be summarized as giving the restoration of the remnant, now suffering under Divine government, on account of their sins, into the favour and blessing of association with Messiah, who is in person Jah Elohim (68. 18).

THIRD BOOK

The subject of the third book (Ps. 73.-89.) is found in its first Psalm, the opening statement of which, "truly God is good to Israel, to the pure in heart," might seem to be belied by the direful circumstances in which the faithful are found (see 74.-79.; 83.). The point of instruction is to lead them into a present knowledge of and confidence in the unchanging purposes of God; this can only be learned in the sanctuary (73. 17, and 77. 16). So generally through the book, the soul is taught to reach God *experientially*. The analogy of this with Leviticus is striking, and of much interest. The key to the position in which the saints are found may be learned from Ezekiel (chap. 20. vers. 42-44). The rebels have been purged out (38), and the remnant are brought back into the land, and *there* repentance is wrought (43). With this experience Psalm 88. corresponds with its six tremendous questions (vers. 10-12), which find their triumphant answer in "the sure mercies of David" rehearsed in the closing Psalm 89.

FOURTH BOOK

The fourth book (Ps. 90.-106.) begins with the prayer of Moses, a remarkable commentary on the Book of Numbers; but the sinful, perishing man of Psalm 90. is superseded by Him who abides (Ps. 91. 1). He, as Jehovah, is to reign in Zion (99.). But He too must pass through the dread reality of death (*cf.* 102. vers 10, 23, with 90. vers. 7, 9). How truly in all their afflictions was He afflicted! The glorious answer to His

humiliation is given in the end of the Psalm (see Heb. 1. 10) according to the truth of His eternal personality, "Thou art the same and Thy years have no end" (who is this but the God who is from everlasting to everlasting)? (90. 2); but more, not only does He abide because of who He is, but for the same reason, "the children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee" (102. 28; *cf.* Mal. 3. 6). Thus the prayer of Moses is answered, "Let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us," and the purposes of God are surely accomplished, as the concluding chapters of the Book of Numbers also predict. Finally God secures praise to Himself in view both of redemption (Ps. 103) and creation (Ps. 104.), and the book closes with an anticipation of the scene before Christ's judgment-seat, where God's ways in perfect grace (105.) and man's ways in perverse opposition (106.) are rehearsed.

FIFTH BOOK

The fifth book (Ps. 107-150.) is the Deuteronomic conclusion. Israel, according to the first Psalm, is redeemed and gathered (vers. 2, 3), and reviews the ways of God with her. In the next Psalm God takes possession of the land for His people with joy (108. 7; *cf.* Jer. 32. 41), and Israel has now at last a fixed heart and God is worshipped. These two Psalms indicate the character of this last book. Accordingly, we find in Psalm 119. Israel, not groaning under the sense of a broken law, as in Psalm 88., but with the law written *in* their hearts, according to one of the terms of the new covenant, but full deliverance still unknown (see vers. 153, etc., and elsewhere). The great Messianic Psalm of this book is the 110th, which follows the sorrows of 109. In this latter the ways of the causeless hatred of Judas in the past and Antichrist in the future are detailed, with the righteous retribution, due to such hopeless evil. The faithful One of the Psalm accepts it from the hand of Jehovah, and is answered by exaltation to His right hand in due time (Ps. 109. 27; 110. 1). From that place both judgment and blessing proceed. The book closes with a glorious outburst of praise led by the Messiah Himself (Ps. 145), which embraces in its chorus all creation, animate and inanimate (Ps. 146.-150.).

* The preposition has no exact representation in English, it indicates "the sphere or place of God's action or blessing" (*Darby*). Hence I have paraphrased it as above.

The Work of the Lord in the World. (FRANK B. HOLE.)

Plan—Process—Power.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

"And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1. 6-8).

WHEN these words were spoken the disciples stood upon the threshold of a new dispensation. Great events, the death and resurrection of Christ, had just taken place; and one great event, the coming of the Spirit, was impending. The old order of things was evidently breaking up and ready to vanish away. The new order was rising above the horizon into view. Thus between two dispensations the disciples stood.

Under such circumstances it was only natural that they should wonder what character the new dispensation was to bear, and that they should raise a question as to the divine plan for the period on which they were about to enter.

The question which they addressed to their risen Lord was, however, shaped by two considerations:

Firstly, they were still largely swayed in their minds by their national aspirations, which made ISRAEL, its future and glory, the paramount idea; and secondly, they wished for something more definite, more satisfying to natural curiosity than promises of a general nature. Could not a definite time be stated when the apparently long-deferred predictions of the prophets should be fulfilled.

This being so, the Lord declines to gratify their curiosity. Time-setting is a matter which lies only in the Father's hands. He directs their attention rather to the process by which the divine programme for the dispensation—whatever it be—may be carried out through the instrumentality of the disciples, and also to the power

which would enable them to carry out the process.

It would be, however, a mistake to infer from this that the divine plan is something not to be known by us. Already the Lord Jesus had hinted at it in parabolic language. He, the good Shepherd, had entered the Jewish fold, not to take up His abode there, but to call His own sheep by name, and lead them *out*, and into a new sphere of life and blessing. He added, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, [R.V.] and one Shepherd" (John 10. 16). The whole of the early part of this chapter must be carefully read if the points of the Lord's words are to be seized. It will then be plainly seen that He indicated the divine plan to be the gathering of Jews by believing out of their Judaism, and of Gentiles by believing out of their heathenism, and forming them into one company around one centre—HIMSELF.

We find also that on an occasion, subsequent to the Lord's ascension, when the Holy Spirit had been given, the same fact was plainly declared by the apostles, showing that they now fully realized the nature of the divine plan. When the first great conference was held at Jerusalem we find James saying, "Simeon [*i.e.* Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15. 14). And he proceeded to show that this conception of the divine plan was in full harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures. From John 10. we have

already seen it to be in harmony with the teachings of our Lord.

The divine plan for this dispensation may then be stated in few words. God is sending forth the gospel amongst all nations, to gather out of all a people for the name of Christ, *i.e.* "the church."

But what about the process by which this end is to be reached? This is simplicity itself. Amongst all nations, said the Lord, "ye shall be witnesses unto Me." No elaborate arrangements were made. No cumbrous machinery was instituted. Christ and all that He stands for is to be the subject of testimony, and every disciple according to his or her measure is to be a witness-bearer. In this way the plan will be put into execution.

But if so large a programme is to be accomplished by so simple a method, there must be, one would suppose, a great power behind the method. This is precisely what we find. "Ye shall receive power," said the Lord, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." In the gift of the Holy Spirit lay their power, and nowhere else. He would endow them with the necessary ability to bear the witness, and would also make the witness effectual in gathering out from the nations a people for Christ's name.

The whole of the Acts of the Apostles may be read as a commentary upon, or illustration of, these words. We find recorded many an act of the Holy Ghost through the apostles, but also acts of the same Spirit through men of much less note, though equally devoted to the Lord. Each servant, whether small or great, looked up to the same Lord for leadership and direction, and relied upon the same Spirit for power and effect, with the result that without human organization or arrangement the men for every enterprise or emergency were to hand as needed, and the work proceeded with signal and supernatural success.

Do we see anything approaching

this to-day? Only, it is to be feared, in comparatively rare instances. Why is this? Very largely because we—present-day disciples—are guilty of misunderstanding the divine plan, or departing from the divine process, or ignoring the divine power; or it may be we are guilty of all three things together.

* * * *

In current missionary literature no phrase is much more common than "*the conquest of the world for Christ!*" and yet no such phrase is found in Scripture. The kingdoms, of this world are indeed going to become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11, 15); but this as the result of woes and judgments, and not of the preaching of the gospel. There is a great difference between subduing the world to Christ and gathering people out of the world for Christ. The divine plan must be one *or* the other. It cannot embrace both at the same time.

It may be wondered perhaps whether any misunderstanding on this point is of any great moment. Some might urge that it is not, and that if a Christian be real and earnest in propagating the true gospel, his view on this matter is of little account. We venture, on the contrary, to affirm that it will have a serious effect, if upon nobody else, upon *himself*.

It will alter his whole standpoint in relation to the world; and all through the history of Christianity the most critical point in Satan's attacks upon the church and individual believers has been just here.

"Now is the judgment of this world" were the Saviour's words anticipating the cross (John 12. 31). The world as a system is a condemned thing. Jews and Gentiles alike were implicated in the rejection of God's Son. Alike they have lost any kind of status they ever had before God. When three thousand Jews became anxious inquirers, Peter said nothing as to conquering the

Jewish nation for Christ; he exhorted them in the contrary direction saying, "Save yourselves FROM this untoward generation" (Acts 2. 40).

The plain fact is that faithful adherence to the divine plan keeps the disciple of the Lord himself from the world in *separation* according to the spirit of the Lord's prayer for him in John 17. 16-19, and it leads to the converts that God may give him as the fruit of his labours being delivered from the world also; whereas "the conquering of the world for Christ" must mean the bringing of Christian light and blessing to subdue and adorn the world, leaving both worker and convert with their world-links *uncut*.

In this we see a deep-laid plot of Satan, for just as the one essential for charging a wire with electric power is that the wire be insulated from the earth, so one great requisite for spiritual power is that the saint who is to be the vehicle of that power be kept separate from the world.

There is also a tendency with many advocates of this faulty view to still further deflect from the divine plan and substitute "the Christianization of the world" for "the conversion of

the world." The latter is, to every unprejudiced onlooker, a remote contingency; growing more remote each year as the rate of increase of converts falls far below the rate of natural increase of population all over the world. What then? Shall we call a halt, and reinvestigate our theory to see if, after all, it does accord with God's word? Alas! in many cases No. The theory is broadened out and adapted to suit these unpleasant facts by the substitution of Christianizing for converting.

Let us make no mistake. At the root of the defection and weakness deplored by all earnest believers in the lands which for long have been looked upon as "the home base of foreign missions," lies the increasing way in which the genuine, old-fashioned God-made converts are being overborne by the incubus of the great mass of merely Christianized professors. Shall we labour to produce the same deplorable conditions in new fields? May God forbid it!

There is but one remedy. Back—back with renewed fidelity and subjection—to the original plan of God for this dispensation.

(To be continued in our next issue.)

Hymn of Praise.

(JAMES BOYD).

O GOD, what love was Thine, to lift,
From depths degrading such as we,
And give us to Thy Son, a gift
So grateful unto Him, that He
Should shed His blood our souls to bring
To heights of bliss bewildering;

To re-create us, to unite
Us to Himself brought from the dead
By Thine eternal Spirit's might,
Live members to their living Head,
One with Him who redemption wrought:
This, this were never human thought:

That we should be so one with Him,
His body, He our heavenly Head,
By this to reach the utmost rim
Of that vast sphere for which He bled,
And thus with light that sphere to fill:
No creature's counsel this nor will.

The thought was Thine, the power to bring
The thought to pass was all Thine own—
Ring, earth, with acclamation, ring.
Ring, worlds that wheel about His throne.
Ring with the praise of Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit—Triune One.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 13.

(H. J. VINE).

The Covenant; The Light.

Isaiah (2). Section 1. Chapters 41. to 48.

Christ the Covenant.

IN chapter 42. verse 6 we read that our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful Servant, is given "for a Covenant of the people." An unconditional covenant had been made with Abraham and a conditional one with Israel at Sinai, but He who centres all things in Himself is the Covenant.

How secure, how stable, how sure, therefore, all must be in Him. He is "the Surety" of the new covenant; His precious blood is "the blood of the everlasting covenant;" He is "the Mediator" of the new covenant, so we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but here, He Himself is the Covenant. It must therefore be, like Himself, unailing and perfect. Who would not rejoice in such a Saviour! Everything depends upon Him, not upon us. It is because of Him, God forgives, and will remember no more the believer's sins; and this will be Israel's blessing also by and by; when they turn to the Lord, and come into the covenant; for "this is the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10. 16, 17). This is all from God's side, and is all secured in Jesus.

Once more, and only once more, is our Lord Jesus Christ called the Covenant. It is in the first chapter of our next section: "I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a Covenant of the people (of Israel), to establish the earth" (Isa. 49. 8). Only through Him can this be brought about.

The first part of this verse is cited in 2 Corinthians 6. 2, showing the present interest the believer has in Christ as the Covenant; and "the acceptable time;" "the day of salvation." May our glad hearts know Him and that which is connected with Him more intimately.

Christ the Light.

This same verse (42. 6) makes known to us another shining glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is given "for a Light of the Gentiles." He is not only a Covenant for the people of God, but He is given as a Light for all. High distinctions and privileges belong to Israel; as also in a higher degree to the assembly, the body of Christ; but as *the Light* He shines for the world. We need to heed this, for all apostacy begins with wrong thoughts of Him; erroneous, even if exalted, thoughts about ourselves follow, culminating in the success of Satan, as an "angel of light," and of the "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11. 14-15), in turning souls away from our Saviour God, made known in Christ. It would surprise us, had God not warned us, to see the frequency of such terms as "light" and "righteousness," in erroneous teachings; whilst "grace," "love," "faith," and "truth" are almost altogether absent. We cannot hold too firmly to the great and important fact that Christ as "The Light of the world," shines for "every man."

Turn once more to Isaiah 49. In verse 6 the Lord is pointed out as Jehovah's Servant, to restore the preserved of Israel; but again God says, "I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be *My Salvation* unto the end of the earth." Here we see Him as *The Servant; the Light, and the Salvation of God*. What a wonderful Saviour! When Mary took Him to the temple, one of the remnant of Israel; "a servant" of the Lord's, Simeon by name, rejoiced to see in Him God's "Salvation," and "the glory of His people Israel;" also "a Light for revelation of the Gentiles" (N.T.), that they, brought out of their darkness and ignorance, might be revealed in God's marvellous light. Nor is this truth limited to the bodily presence of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, for in preaching the gospel the Apostle

Paul, when "the Jews seeing the crowds, were filled with envy, and contradicted," said, "Lo we turn to the Gentiles; for thus the Lord enjoined us: I have set thee as a light of the nations" (Acts 13. 47). This striking reference to Isaiah decisively confirms the truth of which we have spoken. The Light, like the gospel, and the salvation of God, is sent out for all men everywhere.

As the Sun of Righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ will shine forth in the day of His glory. Israel will then arise and shine, for Christ her light will have come (Isa. 60. 1). She will shine in His light. The believer of this present period, who is sleeping now, or mixing with the dead world, is called upon to awake, and to arise, for Christ does not cease to shine, though the world does not apprehend it. And the believer who sleeps indifferently does not enjoy it. The believer whose

condition and position is here described has misery himself and is a cause of sorrow to others also, because he is of the light, and never can be really of the darkness. The present application of Isaiah 60. 1, in Ephesians 5. 14, is very instructive.

It is true still that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light. We are "light in the Lord;" we "were once darkness" (Eph. 5. 8); now believers shine as in the Lord, as "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2. 15); they point to our Lord Jesus Christ as the Light, not to themselves. Even apostles could say, "*We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord. . . . Because God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine, has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST*" (2 Cor. 4. 5-6).

Questions and Answers.

To what "beginnings" does Scripture refer in the following passages. John 1. 1; 1 John 1. 1; and 2 Thessalonians 2. 13. Are they the same?

IN John 1. 1 the words "In the beginning" refer to the eternity which existed before ever the earth was; having no commencement, no point that the mind can grasp. Not *at*, but *in* that eternal condition, He, the divine, eternal Son "The Word" was. In the glory of His person ever the same; before any thing received form or began to be, He existed in the unity of the Godhead, yet distinct in His glorious Person, dwelling in all the blessedness of divine relationships. No finite mind can measure the unfathomable depths, or conceive the extent of that eternity in which He, "the same was in the beginning with God."

But "the Word became flesh" born in time, this matchless One included manhood in the glory of His person, very man yet very God. Both inseparable in the mystery of *The Son*, whom only the Father comprehends.

This is "the beginning" to which 1 John 1. 1 alludes. Here a point in time is given. "That which was *from* the beginning," that eternal life which had for its great characteristic that it "was with the Father" is for the first time revealed on earth. Those in whom God had wrought, saw, heard, contemplated, handled, not an idea nor a conception of the mind, but an actual living Person. They saw in Him the glory He had brought from eternity, "the glory as of an only begotten with a father;" the manifestation of the special place of love and relationship which was ever His, and in this He revealed the Father's heart.

2 Thessalonians 2. 13 carries us back to eternity and the purpose of God, showing that in connection with the coming revelation of His Son, God had made a choice, which having for its foundation the person and work of Christ is thus expressed as "from the

beginning." This divine choice in eternity was made regarding us, with a view to our salvation, that is deliverance from every hostile force, and the power of sin and its consequences. This was accomplished by the "sanctification of the Spirit," the active work of God in the soul which sets it apart for Himself from the rest of the world, accompanied by "belief of the truth," that is, God revealed in the life and

death of His Son, the knowledge of which is involved in the call of the gospel. Then the great object God had in choosing was that we should obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the joys, relationship and love which were His before the foundation of the world. Thus eternity is linked with eternity, through the revelation in time, of God, in the person of His Son.
(James Green.)

What is the meaning of Matthew 11. 11-13? Is the contrast drawn between the old dispensation and those who have new church privileges?

There is nothing about church privilege in the passage. The contrast is between the place that John then occupied *as the forerunner of the Lord*, and the position of one in the kingdom.

The rejection of the King, who was presented to the responsibility of man, having postponed the establishment of the kingdom in power, gave to the kingdom the character of *mystery*, and furnished an opportunity for the setting up of the church according to the eternal thought of God, and for the fulfilment of His eternal counsels of love. But with this the statement in Matthew 11. 11 has no connection.

It was the law and prophets up till the days of John, but he was more than a prophet, he was the one of whom it is written, "Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee." It was in this way that John could be said to be greater than all that went before him.

But if such a place as was his in the ways of God made him superior to all that had previously spoken in the name of the Lord on earth, what must be the place of those who shall sit down in that kingdom when it will be established under the beneficent and glorious reign of the Son of God? *A little one* in such a wondrous place of favour and blessedness would certainly be greater than John—must have a greater blessedness than the one who

was but His forerunner, however great an honour it was to be this.

But neither was the kingdom to be possessed by weaklings. A certain moral and spiritual calibre was necessary to be possessed by one who aspired to such a position if he was to be accounted worthy. The sermon in the mount gives us the characteristics necessary to be possessed by the candidates for such a high privilege. And here, in this chapter (Matt. 11.) it is the *violent* who take it by force. The King is in rejection, the Jews and the nations are in rebellion against His authority, and only those who are in the energy of faith and of the Spirit of God are able to break down all opposition and force their way into it. The world is to be overcome, and it cannot be overcome by those who fold their hands, and sit down comfortable and float with the current of the world in its rejection of Christ. His feet surely are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and, as much as lies in him, he is to live in peace with all; but the glint of the panoply of God, in which he is clad from head to foot, proclaim him of the Lord's host—a warrior always ready to do battle for King and Country.

He has the moral and spiritual qualifications fitting him for entrance into the kingdom, and his place there will be above and beyond all the blessedness that belonged to men born of women in past dispensations.

(James Boyd.)

New Birth and Eternal Life.

(EDITOR).

WE have received several letters with regard to papers that have appeared under the above title in this magazine, and feel that we must return to the subject again in the hope of clearing away difficulties which seem to exist in the minds of some of our correspondents.

The views expressed in these letters may be classified for answer as follows: (1) New birth and Eternal life are one and the same thing. (2) Eternal life is the life received at new birth. (3) That a man is born again by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must test these views by the Scriptures.

ARE ETERNAL LIFE AND NEW BIRTH THE SAME THING ?

We will answer this question by substituting the terms "born again," or "new birth" for eternal life in some of the passages where the latter occurs. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but [be born again]" John 3. 16. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into [the new birth]" 4. 14. "This is [the new birth], that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" 17. 3. "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end [the new birth]" Romans 6. 22. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap [the new birth]" Galatians 6. 8.

It will be seen at once from these scriptures, which we have purposely misquoted, that the two terms in question are not synonymous or interchangeable, and a careful consideration of the passages should convince our readers that eternal life is much more than new birth, and also that it is presented in many ways by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures.

IS ETERNAL LIFE RECEIVED AT NEW BIRTH ?

That spiritual life is imparted at new birth, and that it will abide forever cannot be questioned, for it is by the word of God that it is brought about (1 Peter 1. 23), and that word brings

forth after its own kind. But is this what is meant in the Scriptures by "eternal life?"

The passages already quoted are, we believe, sufficient to prove that it is not, for one speaks of it as a sphere, or region of life, another as the knowledge of a relationship, others as something to be reached and reaped. There is also the great passage in 1 John 5. which tells us that the Son of God is it, and that we have it in Him.

We arrive at the perfectly just conclusion that life and new birth go together more by inference than from any direct statement to that effect in Scripture, for we know of no passage that definitely connects life with it; what is definitely stated is, "that which is born of the Spirit is SPIRIT." This is the Lord's own definition as to what is brought into being at new birth. There is a new spiritual condition or being which is absolutely distinct from the flesh, and which has its own nature and desires that can only be satisfied with God and Christ. It may be urged that this must be life, and with this we agree, but again ask, Is it what God calls "eternal life"? A careful study of the Scriptures will, we believe, convince our readers that it is not, and also, that eternal life is very much more than simply not perishing, as some of our correspondents seem to think.

It may help us to briefly consider those passages which treat on this work of grace, which is called "born again" in the Authorized Version. Each of them seem to present it from a different side, and may be said to deal (1) With the absolute necessity of this work in man; (2) The source from whence this work proceeds; (3) The means by which it is brought about.

(1) THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF THIS WORK IN MAN.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee except A MAN be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3).

The condition of man is here revealed. It was useless for Nicodemus, even though he were the best man in Jerusalem, to imagine that all he needed was

teaching; these words of the Lord struck an unerring and decisive blow at such a conceit as that, and the same solemn truth is reiterated over and over—always an arresting thing in Scripture—“Except a MAN be born again” (ver. 3) “Except a MAN be born of water and the Spirit” (ver. 5); “YE must be born again” (ver. 7).

MAN is the subject of the Lord's words, and nothing can be surer than that it was His intention to expose to His hearer the irremediable condition of man according to the flesh, which condition makes it an absolute necessity that he should be born again ere he could have any knowledge of, or part in, the things of God.

It is not the way of divine grace to uncover the utter ruin of man and his complete alienation from God without also disclosing the unfailing resources of God for his recovery; so the way in which this great thing can be accomplished is also set forth by the Lord: it is by the Spirit as the mighty Operator, working in man and producing by the word, as the instrument, a new spiritual condition in men; and since the word is spoken of under the figure of water, it is by the word in its cleansing character, separating a man morally from the evil principles of the flesh that once governed him, and made him run counter to the will of God. Having been born again he is changed in the very springs of his being—he is clean *morally* (see John 13. 10, and 15. 3).

(2) THE SOURCE FROM WHENCE THE WORK PROCEEDS.

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1. 18).

We are begotten, not by our own will, nor by any initial movement from ourselves: it is by God's sovereign will. That will is the source of and the determining factor in this work, above and before all else, working from and for itself, and just as absolute as when He at the creation said, “Let us make man in our own image.” And so, though it cannot be entirely apart from faith, for it is by the word of truth, which must be believed to be operative, yet it is by the sovereign will of God, and by nothing in ourselves, that it is accomplished.

(3) THE MEANS BY WHICH IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1. 23).

This passage is occupied with the means that God uses, and the seed of God is set in contrast to the seed of man; the latter is corruptible, for all flesh is as grass and it cannot abide, but those who are born of the incorruptible seed of God must live and abide for ever, for this is the character of the word by which, as we have seen before, the work is accomplished, and it produces after its own kind.

IS ETERNAL LIFE THE LIFE RECEIVED AT NEW BIRTH?

These are the three passages which speak definitely of being “born again,” and it is interesting to note that they are addressed, in the first instance, to one who was a Jew, and in the other cases to those who had been Jews and who were acquainted with the Old Testament Scripture, and consequently should have known of the necessity of this, for the truth as to it had been revealed in their Scriptures as that which was needful before they could enter rightly upon their blessing, which was earthly in character. New birth belonged to the earthly side of things (John 3. 12); but all men in every dispensation must be born again if they are to be in right relations with God and to see and enter His kingdom. But eternal life *as revealed by the Lord in His own person on earth* is a heavenly life and outside all dispensations, it is given to us who believe in Him, who do not belong to dispensations at all, but are heavenly as He is. New birth we believe is the preparation of the soul for the reception of the Son of God in whom eternal life is, and who is it. John 1. 12, 13 is sufficient to prove this, for there we learn that those who received Him were born of God; and again, in John 10. 27, 28, we find that it is to His *sheep* who hear His voice that the Lord gives eternal life. New birth is the outcome of the operation of the Spirit by the word in the soul; eternal life is connected with faith in the Son of God.

We do not deny that a person might, under the same preaching of the Word, come under the operation of the Spirit and turn in repentance towards God—"know his own sore and his own grief and spread forth his hands" (2 Chron. 6. 29), in supplication to God, and also put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The former would be life in His soul, the latter would save him, bring him into the position of a child of God (Gal. 3. 26), and as such he would have eternal life, which every member of God's family has, whether babes, young men, or fathers. We believe these two may be simultaneous as the sword-stroke and the wound, nevertheless they are distinct and, as in the case of Cornelius quoted in the next paragraph, some time may intervene between the two.

The exigencies of space compel us to postpone any further reference to eternal life in its character, environment, and relationships as distinct from new birth, in this issue of the magazine, but we would ask our readers to carefully study the scriptures quoted thus far, and while not separating that which God has joined together, to be also careful not to confound that which He has made distinct.

IS A MAN BORN AGAIN BY BELIEVING IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

Certainly a man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is born again; his faith in Christ, we believe, is the proof that he is so born; but he is more—he is saved; he is justified; he possesses eternal life in the One in whom he believes; and these things are not the same or the Spirit of God would not have made a difference. But let us take the case of Cornelius as an example of that which we wish to make clear, for, though living in a transitional time, yet being the first Gentile to receive the gospel, he is a pattern man and brings out clearly that a

man may be alive to God and yet not "saved" in the sense in which Scripture speaks of this, which surely is the only right sense. Peter was sent to him to tell him words by which he and his house were to be saved (Acts 11. 14). So that he was not saved until Peter spoke these words to him, and yet "he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10. 2). Did this spring from what he was naturally? Impossible. His prayers and alms went up as a memorial before God (ver. 4). Why? Because they were the fruit of God's work in his soul, there was spiritual life there, and his seeking after God was the result of it; but he was not saved until he heard the glad tidings from Peter's lips. He had heard some word from God previously, he must have done so, must also have believed it, or how could he have done things which were acceptable to God, things which proved that he was born again? But he had not heard the gospel of God's Son, and it is by this gospel that a man is saved and by this he receives eternal life.

Since it is the word that is used by the Spirit to accomplish the new birth, there must be faith in the word or it would be profitless, as Hebrews 4. 2 makes clear; but here again we have to go to another scripture than those that speak of being born again.

We must remember that the word of God covers more than the gospel by which men are saved; it includes the solemn truth quoted from Isaiah 40. 6 by Peter (chap. 1. 24), a word declaring the condition of men, and when this word as to himself comes home to a man it produces repentance towards God in him and he is ready to put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we must leave the further consideration of the subject to another issue, God willing.

The Good and Great Shepherd.

(J. T. MAWSON).

The hand that bruised the head of the Devil to save the sheep is the hand that holds them secure for ever.

The supreme power of Deity was His, and yet He shows Himself to us in absolute submission to His Father's command.

Each individual sheep in the vast flock of God is attached to the Shepherd by an intimacy known to itself alone.

Every scattering, and all the sectarianism that has afflicted the flock of God, was conceived in the mind of the Devil, and was engineered by him.

If when crucified in *weakness* He annulled the power of the Devil, what will He do in the glorious *strength* of His resurrection? Shall He not be triumphant over every force of evil, and that for ever?

THIS chapter (John 10.) was not given to assure the sheep of Christ that they are eternally safe. It is often used for that purpose, and no doubt it has yielded comfort in that way to thousands of harassed souls. But that is not its purpose. The sheep of Christ should not need to be assured of their safety. It should be sufficient for them that they are HIS sheep. Can He let them slip? He is THE GOOD SHEPHERD. He laid down His life to deliver them from every foe. He has taken it again to gather them into one flock—the flock of God. Can one amongst these perish? Impossible! His greatness, goodness, love, and power forbid the thought entirely. The hand that bruised the head of the devil to deliver them is the hand that holds them. They are safe. But the precious words of this chapter were not spoken, and preserved, to assure the sheep that they are safe, nor to occupy their thoughts with themselves at all, but with Christ. The chapter is about the Shepherd. It was written that we might see His greatness and hear the melody of His voice, and, as a consequence, know the supreme blessedness of following Him. We must certainly see Him and hear Him if we are to follow Him. The man whose eyes were opened in the ninth chapter was one of His sheep, and when cast out of the synagogue Jesus found Him and asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And the

Lord made reply, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that *talketh* with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Him. That is the pattern; you see Him and hear Him, and immediately you become a worshipper and a follower. Now may the chapter show us Himself to this end.

HIS LIFE ON EARTH

"He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep."

The door is the appointed way of entrance, and by that way He came—by the way that was marked out by the prophecies of old, which spake of Him. Others had come claiming to be Christ, but they had proved themselves to be thieves and robbers, actuated by vain-glory, and making gain of the sheep; they did not come in the appointed way. He came into the fold (Israel), fulfilling the Scriptures. His entrance into the fold is given in the earlier chapters of Matthew, in which Gospel He is presented as the Messiah of Israel, and these chapters are significant with the phrase "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." And at His exit out of it given in the closing chapters of John, we are told often that things were done to Him "that the Scripture should be fulfilled."

There are prophecies which tell of His glory; how, as the Sun of Righteousness, He shall arise with healing in His wings, and fill the earth with the knowledge of God—for that time we wait; but there are others which tell us

that "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." These prophecies mark out a path of humiliation and suffering for Him ; they show Him trodden under foot by the proud of the earth : "His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hairs ; He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He came to tread the path of obedience to God. He was perfectly submissive to the will of Him that sent Him. The Lord God opened His ears and He was not rebellious, neither turned away back ; and every sorrow found its centre in Him because of this.

Now mark well who He is who trod this path of submission to God, and of suffering from sinners, who was buffeted by men because He would obey God. He says, "At my rebuke I dry up the sea. . . . I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." He is the mighty Lord of the universe.

Can anything affect us more profoundly than this ? The Virgin's Son was Emanuel, and, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The Mighty God*, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

"Heaven's arches rang as the angels sang,
Proclaiming His royal degree—
But of lowly birth came the Lord to earth,
And in great humility."

Thus is He shown to us as the Shepherd of the sheep, gentle and submissive, meek and lowly of heart, the servant of God and the servant of men, yes, even of those who hated and derided Him. Have we seen the glory of that life of His—the glory of its humility ?

HIS DEATH UPON THE CROSS.

"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*"

He has become the door of salvation and liberty for the sheep, the God-appointed and only way of blessing, but He has become that door by giving His life for them. There was no other means by which He could deliver them, for they were sinners every one, and held in the power of death. So the sword awoke against Him who is the Shepherd, who has proved Himself to be the Shepherd by standing between that sword and the sheep. "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. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It is not here a question of physical pain : of the thorns, the smitings and the nails ; nor of all the shame and degradation connected with His suffering a malefactor's death ; undoubtedly our Lord felt these things with an intensity of which none other could be capable ; but there was more than that at Calvary, for, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him ; He hath put Him to grief" (Isa. 53. 10). It was Jehovah's sword that smote Him when His soul was made an offering for sin ; the billows of His wrath rolled over Him as He stood as the substitute in the place of the sheep.

He gave His life for the sheep. He entered the field where death seemed to hold an undisputed sway, and there He annulled him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. As David beat down the mighty giant in Elah, so has the Good Shepherd, by His dying, destroyed the great foe, and wrought deliverance for the sheep.

He laid down His life, no man took it from Him. He had power to lay it down and power to take it again. These are wonderful words, proclaiming the fact of His Deity, for no creature could so have spoken, and yet in this same connection He says, "This commandment have I received of My Father" (ver. 18).

How startling is that which greets us here. The supreme power of Deity was His, and yet He shows Himself to us in absolute submission to the Father's command. But further, this commandment of the Father's had the sheep entirely in view. His purpose was that they should be saved from every foe, and He has found a new reason for loving His well-beloved Son in that He laid down His life for them. These are wonderful things for the heart's meditation. Have we seen the Good Shepherd in the glory of His love ?

HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again.”

He has taken His life again, that, as the great Shepherd, He might gather the sheep of God into one flock. His voice sounded amidst the dead legalism of the Jews' religion, and the sheep within that fold heard it and followed Him out of it ; His voice was also to ring tenderly and clear over the far-away mountains of sin, that His “other sheep ” from among the Gentiles might also be brought, that there might be **ONE FLOCK** and one Shepherd. Not a fold now in which the sheep should be held together by the high walls of law and ordinance, as the Jews had been kept from the nations ; nor yet by rules and regulations, either written or unwritten, but a **FLOCK** held together by the all-sufficiency and attractive power of the **ONE SHEPHERD**.

This is the beginning of the revelation of the oneness of the Christian company. It is developed in the thought of the family having God as **FATHER**, and still further in the body and its one **HEAD**, which is Christ ; but there is a sweetness about the thought of the one flock which is entirely its own, and it is this : the sheep are not united to each other organically, as are the members of a body, but each individual in the vast flock of God is attached to

the Shepherd by an intimacy known to itself alone. “He calleth His own sheep by NAME.” “I know My sheep and am known of mine.” It is because we know Him that we belong to the one flock. He has a special name for each one of us, each of us is—

“Called by that secret name
Of undisclosed delight.”

We shall fully understand its meaning when we see Him in the “saint-thronged courts ” above, but now our ears should be so keenly attent to His voice that we should be learning it here. There should be with each sheep a secret history of soul, with the Shepherd increasing in blessedness as the days go by.

How precious is this oneness to God, and to Christ, and to everyone whose heart is intelligent in divine truth. “I am the good Shepherd, and I know those that are Mine, and am known of those that are Mine, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father ; and I lay down My life for the sheep ” (N.T.). This is an intimacy and communion that creature thought could never have conceived, and which can only be enjoyed by the Holy Ghost.

The devil's work is to hinder the sheep from enjoying the wonderful portion which has been won for them by the laying down of the good Shepherd's life ; and he has done it very effectually by seducing them from the simplicity that is in Christ. He has transformed himself into an angel of light, and turned their eyes from the Shepherd to men ; filled their ears with the clamour of party strife ; made them believe that the “grievous wolves ” spake with the Good Shepherd's voice ; and has separated them into little flocks and folds. As an angel of light he has done this, and so deceived by him are some of the sheep that they glory in his work, and account it just and right. Every scattering, and all the sectarianism that has ever afflicted the flock of God was conceived in the mind of the devil, and was engineered by

him. He is the inveterate foe of the Shepherd and the flock, and of every thought that God has revealed for His own glory and for the joy and blessing of His sheep.

“There shall be one flock and one Shepherd,” this is the purpose of God, and, blessed be His name, it abides true, for there can be no failure in the one great Shepherd. It is true for God, and true also for the faith and affection of every sheep that is contented to hear the Shepherd’s voice and follow Him. Have we seen Him as the great Shepherd, in the glory of His all-sufficiency for the whole flock of God?

HIS SUPREMACY OVER ALL EVIL.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

These words were spoken to those who believed not, and they were the declaration of the Lord’s ability to keep and bless His sheep. Those Jews who urged Him to tell them plainly whether He was the Christ or not were seeking some sign that would satisfy their sensuality, a sign such as He had given them when He fed the multitude. They wanted a king who would give them the bread that

perisheth, and bless them according to their own carnal thoughts, but for the Bread of God they had no taste. But His sheep heard His voice; they said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” And this life He gave to them, a life outside of the world and nature, a life which was manifested to them in Him, and which belonged to the home out of which He had come.

He gives this life to His sheep, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand. Neither decay within nor foes without can rob Him of those whom the Father has given Him. He is their life and protector, and He is supreme in His glorious power. Can any sheep have a doubt since He is its Shepherd? If when crucified in *weakness* He annulled the power of the devil, what will He do in the glorious strength of His resurrection? Shall He not be triumphant over every force of evil, and that for ever? It must be so, and He declares in this His supremacy that He will hold all who are His. Have we seen Him in the glory of this great power?

Time fails to say more about Him, but this is the way in which He shows Himself to us, and speaks to us, that we may both see Him and hear His voice, that henceforward our feet may follow Him in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.

Ready for the Trumpet Call.

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52),

THERE were three trumpet blasts at the breaking up of a Roman camp. The first meant, Strike your tents; the second, Fall into line; the last, March. It is for the last trump that the Christian waits, for, if rightly affected by the gospel, he is ready for it. The Word has come to him in power, and it has done for him what the two first trumpet blasts did for

the Roman soldier, for it has turned him to God from his idols to serve the living and true God—he has dropped his impedimenta, he has fallen into line, he is waiting for God’s Son from heaven. At the sounding of the joyful blast the dead saints shall be raised and the living changed, and in the twinkling of an eye they shall be with the Lord.

(Ed.)

From a Doctor's Note-Book.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON.)

"Maistly Praise."

IN the year 1866, I was House Physician in the old Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and there came under my care a middle-aged man for a most rare, and withal incurable, skin malady, that really rendered his life a burden. It was not long ere I found out that he loved the Lord and knew His love too. As a consequence he patiently accepted the trial his malady carried daily with it, and we often had nice talks together about the Lord, and His wise and loving ways towards us.

Finding that Edinburgh's best physicians could give him no cure, John returned to his home in the Shetlands. In 1910 I visited those islands for the first time. Through a mutual friend I found that John yet lived—some seven miles from where I was staying, and he, hearing of my visit, begged that I would see him.

This I was truly glad to do, and great was the delight of the old fisherman when he heard my voice, and warm the welcome he gave me. "I'm glad indeed to see you, doctor," were his words, though his sightless eyes told the sad tale that he saw me not, but I understood what he meant. Taking a seat by his poor box-bed he told me what had happened since last we really saw each other. His malady had long since affected his eyes, and he had for many years been blind, and confined to bed in the veriest hovel, with earthen floor, and minus every comfort, while many diseases racked his body with pain.

His wife did her best to keep him alive on the three shillings a week—their only assured support—which the local poor rates yielded to him. 'Twas indeed a piteous case!

But his face was radiant with joy, and "Praise the Lord!" fell from his lips again and again as we talked of

Him, His grace, and His ways with us both. At length, rising to go to address a gospel meeting which had been arranged in the village, I said, "Now, John, would you like me to pray with you?"

"Oh! thank you, sir; that indeed I would, but, doctor, IT MAUN BE MAISTLY PRAISE," was the old saint's instant and fervent reply; and praise the Lord together we did, I can assure you.

I have been in thousands of poor sick-rooms in my day, but nothing ever touched me as did dear John's, "It maun be maistly praise," in the dire poverty in which he was, and cut off from a thousand comforts that most of us enjoy.

There is a moral to this true tale. It tells of the sufficiency of Christ to sustain the believer's heart in every possible circumstance of earthly pressure, poverty, and pain. The secret of John's joy was Christ, *well known*. He had drunk into the spirit of Phil. 4. 4-9. I commend these verses afresh to my readers' notice: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (ver. 4). Our joy is to be *in* the Lord, not *in* our circumstances, but *spite* of them, if they be adverse. They change. He does not. Hence our spring of joy can never vary. Does our joy wane, or ebb and flow? It is because we have forgotten Paul's double exhortation (Phil. 3. 1; 4. 4).

In his day Nehemiah was animated by the same spirit, as he said to the returned remnant at Jerusalem, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for *the joy of the Lord is your strength*" (Neh. 8. 10). Note well that

spiritual axiom. You show me a *joyful* Christian and I will show you a vigorous, strong, and useful one, who is "sending portions" to others. On the other hand, you show me a *joyless* Christian, and I will show you a weak one, who is usually looking for something for himself, has nothing to give to others, and is in perilous danger of being a witness against, rather than for Christ. What heavenly unction and wisdom are found in these two words, "Rejoice . . . Rejoice" (Phil. 4. 4).

But doubtless what leads to the maintenance of this blessed joyful state is the moral condition which verse 6 enjoins: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." How simple: (1) *careful for nothing*, (2) *prayerful for everything*, (3) *thankful for anything*. RESULT: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (ver. 7).

Nor is it only that "the peace of God" will garrison our hearts and

minds, but, if the lovely traits of Christ, to be seen in other Christians (ver. 8) now, and seen in Paul then (ver. 9), command our thoughts, the company of God Himself is secured.

What a wonderful privilege, though, indeed, a conditional one, "The God of peace shall be with you." Could anything be more blessed?

Peace *with* God is gotten by simple faith in the Lord Jesus, now known to be risen from the dead. The peace of God is secured by a prayerful, thankful attitude towards Him. *The God of peace* as your companion in life's pathway is an added blessing and joy. His company can only be secured by our complete occupation with the things that suit Him.

Well, indeed, said a servant of Christ, over sixty years ago: "For a Christian the secret of peace within and power without is to be always and only occupied with good."

To any young Christian, on the outlook for a motto for life, I would give this.

The Word of God.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

BREAD is well called "the staff of life;" and if, for seventy years, a man has been supported and nourished, physically, by this "staff," he not only is able to smile at the foolish person who would condemn such sustenance, but he is fully warranted in pronouncing, most favourably, on its virtues. He has given it ample and abundant proof. He is not readily shaken by his critic.

In like manner, if for, say fifty years, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has fed, spiritually, on the truths of the Bible, and has found in them food, drink, light, life, joy, instruction, comfort, correction, guidance, and richest blessing to his soul, he may not be, indeed, deaf to that which adverse criticism may have to say against such a well-known and well-tried guide (though he is persuaded that it will stand any and every test), but experience renders to him the repose of confidence in the unerring accuracy and truth of the Word of God on which he has leaned all that time, and which has never failed, nor deceived him by any false light, in shade or sunshine, defeat or victory. His best defence of that Word, if defence were needed, is simply the fact that he himself has proved it.

Does it seem miraculous that a man should stake everything on what God says? or that he should prove God to be true?

The Work of the Lord in the World. FRANK B. HOLZ).

Plan—Process—Power—(Continued).

IT is not easy for any of us to be simple and pursue unswervingly the line of service to which the Lord has called us, looking to Him for the direction and leading which we need. Yet such is the disciple's path as Scripture shows it, both by precept (Acts 20. 32 ; Rom. 14. 4 ; 2 Tim. 2. 15) and also example (Acts 8. 26 ; 11. 19-21 ; 16. 6-9).

For the Christianizing or converting of the world much may be needed in the way of arrangement. For the taking out of the nations a people for Christ's name, the divine process indicated, though most simple, is most efficacious. Souls are drawn out of the world to Christ by the faithful presentation of Christ Himself in the way of testimony. Granted that such faithful witness unto Christ is maintained, it is only further necessary that immediate and personal dependence upon Christ as Leader and Lord be found with each servant for the service to achieve its object.

From this simple acknowledgment of the leadership of the Lord Jesus we are very apt to stray. Read such words as these :

"A sound missionary strategy is essential if the missions . . . are to accomplish the best results. Small, independent missions, working without a statesmanlike plan, and without adequate knowledge of the field, should be discouraged."

"In such a difficult field only societies possessing a wide experience are able to meet the situation."

"How many missionaries are necessary to evangelize the country in our generation? The answer to this question has been given by the . . . conference . . . The question

was considered *scientifically*. They made this calculation that one missionary for every 25,000 would be necessary."

These sentences were penned by men whom we have every reason to consider earnest Christians. The sentiments they express would doubtless commend themselves to most as being framed upon sound business lines, and being marked by eminent common sense. Yet they plainly reveal a view of the Lord's work out of harmony with that of Scripture.

What has the servant of Christ, be he a first-century apostle or a twentieth-century believer, to do with "*sound strategy*," "*statesmanlike plans*," or "*scientific calculations*"? We venture to say, NOTHING—*absolutely nothing!*

The apostles returned to Jerusalem with those words ringing in their ears, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." How did they set about it? Did they appoint a committee to gain "adequate knowledge of the field" of operations, so that "scientific calculations" might be made, and "sound strategy" and "statesmanlike plans" decided upon? No, they simply betook themselves to their knees in the spirit of little children, and when they found themselves endued with power from on high they at once commenced their witness to Christ, boldly utilizing each opening for testimony as it presented itself to them. Though they had been called by the Lord to positions of authority in the church of God, analogous to the position of an army officer when compared with a common soldier, yet they recognized that it was not theirs to plan the campaign, but *to do what they were told*. They had supreme confidence in their great Comman-

der; His "adequate knowledge," His "strategy," His "plans" they accepted as sufficient; and they were content to proceed under His direction, whether directly or providentially conveyed to them.

The Acts of the Apostles, supplemented by occasional glimpses of Paul's ministry, afforded by his epistles, show us with what astonishing success the great "Prince [or *Leader*] and Saviour" (Acts 5. 31) conducted His campaign from His seat in the heavens. Within thirty years the gospel had been fully preached "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum," and that through the instrumentality of one man, the apostle Paul, aided by a few helpers; and if any failure is apparent in the story, it was when that same eminent servant of God, in well-meaning zeal for His own nation, insisted upon forming his own "statesmanlike plan" of going up to Jerusalem, feeling that he indeed of all people had an "adequate knowledge" of that field. From that point his liberty was curtailed, and he went a prisoner to Rome.

In Acts II. 19-21 we read how a few men of no particular note—their names are not even mentioned—travelled from Jerusalem into the region of Antioch. Had they lived in the twentieth century they would have been described, we fear, as a small, independent mission, "working without a statesmanlike plan, and without adequate knowledge of the field," and as such, according to the authority quoted, they should have been discouraged. Their great Master, the Lord Jesus, however, thought otherwise. His hand was with them, and there were wonderful results, leading to the formation of one of the greatest churches of primitive times.

But though these men of Cyprus and Cyrene worked in independence of even the apostles, they were evidently thoroughly in dependence upon God. They did not concern themselves

about "strategy," since, far from being commanders, they were only common soldiers. *Neither did they form plans, statesmanlike or otherwise, and expect God to fall in with their arrangements. They rather sought to discover God's plans, and to exercise that humility of mind which would enable them to fit in to His arrangements.* Between these two lines of conduct there is all the difference in the world.

At that moment, Stephen having been martyred, God was definitely passing by the perverse Jewish nation, and sending the gospel to the Gentiles, as witnessed in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10.). These men, acting in concert with this divine move, "spoke unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus." They did not indulge in sentimental talk about "Jesus," as do many nowadays; they preached Jesus as LORD. "The hand of the LORD was with them." In result "a great number believed and turned to the LORD."

These humble individuals, belonging to no missionary society and without any of these supposed requirements, did indeed "accomplish the best results." They won many converts, and those converts were attached not merely to the preachers but to the LORD.

* * * *

Probably all Christians would agree that the Holy Spirit of God is the power for Christian service; but let us inquire as to the way in which He exercises His power. Does He come to help us in our projects for the Lord, or does He condescend to use us as instruments in carrying out the Lord's own projects? In other words, Do we wield Him, or does He wield us?

The former idea obviously fits in with the ideas which we have ventured to challenge in the preceding section. But then—mark it well!—if, having founded large and influential societies, and formed statesmanlike plans, and

having learned how to bend and use the Spirit to our arrangements, we conduct a successful campaign, how all will redound to the credit and glory of—OURSELVES!

If, on the other hand, any servant of Christ is content to keep in his own little place, to seek in communion with the Lord to recognize His plans, and to be thoroughly subject to and usable by His Spirit, then the success which certainly will follow—though not perhaps in quite the way of our thinking—will redound to the glory of God!

When, having led Israel over Jordan, Joshua saw the Man with drawn sword in His hand, he assumed that He appeared to act as helper either for Israel or for Israel's enemies. The mysterious Stranger corrected his thoughts. He had come, not as helper, but as Leader. "And He said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come" (Joshua 5. 14). The Spirit's place to-day amidst the hosts of the Lord is analogous to this.

Do we really believe in the presence and power of the Spirit of God? One wonders! Read, for instance, these extracts:

"The most urgent need . . . is financial support. Without it, no matter what doors are open, no matter what suitable candidates are offering, no matter how loud and urgent the call from those who are perishing in the darkness, we are helpless."

"Nothing is of greater importance than to learn how to loose, by persistent, mighty, aggressive prayer, the money power of the world. Satan knows that if he can only hold the gold in his grip, all such work as we are interested in will languish, and all new victories for our King will become impossible."

"There is nothing to hinder us but finance."

Are these things really so? The

Spirit of God has come to earth as THE SERVANT of God's purposes (see Luke 14. 17). He it is who is compelling men to come in to the gospel feast. Will HIS operations come to a standstill if Satan succeeds in engineering a "corner" in gold?

In the apostolic days there was plenty of power, but it most emphatically was not money power. Peter had to say directly after the great triumph of Pentecost, "Silver and gold have I none" (Acts 3. 6). Paul, reviewing much of his life, had to speak of "hunger and thirst," of "cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11. 27).

To give of one's worldly goods or money to the work of the Lord is a great privilege from which but few Christians are so poor as to be altogether debarred. Would to God that we were all far more alive to our responsibility as well as privilege in this matter, but let us not unduly magnify the money question. It really is one of the least important.

The fact is that, speaking generally, the hindrances to God's work lie in nearly every quarter *except finance*. British missionary and evangelistic societies alone handle a million or two sterling every year, and yet astonishingly little is done in the way of results for all this expenditure. Why? Our diagnosis would be:

1. The inroads caused by *false doctrine* in the professing church at home. These inroads are so great in all directions as to almost amount to apostasy.

2. The invasion of the church by *the world*, leading to the adoption of worldly methods in the work of the Lord as well as sapping away its spiritual power. The Nazariteship of the church has been lost, hence its former Samson-like power has departed.

3. The state of *division* and sub-division into which the church has been plunged as the result of the foregoing.

These are the things which lead to "grieving" or "quenching" the Spirit and the decay of power.

If a fourth reason might be added to the above, it would be the large measure in which the Spirit of God Himself is ignored or relegated to the background in this matter. In 1 Corinthians 2., Paul reviews and explains his ministry, and seven times over does he lay stress upon the Spirit of God. The brain-power of the "natural man" he rules completely out of court (ver. 9). The natural "excellency of speech" or "wisdom" of a spiritual man like himself he discards (ver. 1). Whilst stirring up the liberality of the saints of God in a later chapter, here he does not even mention money, certainly not the money of the world.

The servant of God runs to the world and begs to be allowed to share in its money-power! A sorrowful spectacle truly! Well might the world scornfully reply, "What! Has not your God the skill and foresight which our captains of commerce possess? Can He not provide for His own work?"

Or is it that you have run astray from His leadings, and therefore, failing support from Him, you turn to us?"

Let us, brethren, ask ourselves these questions, and allow their force to come home to our souls. Then by His grace we may avoid such mistakes, and with them the humiliation of being asked such questions by the world.

* * * *

Does that which has been stated carry your conscience with it, commending itself as being in accord with the Scriptures of truth? Then see that it fails not of practical result.

Do not be beguiled into treating it as merely religious idealism, something lovely in theory, but unworkable in practice.

Such were the divine instructions, and such was primitive Christian practice. "Back to the divine plan, the divine process, and the divine power," should be our watchword. Let us not wait for others to adopt it. That is not our responsibility. It is our responsibility to adopt it for ourselves.

Let us ask grace from God so to do.

Questions and Answers.

In looking over the 1910 volume of "Scripture Truth," I find on page 45 these words: "It is most important, if we are to partake of the Lord's Supper according to the Lord's mind, that we should enter into the thought of the assembly, and come together not as believers merely, but as the Assembly of God." What can this mean?—Help.

IN the article referred to, the writer does not mean nor suggest that a few Christians meeting together can assume that they are the assembly of God in that town. That would, indeed, be assumption and presumption. Those who have got a true divine sense of what the assembly of God is, and who are seeking to act according to the truth of it would be the last to clothe themselves with any such assumption; but, *equally* will such be unwilling and unprepared to act contrary to the blessed fact that the

assembly of God, which is the house of God, is here on earth and that they are *of it*, and *in it*, and therefore cannot sanction what is untrue or contrary to it nor what would deny it practically.

What they may and can do, and are responsible to do, is to come together in the truth of the assembly as God has revealed it to us in His Word, realizing they are *of* the assembly of God, while fully recognizing and owning that all other believers are also of the assembly of God—even

though they may not be acting according to the truth of it.

Now Christ is *Lord* in the assembly. He is the *Head* of the church, which is His body, and He is Son over God's house. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is here to gather to *Him* alone, to bear testimony to the virtue and power of His Name, and hence where two or three are gathered together to His Name, there He is in the midst. His presence gives character and reality to that company *so gathered*. The first thing in the assembly is, not that all gathered are believers, but that Christ is there, recognized as Lord and Head, and that those gathered are gathered to *Him* and in full submission to *Him*. He is in the midst to be the Leader of their praise to God (Heb. 2. 11, 12), and they are there as connected with His name and His interests. For a number of believers to come together in a voluntary way by some mutual agreement, and then attach His Name to their meeting is a totally different thing, assuming something quite unwarranted by Scripture.

When the Christians (or believers) at Corinth were gathered together, it is clear they were assembled as "the assembly of God at Corinth," with privileges, functions, and responsibilities attaching to that high and holy designation. I suggest that your correspondent and other readers should prayerfully ponder over the meaning of that wonderful expression—"The assembly of God."

I think it will be easily understood that were, say, three hundred members of Parliament to come together by agreement for some purpose, and even be quite harmonious in their meeting and their decisions upon certain matters, it would be of no legislative weight or value whatever. True, they are all M.P.'s, all entitled to be together in the House of

Commons when Parliament is duly summoned, because they are members; but in the case I instance they are meeting together "*merely*" as M.P.'s, and not as summoned or gathered by the call of His Majesty the King. In this latter case, let but forty or fifty of these individuals be assembled in Parliament in due order by the summoning of Parliament, with the Speaker in the chair to control and guide, then a value and character are attached to their decisions and decrees entirely lacking in the former case, for they are gathered according to the rules of the Constitution of the realm under the authority of the King, and acting on his behalf.

I must add, however, in using this illustration, that I only do so to show the distinction between a number of Christians coming together "*merely* as believers" and being gathered together in the truth of the assembly, where the Lord Jesus Christ is given His true and rightful place "in the midst." I would carry the illustration *no farther* and give it no farther application to the subject we are considering. I fully recognize that the professing church as a whole is outwardly in ruin and confusion, and, indeed, very corrupt; but, as even Daniel could be true to the mind and purpose of God about Jerusalem and Israel in that day of *utter* ruin, and pray with his window open towards Jerusalem, and refuse every *false way*, so two or three, or even *one*, may be true to God's glorious thought and mind about His assembly until the Lord comes.

"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,"—so wrote the Spirit of God by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 3.).
(S. M. Anglin.)

"The Saving of the Soul."

(H. J. VINN).

"Them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10. 39).

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1. 9).

THERE is far more in the expression "the saving of the soul" than safety from the eternal judgment of God, which must surely be meted out to the wicked. Salvation in that sense of it is a very great matter indeed; and it belongs to all those who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot thank God too much for His great mercy to us in this respect; for truly, we richly deserved His judgment.

The Epistles in which these expressions occur—Hebrews and 1 Peter—were both written to converted Jews, and if we are to rightly understand their meaning we must keep this in mind.

Before they received our Lord Jesus Christ as the God-sent Messiah, they had cherished the hope of that salvation which was to come, and of which their Old Testament Scriptures spoke with such rapture.

Isaiah 45. is one of these prophecies. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation" (ver. 17). This would be for their nation, and it would be found "*in the Lord*"; for "there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none else beside Me" (ver. 21). Israel was therefore shut up to Him for salvation. But there followed a world-wide invitation: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (ver. 22). The world is also shut up to Him. In the last verse we read, "*In the Lord* shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

But this glorious salvation for which every pious Israelite looked, was for the time being lost to them because of the rejection of the Messiah. The public revelation of it was postponed; but those to whom Peter wrote had received Christ in faith. They had believed in Him, before He brought in publicly the

"salvation ready to be revealed" (1 Peter 1. 5). They loved Christ already. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently" (1 Peter 1. 8-10).

But this is ours, as well as theirs, for the Lord drew out of Israel those who believed on Him, and He is drawing out from amongst the Gentiles those who believe in Him, and they are made one—sharers of a common salvation.

As Simeon received the Saviour into his arms he sang, "Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a Light for revelation to the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2. 30-32, N.T.). In receiving Him in faith, *soul*-salvation is ours, before our *bodies* are saved; and before Israel and the nations are brought into salvation.

In Hebrews 10. 39, the Apostle says, "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition;" but, since "the just shall live by faith" (ver. 38), we go on in faith, "to the saving of the soul," or "to soul-saving". In what follows in Hebrew 11. we have this illustrated, by the men of faith who had gone before. Faith enriches the soul with the things hoped for. It is the substantiating of things hoped for, as well as the conviction of things not seen (ver. 1.). Now this truth links with what we have spoken of in 1 Peter 1. Instead of vain things, corruptible things, and defiled things, and dead things, filling our souls, we have a living hope, and that which is precious and abiding, incorruptible, undefilable, and unfading. But we have these things by faith, and

though we have not seen Him, yet we know the love of Christ, and love Him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. Christ Himself is received, and our souls are "full of glory" (ver. 8.). Therefore it is at once added, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired," for faith in these unseen things lifts up the soul above the corruptible and defiling things of the world, and these things that belong to the kingdom when His kingdom comes are ours now.

No *material* order, no *seen* organization, no *outward* system, however correct and scriptural, can bring this about for us. Of course, it is most important to be correct and scriptural in the order of our gatherings, etc. ; but when that is put in the place of faith, loss of a very serious nature follows. Hardly anything could be worse than to say that salvation is *in the assembly*. The Apostle endured "all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2. 10). It is faith which brings this great

wealth, these divine riches, into our souls ; and the Christ dwells "in your hearts *by faith*" (Eph. 3. 17).

It will be seen from what we have said, that soul-salvation in these scriptures necessarily includes the judicial salvation, which is ours when we believe ; when we receive the forgiveness of sins, and are justified on the principle of faith ; but in its positive aspect it embraces the present enjoyment in the soul, of that salvation, which, in its fullness, is ready to be revealed. It is ours in this world now, because it is "in Christ."

In His name a lame Israelite was once strengthened to walk, and leap, and praise God. *To the rulers and elders of Israel*, when called upon to answer before them as to this miracle, Peter said, in effect : If ever you (Israel) are to be saved, and also to be filled with joy and praise, like this lame man, it must be through our Lord Jesus Christ ; for "*in none other is SALVATION*" (Acts 4. 12, N.T.). If that nation still rejects Him, let us ever remember it is all of grace that we have accepted Him.

More Than a Conqueror.

We have been asked for the following lines. They were written by a man who had been for eighteen years a complete paralytic, and who finally lost his sight. They were first published, we believe, in "Things New and Old," 1874.

ONCE I could see, but ne'er again shall I behold the verdant plain,
 Jewelled with flowers of colours bright, bathed in a flood of golden light.
 The birds, the brilliant butterflies, these all in thought before me rise ;
 The shining rivulet, whose song comes sweetly murmuring along ;
 The sky, the clouds, the grass, the trees, all waving, glancing in the breeze—
 I see them pictured in my mind—but *there alone*, for I am blind.

Blind did I say ? How can that be ? Since I by faith my Saviour see ;
 Exalted to the throne above, beaming with mercy, grace, and love.
 A view like this were better far than sun or moon or glittering star,
 Or glowing landscape, sunny skies, or sight that's fair to mortal eyes.
 I thank my God that He has put a veil before mine eyes, and shut
 All earthly objects from my sight, and Christ revealed in glory bright.
 Henceforth my word shall ever be : ONCE I WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE.

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart.

(EDWARD CROSS)

(CONTINUED)

A FEW additional remarks on this subject, in further explanation of what was stated in last month's issue, will be of interest to some of the readers of "Scripture Truth." Many seriously-minded persons find difficulty in reconciling the apparent arbitrariness of God's dealings with Pharaoh, as we understand them from our English translations, with the idea of justice and mercy, which we have rightly learned to ascribe to God, as amongst the brightest attributes of His being; and any attempt to understand better the real meaning of these dealings, which we are prepared, on *a priori* grounds, to believe, must vindicate His righteousness, and further our confidence in His holy name, cannot but be fraught with blessing to those who diligently search this subject out. Whatever may be the result of our researches, and to whatever conclusions we may think we are necessarily bound, we may conclude already in advance, with the Apostle James, that "no man [can] say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man." All that is good and perfect, and only such, "cometh down [from above], from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." And so reasons the Apostle Paul in treating this very subject, when he says, "Is there [then] unrighteousness with God? God forbid." Nor is there anything new in this mode of reasoning. It is the argument of the Spirit from the beginning. In the oldest book of the Bible, Elihu addresses himself to every man "who has a heart to understand" in these terms: "Let wickedness be far from God, and iniquity from the Almighty. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment" (Job 34. 1-5). His very nature as God, as well as the greatness of His power, preclude

the possibility of such a thought. It would be beneath Him to stoop to any baseness. God forbid the thought! Therefore we may rest assured that the Scripture that reveals Him cannot, when rightly understood, but assert the fact that "the Judge of all the earth will do right."

But, says the Apostle: "He shews mercy to whom He will shew mercy, and whom He will He hardens." That seems arbitrary enough. The question then arises, What is the meaning of this expression? Let it then be premised at once that God never hardened any one's heart in the arbitrary manner that is not infrequently deduced from this Scripture, as though He first hardened the rebel's heart and then punished him because it was so. That is a perversion, not the interpretation, of the Scripture. What, then, do these words mean?

It is plain that they must be read in connection with the history in the O.T. to which they refer—of which they are, in fact, a summary; and to that history we must now turn, and seek to understand it, as it is given in the original Hebrew.

Prof. Lee, in his Hebrew grammar, from which the following remarks are largely taken, points out the importance of understanding the laws which govern the changes in the constitution of Hebrew words, because of the changes, or modifications, they effect in the meaning of the words themselves; and until these laws are understood constant difficulty will be met with, all real progress in the knowledge of the language will be stopped, and, in consequence, the interpretation of it will suffer accordingly.

Let us then try to understand a few simple, guiding principles. Of the Hebrew verb there are seven forms or

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species, sometimes called conjugations ; and each form has its own special and distinctive signification. With three of these forms alone we are here concerned. They are known as the Kal, Piël, and Hiphil forms.

Kal.—This is the simple, primitive form of the word, conveying its simple, primitive meaning. It may be transitive (active), or intransitive ; *i.e.* represent doing or being, as *kâtal*, to kill ; *gâdêl*, to be great. From this form come the various forms, or modifications, of the primitive word, each form of the stem being distinguished by a specific change of meaning ; as :—

Piël.—This form in general denotes intensity, etc., and, in the eager pursuit of an object, influencing others to perform it. Its mark is the doubling of the middle stem letter, thus emphasizing its pronunciation. This doubling of the letter is shown by a dot thus, *ki-têl* (for *kittêl*) = to kill violently, to massacre.

This form conveys also (like *Hiphil*) a declaration, or pronouncing, of what the primitive word, in *kal*, means. Thus, “the daughters will call me blessed” (*Gen. 30. 13*), *i.e.* declare me blessed ; “he shall make innocent” (hold him guiltless) (*Exod. 20. 7*), *i.e.* declare to be so ; “the priest shall clean, or unclean him,” *i.e.* pronounce clean or unclean (*Lev. 13. 15*) (there is no word in the original for “pronounce,” but only a change of form, and this dot (·) called *Dagesh*). “And in this way is to be understood all the passages in this form, in which God is said to have hardened Pharaoh’s heart.”

Hiphil.—The general meaning of this form is causative—causing another to act. Its characteristic is the prefix of the letter *h*, with a long vowel *ê* or *î* in the middle of the word ; thus *hiktîl* = to cause to kill. It also conveys the idea of exhibiting, or esteeming the person designated, by such word as is possessed of the sense afforded by the primitive word in *kal*, “do justice to the afflicted” (*Psa. 82. 3*) ; “they shall justify the righteous” (*Deut. 25. 1*) *i.e.* declare him to be, treat him as such ;

“who did very wickedly” (*2 Chron. 20. 25*), *i.e.* his conduct was so esteemed. “To this property may be referred all those passages wherein this form is used, where God is said to have ‘hardened the heart,’ ‘blinded the eyes,’ ‘made the heart gross,’ ‘deceived the people,’ etc., where nothing more than declaring this to be the case can be meant.”

Three words are used to express the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. They differ from each other in their import, but they are all alike translated “harden.” They are :—

(1) *Chazaq* = to bind fast, harden. It implies the purposeful, obdurate resistance of Pharaoh to all the appeals made to him of every kind, and the strongest pronouncements of the judgments of God. It is used of him twelve times.

(2) *Kabêd* = to be heavy, dense, insensible to the promptings of conviction. It is used six times, once as an adjective.

(3) *Qashach* = to be obstinate, perverse, intractable. It is used twice.

The following Table shows the passages in which these words are found, and the forms in which they are used :—

		CHAZAQ	
Ex.	4. 21	and I will harden his heart (not <i>but</i>)	Piël
”	7. 13	And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart [rather Pharaoh’s heart was hardened] (<i>s’endurcit. J.N.D.</i>). It is the same as ver. 22. “So all the ancient versions” (<i>Speaker’s Commentary</i>)	Kal
”	7. 22	Same as 7. 13	”
”	8. 19	Same as 7. 13	”
”	9. 35	Same as 7. 13	”
”	9. 12	the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh	Piël
”	10. 20	Same as 9. 12	”
”	10. 27	Same as 9. 12	”
”	11. 10	Same as 9. 12	”
”	14. 4	I will harden Pharaoh’s heart	”
”	14. 8	Same as 9. 12	”
”	14. 17	I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians	”
		KABÊD	
Ex.	7. 14	Pharaoh’s heart is <i>hard</i> , [an adjective] or, it may be a verb in <i>Kal</i> .	Kal
”	8. 15	he [Pharaoh] hardened his heart	Hiphil
”	8. 32	Same as 8. 15	”
”	9. 7	the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, (<i>s’endurcit. J.N.D.</i>).	Kal
”	9. 34	Same as above, and 7. 13	”
”	10. 1	I have hardened his heart	Hiphil
		QASHACH	
Ex.	7. 3	And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart	Hiphil
”	13. 15	Pharaoh would hardly let us go [literally, hardened himself]	”

From this Table it will be seen that God is never said to harden Pharaoh's heart in the "kal," or unmodified form, but only in the "piël," or "hiphil" form. Where the "kal" form is used, it is Pharaoh's own doing. But where God finds him in a rebellious, self-hardened state (see Exod. 3. 19, 20), He deals with him accordingly; and a terrible thing it is to be hardened by Him judicially. Eternal judgment in the lake of fire is nothing more than this same dealing carried out to its natural issue (*cf.* Rev. 19. 19, 20; 20. 10-15). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10. 31).

We have yet to consider Isa. 6. 9, 10. But as this Scripture is interpreted for us by the Lord Himself in all the four Gospels, and also by the Apostle Paul in Acts 28. 25-27, there is no possibility of our going astray here.

The verbs in Isaiah 6. 9 are in the "kal" form; in verse 10 in "hiphil." Verse 9 may very well be rendered, as in the French of *J. N. Darby*, "*En entendant vous entendrez, et vous ne comprendez pas; et en voyant vous verrez, et vous ne connaissez pas*" (In hearing ye will hear, and not understand; and seeing ye will see, and not perceive). The glorious message of God would be still proclaimed to them by the prophet, as again more fully by the Lord Himself, and still again by the Apostle Paul and others; but while they heard, they heard not; and while they saw, they perceived not. Pride and unbelief stopped up the avenues of their consciences and their hearts; and, as it was at that day, so it still is. This was *their* doing, and for the consequences which they would assuredly reap—which they are reaping still—they have but themselves to blame. Earnestly the Lord had pleaded with them (Isa. 1. 18), "Come now, let us reason together, . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." But in vain. He will even call upon themselves to judge, and will leave the verdict with them. "What could have

been done more to my vineyard that I have not done?" (chap. 5. 4) But they "cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel" (ver. 24), and so the message is forced from Him: "Go, tell this people"—mark the word; not "My people" (*cf.* Exod. 32. 9, etc.; Num. 11. 11, etc.)—as He sets before them their state (Isa. 6. 9) and His judgment thereon (ver. 10). The verbs in verse 10 are *hiphil*: *i.e.* He declares their state and treats them accordingly.

In Young's translation of the Bible, Isaiah 6. 10 is rendered thus: "Declare fat the heart of this people, and its ears declare heavy, and its eyes declare dazzled—lest it see with its eyes, and with its ears hear, and its heart consider, and it turn back, and have health." Compare also the words of the Apostle in 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4: "But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing [or, that perish, as chapter 2. 15]; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, (N.Tr.) so that they should not discern the shining forth of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God."

In referring to this Scripture in Matthew 13, the Lord ascribes their state to the "Evil one"; in Mark 4. to "Satan"; in Luke 8. to the "Devil." But John 12 is the most touching of all. There He reviews the whole scope of His service in all its significance, its moral depth, its history, and its end, with the trouble His soul has passed through in its performance. Here He has before Him "this world and the prince of it." He had brought light into the world; fain would He have them receive it. "But though He had done so many miracles, yet they believed not on Him." Isaiah had foretold it (chap. 53. 1). Yea, "they could not believe," as shown in Isaiah 6. 10. But notwithstanding all they had done, and their stubborn unbelief, His last word is to throw the door of mercy widely open, as He says, "I am come a light into the world, that

WHOSOEVER believeth in Me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My words and believe not, I judge him not . . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day." Moreover, He did not say this of Himself, but as so commissioned of the Father; "and," He adds, "I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak, therefore"—all the words of loving entreaty,

of patient grace, of life eternal—"even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

Blessed God, Thou art not to be accused of arbitrarily willing man's destruction, who hast sent Thy Son with such a message to such as we are by nature—poor, ruined, guilty rebels!

Blessed Saviour, how can we bless Thee aright, for bringing to us such a message at such a cost?

The Creature that Turns Up the Eye.

T. OLIVER,
GALASHIELS.

THE Shorter Catechism commences with the proposition: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." This is true, and it was God's purpose in creating man that, in contrast with the whole animal creation, he alone should have aspirations heavenwards. It is striking that the derivation of *anthrōpos*, the Greek word meaning "man" signifies "the one who turns up the eye": (ana) upwards; (trepo) I turn; (ops) the eye.

But man has failed signally to fulfil the end which God had in view in creating him. At the beginning, in Eden, Adam dishonoured God by choosing to follow the Serpent's lead instead of the path of obedience to his Creator; and so far from enjoying God, he hid himself behind the trees of the garden in abject fear. Man's signal failure has, however, never altered God's unwavering purpose. But in order that His purpose should be effected it was necessary that His Son should assume manhood. When that event took place, there was for the first time on earth a Man who in very truth lifted up the eye to God, and who glorified God and enjoyed Him perfectly. For the first time also there

was an object on earth which claimed the whole attention of heaven. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Ps. 8. 4, 5). In consequence of His perfect obedience and His having by the grace of God tasted death for every man, He is now bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2. 9, 10). They have been endowed with capacity to glorify and enjoy God, and they can now turn up the eye to Him. But if the Christian can turn up his eye to God, he also finds that his eye meets the eye of God, and in that eye he can read guidance for the pathway. "I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Ps. 32. 8). When the good sheep-dog is far away from the shepherd, his movements must be controlled by the hand or by whistle; but when he is working at short range he is controlled by the shepherd's eye. It is a matter of common observation how much better he does his work at close quarters than at long range. So, in order that we may be guided by the eye of God, we must not seek to roam afar; we must be at short range, and have the eyes of our hearts turned heavenwards.

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 2.

(JAMES BOVD).

The Rapture of the Church.

THE taking up of the church to meet the Lord in the air is now admitted by almost all who undertake to speak of the coming of Christ as the hope of the believer. Some will have it that it is at the moment of His appearing to the world this takes place, others that it takes place some considerable time before the event. But every one who loves Him, and longs to see Him will be exceedingly thankful that the attention of saints is being directed to that glorious advent, even though all may not be quite agreed regarding the order in which the various events connected with it will shape themselves. At the same time we need to be watchful that the wily foe does not divert our minds and thoughts into channels of error, from the plain paths marked out for them to traverse by the Word of God.

It is said in Colossians 3., that when He appears we shall appear with Him in glory. And in order for this to be so, it is surely needful that we should be with Him before He appears. How long, or how short a time it may be that we are with Him before He appears I am not prepared to say; but that the world shall not see Him until it sees us with Him is clear.

Again, we are to see Him "*as He is*" (1 John 3. 2). Now the world will never see Him as He is. It will see Him coming with the angels of His might, in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). "*As He is*" is apart from all regal splendour, and judicial terror, and treading of the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. It is as He is at home, in the quiet, and peace, and rest of the Father's house. There we shall see Him, and there we shall be like Him; He the First-born among many brethren, and we His brethren around Him in that holy place. Were we to wait, like the world, for His appearing, we could neither appear with Him nor see Him as He is.

The passage that speaks of seeing Him *as He is* tells us we are *now* the children of God (as 1 John 3. 2 should read). We

can never be more this than we are at the present moment. In one sense we are *sons*, but yet we await sonship, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8. 23); for the full thought of sonship is likeness to Christ in glory, conformity to the Son of God. But children we now are—first, by the right given us by Christ on the ground of redemption (John 1. 12); second, by the Father's call (1 John 3. 1); third, by the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8. 16). And as such we are already manifested. As *sons* of God we are not yet manifested. For creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God when all its travail will cease and its groans be hushed (Rom. 8. 19). But as *children* we are already manifested, and that by the fact that we do righteousness, and love the brethren; whereas the children of the devil are manifested in practising sin, and in hatred to the brethren (1 John 3.). The children of God exhibit the moral features of the One by whom they have been begotten, as do also the children of the devil.

But we are still looking for likeness to Christ and glory with Him. This that lies ahead of our present place as children of God has not yet come, but we know that when it is manifested, it will be that we shall be like Him; and one great proof of this is, that "*we shall see Him as He is.*" We shall see Him, and be with Him, and be like Him, *before* He appears, and therefore when He does appear and is seen by the world His saints will be seen with Him.

Now I turn to John 14. The Lord is about to pass out of the world to the Father, from whom He had come. And what a joy it was to His heart to be going there, however full of gloom, desertion, betrayal, and the abandonment of God was the journey thither! No doubt He could have gone a different way than by the cross, for twelve legions of angels would have made short work of the powers of darkness, and of a hostile world. But two tremendous considerations impelled Him to choose the circuitous, and, beyond all creature thought, terrible, route,

by way of grim Golgotha. One of these considerations was the glory of God and the fulfilment of the counsels of the Father; and the other His love for His own, whom the Father had given Him out of the world. 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); and "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (13. 1).

He was going beyond the range of their natural vision, and would have to be an object of faith to them, as the unseen God had ever been. But He assures them that there is room for all where He is going. There was room for them, and for every family of faith, in the Father's house. If there was no room for them in the world, as there had been no room for Him, there was room for both Him and them in another and better sphere. And there He was about to prepare a place for them. "And," He says, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." There they would be with Him, and there they would see Him as He is.

It would be very difficult to fit all this into His manifestation in the clouds of heaven, taking vengeance upon the wicked. I cannot see how it is possible to reconcile His coming to receive us to Himself in the Father's house, and our seeing Him as He is with His manifestation to the world, when every eye shall see Him.

In the Epistles to the Thessalonian believers, the coming of the Lord is the one great subject. These saints had, by faith in the gospel, been turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come; or rather "Our Deliverer from the coming wrath." It is more One who *would* deliver than One who *had* done so. This coming is the general thought of His coming, though they could only think of it in connection with His coming to judge the world, for it was in this character He was presented to men in the gospel. The truth of the rapture does not cast a shadow on the

appearing, but rather clarifies and brightens it before the soul.

It can scarcely be questioned that epistles were written by the apostles to the churches other than those which by the grace of God have been preserved to us. Meat in due season was given to the saints; that is to say, truth as they were able to bear it. It would be a great mistake to suppose that no assembly of God except that at Thessalonica was instructed into the truth regarding the coming of Christ; yet it is the Epistles which were written to this Church which are almost wholly occupied with this subject. Colossians 4. 16 would lead us to suppose that the Epistles to the various assemblies may have been handed about from one to another. But we have that which God in His infinite wisdom and love saw fit that we should have, as a perfect revelation of His mind for our guidance during this whole dispensation. Therefore we do not find any useless repetitions, but every stone in the glorious edifice of Divine revelation set by a master hand in its own rightful place, and giving forth its own peculiar ray of living light, and all in the most perfect harmony for the enlightenment and comfort of His people. One text was enough to silence the devil, and one text is enough for the man of God.

It was necessary for the comfort of these Thessalonians that the general hope of the coming of their Deliver should be particularized; that they should have the events connected therewith in their proper order, and that difficulties which beset their faith should be cleared up. Some of their brethren had fallen asleep, and what about them? They would not be here to share in His glory and the blessings of His kingdom and reign. And this of itself shows us the hold this hope had upon their hearts. They did not expect any of their number to fall asleep before that event would take place. The Word of God never puts the coming of the Lord beyond the lifetime of the saints who wait for Him. The things spoken of as certain to precede this event—such as the death of Peter and Paul, and the evils of the "*last days*"—were not things that could not have taken place within the lifetime of the saints then living. Peter was not young when the Lord told him what would take place when he would

be old; Paul might have been slain any day after he reached Rome, and evil developes very rapidly. But this I must leave for another chapter.

But the hearts of these Thessalonian believers must be comforted regarding those for whom they sorrowed so deeply. "Them also which sleep," he says, "in Jesus, will God bring with Him." When He returns the saints whom they had laid in the graves would come with Him. When God brings His First-begotten into the world (Heb. 1. 6) His saints will be with Him. It is exactly what we have in Colossians 3. 4.

But mark the way in which this blessed truth is introduced. He says, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again." The death and resurrection of Jesus is brought in because the resurrection of His own is to be like His. His resurrection is the great pattern of that of His saints who sleep through Him. The world never saw Him after He was laid in the cave by His sorrowing disciples, nor will it ever see Him until He comes in glory. But this will also be true of His own.

"*The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*," by S. P. Tregelles (a more unfair and false witness to the truth it would be difficult to find), speaks of "The visible opening of the graves, when dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (page 96). But where is this said of them? That the angel rolled away the stone from the mouth of the cave where Jesus had lain is not questioned. But who will say that it was to let out the body of our blessed Saviour? Surely it was rather to show how death had been already vanquished. The angel who did this says to the woman, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28. 6).

It may be replied to this that I am forgetting Matthew 27. 52, 53. But this also was for a witness to the power of the death of Christ, as that which had annulled both death and the one who had the power of it. As to whether these are included in the first resurrection, or whether they returned to their graves again when they had rendered their testimony, Scripture does not say, and where Scripture is silent we must also be. I see no necessity of the opening of the sepulchre of our Lord to set Him free;

nor of ours either, who come forth with spiritual bodies.

A *secret* resurrection, and a *secret* taking of His people to Himself, are utterly denied by the writer of the book in question. He says that everything must be open and manifest. The graves must be opened, the dead raised in visible glory, and all caught up in the sight of everybody (pp. 96, 97). This is a complete denial of our appearing with Him in glory, for all this, we are told, must take place after His appearing. Our appearing would not be at the same moment with His; nor, indeed, if there were no secret rapture, would it be with Him at all; but rather, we should appear, some of us from our graves rising in glory, others as changed, and all going up to meet Him in the air. Instead of being seen coming with Him, we would be seen going to Him. This is a complete reversal of the teaching of Scripture.

But if the Thessalonian believers who had passed away from this world by "falling asleep," were to come with Jesus when God should bring Him again into the world, it was necessary that they should be taken to be with Him previous to His appearing. And this is brought before them in the parenthesis from verse 15 to 18 of chapter 4. And that which he brings before them forms the subject of a special revelation. He speaks by "*The word of the Lord*." I need scarcely say that all the Apostle wrote to the churches, except a few verses in 1 Corinthians 7., was by the word of the Lord; and one of the tests of the spirituality of a saint was the acknowledgment that the things he wrote to them were "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37). But while this is true, there are certain communications, which, because of their great importance, he draws special attention to as distinct and specific revelations. One of these is in 1 Corinthians 11., and refers to the Supper of the Lord; another we have here.

The living, he tells them, shall have no advantage over those fallen asleep. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in

the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This special revelation, given for the comfort of the hearts of sorrowing and bewildered disciples, is the grand and perfect explanation regarding the way in which God shall be able to bring His people along with His Firstborn into the world.

In this connection there does not seem to be any attendants with the Lord. It looks as though He were unaccompanied. He comes only for His own; and what needs He with angelic hosts. Perhaps it will be said there is the voice of the archangel. But in this case the *voice* is only characteristic. It is "with archangel's voice." In His manifestation the angels have a very prominent part; and in connection with the gathering together of the elect of Israel they have a very great service to render (Matt. 24. 30, 31; 23. 31; 16. 27). I do not see any indications of angelic companions in this instance. But I should not dogmatize on the subject.

In speaking of this, Tregelles says (p. 17), "The scene presented is the reverse of secrecy. . . . To say that this triple sound shall not be heard by all, would be a mere addition to Holy Scripture of a kind that contradicts its testimony." But what about a man who would affirm that it is heard by all? What would such a person be doing other than adding to Scripture? The passage does not say that any single soul of man, living or dead, saint or sinner, saved or unsaved, shall hear this triple sound. Though surely the impression left in the mind by these words is that at least those spoken of in the passage as those for whom He comes shall hear it. Shall the wicked dead hear it? If not, why should it be heard by the wicked living? But this triple sound proves nothing as to the *publicity* or *secrecy* of the rapture of the church. Not only that, but the effort to prove a public taking away of the church is clean contrary to the Word of God, which makes our life a hidden one with Christ in God, and gives no prospect of an appearing until Christ appears, and then we appear with Him in glory. I affirm, and from that passage alone, that we shall not be seen going up.

The way in which the Lord presents Himself to the remnant of Israel in His closing words to that nation by the prophet Malachi, in contrast with His last words to ourselves who are of this

dispensation, is worthy of notice. To them "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." But to us He is both "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22. 16). We know how brightly the morning star breaks upon the vision while it is yet night and even before the coming lord of day has cast a single beam of light over the eastern hills. Not those who sleep during the night, but the weary watchers, are gladdened by its brightness.

Now were there nothing in the order in which these luminaries manifest themselves, I do not see why it should not have been the *star* for *Israel* and the *sun* for *us*, for we are, even at this present moment, more in the light of the coming day than Israel will be when the sun is risen. The light that will illuminate God's earthly people, and spread its healing wings over the whole wounded earth, will be the light of Christ radiant in the church. The saved nations will walk in the light of it, and the leaves of the tree of life, growing within its jasper walls, will heal their woes (Rev. 21. 24; 22. 2). I cannot doubt that the wings of the Sun of Righteousness, in which there is this gracious healing, are His saints, who come with Him through the opened heaven.

Then again, we are the sons of the day. We have our origin in the light that shall drive the clouds of night from this evil world, when the time comes for Him, in whom all light centres, to show Himself. We are neither *of* the night nor *of* the darkness, nor are we *in* the night nor *in* the darkness. The world is in both; and it is either asleep or drunken. If outwardly it is night, and darkness all around us, our hearts are in the light of the coming day, and as sons of the day we show forth in the midst of the world's night "the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9).

Therefore it is impossible that that day should overtake us as a thief, or indeed in any way seize or come suddenly upon (for this is really the meaning of the word) us in any way. For "God hath not appointed us to wrath (as the world and Israel are), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." As we are told in Romans 5. 9, "we shall be saved from wrath through Him;" and

1 Thessalonians 1. 10, "Our Deliverer from the coming wrath." He died for us, that whether we are among the living or amongst those who sleep in Jesus, "we should live together with Him."

It can scarcely be questioned that the seven churches of Revelation give a forecast of the various stages through which the church of God was to pass, from the moment when it could be said to be fallen until, as nauseous to Christ, it would be spued out of His mouth. And there, to the angel of the church in Philadelphia (which I have no doubt takes in the whole body of Christ upon earth), the Lord says, "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 that dwell upon the earth." Now this does not refer to any preservation accorded to the church, as a company going through this time of trial. They are not simply kept from the temptation, but from the *hour* in which that temptation comes upon the whole world. How could such a preservation be extended to the church other than by its being taken out of the scene of the trial altogether before the trial comes? The church is not only not in the temptation, but is not under heaven in the hour in which it exists. We are not preserved through the wrath when it is present, nor are we taken out of the midst of it when it begins to burn, but we are removed from this world before it comes.

And this is in perfect harmony with the disappearance of the church before the appearing of Christ to judge the world, and also with seeing Him as He is, and with our appearing with Him at the moment of His appearing. Of course, a person might say he refuses altogether the notion that these churches (Rev. 2. 3) should be taken to set forth the history of the whole church of God in its responsible career on earth, but if he did I should think he had still something to learn. I only refer to the passage to show its complete harmony with all that I have advanced as to the rapture, and I say, the *secret* rapture of the church.

Scripture is clear on the point that there is no appearance of the saints in glory until Christ appears. Hence that the notion of the "*triple sound*"—shout, archangel's voice, and trump of God, being heard by everybody; graves opened,

dead raised in glory, living changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the air in the sight of all, is but a fictitious vagary of the human mind becomes evident.

That we are to see Him as He is precludes the thought of our not seeing Him until His manifestation to the world, for as *He is* the world will never see Him. If "every eye" were to see Him as He is, it could scarcely be a proof to us that we should be like Him at His appearing, and as this it is brought to our minds in 1 John 3. And this being known by us causes us to purify ourselves according to that blessed standard.

One other passage (Rev. 19.). Here we have the marriage of the Lamb in heaven before He comes forth in judgment. For this to take place, the bride must be there. The harlot is judged in chapter 18., and on this account heaven resounds with the praises of God. Also there is great gladness and rejoicing in heaven, because "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." She is arrayed in fine linen, which is "the righteousness of saints." Next, heaven is opened, and the Lord rides forth to judge and make war, followed by the armies which were in heaven.

Who this bride is, chapters 21. and 22. leave no doubt on our minds. She is the church, the heavenly bride, as the earthly Jerusalem is the earthly bride. The heavenly is the bride of the Lamb; the earthly the bride of Jehovah, as King of Israel.

Taking all these things that we have had before us into consideration we cannot get away from the truth of a secret rapture of the church, and a time in heaven with Christ previous to His appearing to the world. Of the things of which we have been speaking this is the sum:—

First: He assures His disciples He is coming to bring them into the place He has prepared for them in the Father's house (John 14.).

Second: The dead in Christ are raised as He was. His death and resurrection are referred to as a kind of headline or pattern of theirs. His resurrection and ascension were secret from the world, so shall theirs be.

Third : The way this is brought about is by the Lord's coming into the air, and calling all up to Himself (1 Thess. 4.).

Fourth : We are to see Him "as He is." To wait for His manifestation would be to see Him risen from off the throne of the Father and coming in judgment. This is not *as He is* (1 John 3.).

Fifth : The marriage of the church to the Lamb takes place in heaven before His appearing (Rev. 19.).

Sixth : When He appears, we appear with Him in glory (Col. 3.). The impossibility of this is evident if we await His appearing before being caught up.

Seventh : He keeps us from the *hour* of temptation that comes upon all the world to try them that dwell on the earth (Rev. 3.).

Eighth : He is the Morning Star for the church; for Israel the Sun of Righteousness.

I have confined myself, for the setting forth of the opposite side, to a paper by S. P. Tregelles, as I take him to be one of the great leaders in the school of thought which I believe to be opposed to Scripture. I have spoken of his unfairness and falsity in that paper, because he designates as sentimentalists and emotional teachers those who hold the doctrine of a secret rapture, though he well knew that those who were largely used of God to bring this truth before the hearts of His people could not be characterized as either. In the judgment of the author they were men who cared little about "textual criticism," or the "letter of Scripture." Not so thought F. W. Newman the infidel. For he spoke of the teacher who, more than any other, brought the rapture before the hearts of saints, as the one man above all he had ever met, who was determined that no statement of Scripture would be to him a dead letter, or words to that effect. But no man can afford to be fair who has an unscriptural theory to propagate or defend.

Note the strange questions on page 78 of this tract: "If the secret ad-

vent and secret removal of the Church be true, how can the advocates of this theory show that the secret event did not take place long ago? How do they know but that they themselves are living in the supposed interval between the secret coming of Christ and His coming in glory? And thus, how can they be sure that they are part of the church at all? In fact, if the secret rapture theory were true, they might be devoid of all knowledge of what way of salvation (amongst the confused theories) is *now* available; for the preaching of the gospel may have ended with the rapture and resurrection of the church; and if this is a private occurrence, it may be long past, without anyone being aware of it."

And yet this writer was not an infidel, but supposed to be an earnest Christian! I should be inclined to ask those who have republished this tract how they know Christ is risen? how they know they are children of God? how they know they have the Spirit of adoption? how they know they have passed out of death into life? how they know what dispensation they are in at the present moment? Is it only by seeing "*anno Domini*" placed after 1913 that we know we are in the Christian era? What is the meaning of, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19. 2). Or, "Examine yourselves, . . . know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (1 Cor. 13. 3). Or, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14). I might ask many other such questions, the answer to which will suffice for answers to all these questions asked by S. P. Tregelles.

But I will bring this chapter to a close. The truth concerning the church of God must, with the help of the Lord, occupy us for a little before taking up the question of the place it has during the time of trial, to which those that dwell on the earth shall be subjected before the appearing of the Lord, when we are to appear with Him. In the meantime may we be characterized by the spirit of the bride, who has but one word to say to Him, and that word—"COME."

Doing Good.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

THE death of Christ is the sole and only ground upon which mortal man can be just with God ; it is the great act in which God's love has been perfectly revealed, God's claim fully met, a righteous ground laid for man's blessing, his sins atoned for, reconciliation made, guilt removed. We can neither over-estimate these matchless blessings, nor fully adore the grace which so freely bestows them, nor the purchase-price paid for them ; but they call forth some of the sweetest notes in the song of the redeemed *now*, and will do so throughout eternity.

We cannot, by an "unselfish life" or "following Christ's example," earn these blessings ; they are the fruit of His death, but, where His love, expressed in His death, is allowed to have its full power over the soul, it will effectually cure a life of selfishness. A self-centred Christian is an anomaly ; Christ died for all, "that they which live should not henceforth *live unto themselves*, but unto Him which *died for them*, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5. 15). And to this the love of Christ constrains.

Our life is to be *Christ centred*, profoundly moved, ever controlled, by the greatness of His love. It was because the Son of God loved him, and had given Himself for him, that Paul was constrained to live and labour for Christ ; he sat under His *shadow with great delight*, his soul feasted upon Christ's love told out in death ; and the effect was a life of hallowed service, unflagging toil, whole-hearted devotedness, and unselfish labour.

Our peculiarity is to show itself in good works ; Christ not only died to redeem us from iniquity but to make us an unselfish people, zealous of good works ; we rightly condemn *dead works* as a means of earning life, but have we not forgotten that *life works* are proof of *life possessed* ; "show Me thy faith by thy works !"

One pregnant sentence sums up the life of Jesus : "HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD."

The needs of men—spiritual, physical, temporal—moved His heart with compassion, and His hands to relieve them. He is no longer here personally but He dwells in His people ; they live of His life, consequently they are to *live His life*—the life of patient grace and toil which marked Him when here—the life of Jesus is to be manifested in their walk and ways. It is a very practical life and will show itself in good works. We are created in Christ Jesus unto *good works* ; in every *good work* we are to do God's will, we are to provoke one another to love and *good works*, glorify God in them, be fruitful in every *good work*.

Do you ask what is a good work ? It is to spend the best you have upon Christ like Mary ; it is to toil for the salvation of sinners, and the welfare of saints like Paul ; it is to show hospitality like Gaius ; to minister of your substance like Joanna ; to labour for the poor like Dorcas ; clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort the feeble-minded, do good to all, especially to the household of faith.

Perhaps a hard-worked mother says, "I have nothing to give and no time to spare for service, how then can I do good works ?" Open your Bible, read 1 Timothy 5. and you will see you need not go outside your own door. "If she have brought up children." This is a "good work"—rest assured it will not be unnoticed in a coming day ; to bring up the children for the Lord is one way in which we may carry on a good work.

Perhaps you are a servant, and ask "How can I do good works ?" Titus 2. 9 tells us, servants are to be obedient to their own masters, seeking to please them well in all things, not answering again, and not purloining, but showing all *good fidelity*; whilst Colossians 3. 22

enjoins them to walk in the fear of God, in singleness of eye, with the Lord only before them. Those who do this will get the inheritance as a "reward." This is a special encouragement to go on with God in difficult situations, and with inconsiderate masters or mistresses; your good works may not be *manifest now*, but the time is coming when they *cannot be hid* (1 Tim. 5. 25) if you seek day by day to walk with God, doing all under the eye of your Master in heaven.

Nothing can be more sad in a Christian than a dissatisfied and radical spirit; what a happy contrast to such are those faithful servants who adorn the doctrine in their walk and ways, seeking to please their heavenly Master in all things by the way they carry out their daily duties; working as faithfully when the earthly master's back is turned as when his eye is upon them.

Perhaps you are on a sick-bed, lamenting you are shut off from doing good works; but, is there not something you can do? Can you not be "patient in tribulation," can you not pray for *all saints* and *all men*? Your supplications and intercessions may range from the king on his throne to the beggar on the dunghill; such prayers are good and acceptable to God, who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2.). Nearly two hundred people were converted through an invalid's prayers in Scotland. May you be rich in such good works; your labour will not be in vain, *pray on*; remember your

prayers ascend through Christ to God mingled with the perfume of His Person, the sweet incense of our Great Priest. Pray for all sufferers, all who are in sorrow, all your fellow-Christians; begin with those you know, pray for all saints in your locality, rich and poor, old or young, and, if possible, *pray for them by name*.

There is no sphere in life, no condition in which a saint can be found, where, if he is under the constrainings of the love of Christ, he cannot pray for others; nor is there any one of the Lord's people who need be a drone, or a do-nothing; the rich can minister of their wealth; the servant of Christ can give up his time and his energies; the mother can serve in her home; the domestic in every-day duties, the solitary sufferer on a sick-bed, the lodging-house preacher, the tract distributor, the infirmary visitor, all may abound in *good works*.

Nor are these gracious activities to cease if there is opposition; we are to do good to them that hate us, pray for those who despitely use us. So characteristic are good works of a Christian, that 3 John 11. tells us, "He that *doeth good* is of God;" and when the Lord describes those who will be raised at the first resurrection He says it is those who have *done good* who will come forth. How significant this statement is! In the light of it we may well challenge ourselves if our every-day life is so spent under the constrainings of the love of Christ that *doing good is characteristic of us!*

The Way of Faith.

SET out cheerfully with God upon your venture of faith

Tear into the smallest pieces any itinerary for the journey which your imagination may have drawn up.

Your Guide will keep to no beaten path. He will lead you by a way such as you never dreamed your eyes would look upon.

A day's walk with God will do more to awaken awe, wonder, and amazement in your soul than would a century of travel through the sights of the earth.

He chooses for you a way you know not, that you may be compelled into a thousand intercourses with Himself which will make the journey for ever memorable in glory to Him and in blessing to you.

(W. W. W.)

Psalm I.—VI.

THERE are two great subjects of which the Psalms treat: first, the ways of Jehovah in government, while evil is still permitted, the final triumph of good being prophetically made known; second, His purpose concerning Messiah, with whose glory the blessing of His people is inseparably connected. These are found in the first two Psalms, which thus form a divinely-given introduction to the whole collection.

PSALM I. The government of God is pursued to the final dissociation of good and evil by judgment, and the gathering of the righteous together in a congregation (ver. 5). The latter has always been the thought of God for His saints since Israel was redeemed out of Egypt; but the history of Israel, as of the church also, is marked by failure in this respect, as in all else. When this purpose of God is fulfilled it will be by the exercise of divine power. Nevertheless, this Psalm indicates plainly the only way it could be realized now, for it is worthy of all attention that the man who is pronounced "blessed" is not the wealthy, the wise, nor the powerful in this world, but the separated man. Ever since evil was first introduced by the enemy, God has had a peculiar joy and triumph in having His own apart from the ruin; this gathering together in the spirit of Christ—of whose character this Psalm is descriptive—is honouring to God, and becomes a testimony to man (Isa. 8. 16-18). Moreover, this Psalm plainly indicates how true separation may be rightly maintained, viz., in the delight of the heart in what is good: "his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." No room is here left for the working of the leaven of the Pharisee who glorifies himself by contrast with others (Luke 18. 11). Occupation with what God has revealed always ensures both holiness and humility, as also the fruitfulness of verse 3.

As to the last sentence of verse 3, "All that he doeth shall prosper," this will only be true *manifestly* when the Kingdom comes in power. The analogous passage

in Jeremiah 17 explains what is often a real difficulty; verse 8 ends, "shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." This is true prosperity, and it is of all importance that in the confused condition which marks the course of this world, the soul should count on a divine government which will support him under all circumstances, up to, and through a martyr's death. The righteous man will surely prove that Jehovah knows his way.

PSALM 2 has twelve verses, divided into four sections of three verses each. In the previous Psalm we saw the character of Christ wrought by the Spirit of God in the faithful remnant in an evil day; here we find Christ personally, and the purposes of God concerning Him, while the evil is in a federated opposition.

The first three verses disclose the definite purpose in man's hostility, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." From Acts 4., we learn when this confederacy was formed; another climax in rebellion will be reached in Revelation 19., when it will be put down by the "iron rod" of verse 9. The next three verses show God's triumphant counter-scheme, whereby, verse answering to verse, the foe is met, and Jehovah announces His victory, "yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Verses 4 and 5 present the attitude of the throne in heaven during the present time towards the world, as the world, for though grace reigns it does not set aside government. The latter will, indeed, be seen more manifestly in exercise than in the present time, during the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials in the Apocalypse; but the earthquakes, wars, pestilences, and the sorrows of this groaning creation are God's witness against the rebellion of His creation during all the time of Christ's session in heaven. Witnesses to His mercy there are also (Acts 14. 17), and the servant of the Lord should take account of all these dealings in providence while testifying, above all, of grace.

In the next three verses Messiah

speaks declaring Jehovah's decree which reveals who the King is in His person, and shows the extent of His rule, when He will occupy the throne of David, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Luke 1. 22, 23).

The citations of verse 9 in the New Testament: Revelation 2. 27; 12. 5 and 19. 15, follow the Septuagint in rendering the word translated "break" by "shepherd"* implying thereby that besides the dealing with enemies, there will be a shepherding in the way of guidance and control; this twofold dealing of the "iron rod" is well illustrated in Ezekiel 20. 33-38.

Verses 10-12 are the exhortation to the great ones of the earth to bow to this rule, for how soon may His anger kindle (probably this is the best translation), and then if still unrepentant they must meet the power which will dash them in pieces. In the meantime, blessed are all they that confide in Him so as to take refuge in Him.

Following the two introductory Psalms, we come to five more, entirely experimental. Words are given by the Spirit to educate the saints in the exercise of faith, when they have to face the power of evil, in the circumstances outlined in Psalms 1. and 2.

PSALM 3. Here the soul realizes personal weakness and inability to meet the opposing forces. The ear listens painfully to the taunt "no hope for him in God." He turns to Jehovah, and claims Him, the covenant God, as shield and glory, as also the lifter up of his head. The Spirit would lead the sorrowing one to know, in spite of all appearances, that Jehovah hears from the place of holy power. Hence he anticipates the end from the beginning, and if the salvation is of Jehovah, the blessing *must* belong to His people. Precious confidence! In a fuller way we know how the victory was won that we might "share it all with Him!"

PSALM 4. The address here is to "the God of my righteousness," not in the sense of justifying the believer (Rom. 3.), but rather as the source of practical righteousness to the saint. The knowledge of God in this character delivers from all self-righteousness, and enables the believer to delight in the knowledge

that "God has set apart the godly for Himself," and as another has said, "the effects of this are seen not in outward deliverances, but in the joy of an inward experience beyond telling" (F. W. Grant). In fact it is the separated man of Psalm 1., enjoying the blessing which God has pronounced, in the gladness of heart that the out-shining of the light of His countenance gives. In this day, all that God shines for us in the face of the Man Christ Jesus, who has put away our sins (2 Cor. 3. 18; 4. 6). Testimony to others has its place in verses 4 and 5. Uprightness of heart is the key-note of this Psalm, as trust is of Psalm 3.

PSALM 5. Under the continued pressure of evil, there is constancy in prayer, and another element in the knowledge of God is found, which faith is quick to lay hold of. God and evil cannot continue together for ever; hostile power may seem to be firmly established, but as sure as God is God, it must fall. So 2 Timothy 3. 9, "they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be completely manifest [ἐκδηλος] to all." Therefore, instead of being downcast at the opposition, the soul looks to enjoy approach to God, according to the way He is known, after which—and the order should be noted—guidance is sought: "Lead me in Thy righteousness because of my enemies." The soul whose eye is single can unhesitatingly count on divine guidance, according to the righteousness of God, who, as righteous, will be faithful to lead His own in His way. The prayers for vengeance have been considered in a previous paper; they are the suited utterance of the righteous man anticipating his blessing on earth.

PSALM 6. Another ingredient in the sorrow of the Jewish remnant is here disclosed—the wrath of Jehovah. This gives a vastly different character to the experience; the saint feels it physically and in his spirit, and the word is "how long?" (cf., 74. 9, 10). This experience of divine wrath, the fear of death (ver. 5), and all the acute distress described show us what the Jews will pass through, in the time of Jehovah's indignation, at the close of this age. (Isa. 10. 25 and 26. 20). This experience is not that of the Christian; we may indeed suffer on account of our own sin and folly, but the relationships in which we stand are never in question, a truth which properly leads to a deeper abhorrence of sin than the Jew will know.

* See Greek.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels. (J. ALFRED TRENCH).

LUKE. See Vol. iii. p. 222.

IN attempting to follow out further the way the Lord Jesus is presented in the Gospel of Luke, it will not be necessary to dwell on scenes common to the three Gospels and that have come before us in the others, save where a change of order may give them a distinct character. In CHAPTER 8 the parable of the Sower stands alone, with its interpretation more briefly given than in MATTHEW and MARK, but with the same elements. No parable of the kingdom follows. The Word of God is sown; that which fell upon good ground is defined to be they which, in an honest and good heart having heard the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience; with the connection, as in MARK, of what would come out in testimony for God, as a light set upon a candlestick, to be manifested as everything shall be. There comes also the exhortation here to take heed *how* the Word is heard so that it may be truly possessed in its formative power. Following upon this (though without any note of time, as in the A.V. "then," for MATT. and MARK give the occurrence in its historical place, antecedent to the parable), those who hear the Word of God and do it are owned by Christ as His relatives, without any implied disowning of natural ties in Israel (*cf.* Matt. 12. 46-13. 1).

The incidents necessary to complete the testimony of the power of God present in grace are found now, and in the same order as in MARK, up to the feeding of the five thousand (chap. 9. 11-17): the storm on the lake stilled at a word from Him, the legion of demons dispossessed of their prey with the detail of the work of grace wrought in him who was delivered, the raising up of Jairus' daughter, and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, followed by the sending out of the twelve with no limitation of their testimony to Israel, and Herod's perplexity in hearing of all that was done by Him and his desire to see Him. Then the return of the apostles and the Lord's retirement with them to a desert place where He fed the multitudes. What follows upon this in MATTHEW 14. 22-16. 12, and MARK 6. 45-8. 26, and which has to do mainly with the Lord's relations with

Israel and His solemn judgment of their state, does not enter into the scope of LUKE, who carries us on thus early to the Transfiguration; which is prefaced in each Gospel by the question of the Lord as to the effect produced upon the people by His presence, and that leads to the closing of the testimony that He was Christ, and His taking His place as Son of Man, to be rejected of the Jewish leaders and be slain, with all the solemn consequences of the cross as to the position of His followers.

The wonderful scene on the mount has been before us with some of the differences in detail which the three narratives of it afford (see vol. iv, pp. 97 and 226). But it has a character in LUKE suited to the divine purpose in this Gospel which may be a little more fully developed. The "kingdom of God" was set forth in it, but not only in the way of the kingdom being established in power as yet future, but as to what would be the present portion of His people therein. There is a twofold presentation: the Lord Jesus is seen in His glory, a glory in which He will be manifested to all when the time comes for it (*cf.* vers. 32 and 26), and Moses and Elijah appear with Him in glory, and are occupied with His decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem. It was a wonderful gleam of the glory of the kingdom in its heavenly side. But it passed away from the vision of the chosen witnesses. A cloud which we know from 2 Peter 1. to have been that of the divine presence. "the excellent glory," overshadowed them; and they feared as they* entered into it; as well they might for none upon earth had ever been so privileged. The cloud had talked with Moses (Exod. 33. 9), but now they enter into it. It is the Father's house, and a voice out of the cloud reveals Him in the glory that belongs to Him as the beloved Son of the Father, deeper and more intimate than all the glory in which He

*The *ἐκεῖνο* ζ of the Text. Rec. made it Moses and Elijah who entered into the cloud. But the Vatican and Sinaitic uncials supported by other ancient witnesses of the text read *αὐτοῦς*, which is adopted by the critical editors Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, J.N.D.'s New Translation and the Revisers, which makes all plain.

will be displayed in the kingdom. To those who "hear Him" the Son would make the Father's glory known. This is what remained to the disciples, when the bright antepast of the coming glory of the kingdom had passed away, even that which all the grace of His personal manifestation was leading into in LUKE, to be the present and abiding portion of His people.

The terrible contrast of the display of Satan's power that met them as they came down from "the holy mount" (as Peter speaks of it), and the failure in testimony of those who owned the Lord, if it was bringing the time for that testimony to a close, only served to make manifest the mighty power (or "majesty"—it is the same word so translated 2 Peter 1. 16) of God in the person of Jesus. But He would not have the disciples diverted, by the amazement of all, from the things He had been teaching them of what was before Him (vers. 22-26), though they feared to inquire into it. And no wonder, when we learn what was

really occupying them—as to which of them should be greatest. Different forms of selfishness to which His followers can be a prey then come to light. Some of them have been before us in the other Gospels, but not in this solemn grouping of them together. One is peculiar to LUKE, verse 51-56, that brings out what gives its character to much that follows in the gospel. The time was come that He should be received up: He has, in fact, begun His last journey up to Jerusalem from the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration. The various stages of it may be traced from this point, 10. 1, 13. 22, 17. 11, 18. 35. His face was steadfastly set to go to Jerusalem, and on this account a village of the Samaritans would not receive Him. James and John, "sons of thunder" as He had named them (MARK 3. 17), would have fire come down from heaven to consume them, but they knew not what manner of spirit they were of. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Restored!

SHE was a tiny mite of three years old, or less, but with a temper which was alarming. Paddling was delightful, but mother thought she had had enough. Then the trouble began—such a kicking and screaming, as she was borne along the beach in the strong maternal arms! Soon, however, father appeared; then there was a lull, as the mother put her down. Immediately, the little rebel commenced to run seaward, but her father neatly "headed her off" and frustrated her purpose.

There was some conversation. Outwardly the storm subsided, but what followed indicated a tempest working inwardly ere the turbulent little spirit became at rest. Argument and reason failing, both parents walked a short distance and sat down, leaving the little one to her own thoughts.

Once more she proceeded toward the water's edge; stopped, turned, and made a long *détour*, pausing here and there to pick up seaweed or a stone; with ever and anon a furtive and, perchance, wistful glance toward the spot where her parents were seated, apparently unconcerned. Gradually she worked round behind them, stood awhile, came nearer

and then, suddenly, the little brown arms were thrown around her father's neck.

It was a beautiful picture, illustrating the art of wise parental dealing. Not a blow had been struck, yet the victory was complete. But it was more. My thoughts turned inward. I recalled times when self-will had raised a cloud between my Father in heaven and myself; when He might have justly chastened me sore and bowed my spirit with grievous punishment. I remembered His message to His truculent people Israel: "Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you," and I knew He had often so treated me. I saw myself revealed in that little child—trying hard not to yield, seeking satisfaction in this and that among the things of earth, yet all the time with an inward desire—hardly recognized, or reluctantly acknowledged—for the Father's smile.

"Therefore will the Lord wait!" His compassionate heart is ever ready to welcome the repentant soul; but the time for His benediction depends upon the submission of the soul itself, when its rebelliousness gives place to filial submission. Then how gladly will He "be gracious unto you."—*Adapted.*

New Birth and Eternal Life.

(EDITOR)

IN pursuing this subject we desire only to present the truth as we believe the Scriptures present it; our readers will judge for themselves how far we succeed in doing this, but they must judge, not by any preconceived notion or traditional teaching which they may have received, but by the Word of God. 'Search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so.' We would remember that even natural life cannot be explained; there are many secrets as to its organization that God has kept from men, and this is also true in the spiritual sphere. We may take account of the phenomena of what we call conversion: the Word is heard, the conscience is aroused, the whole man is changed, he yields to the truth of God and seeks after God, but just when, and where, and how, in the course of this subjective work of the Spirit of God in the soul, the man is born anew we cannot tell. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Eccles. 11. 5). "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3. 8).

But what Scripture distinguishes we must not confound, though we may not carve up the truth of God into separate blocks, as is done with Bath stone, for one truth overlaps another. They are like the colours of the rainbow—you may distinguish but you must not separate them.

We would ask our readers first of all to carefully note that being born anew is connected with, and for entrance into, *the kingdom of God*. The words are, "Except a man be born again, *he cannot see THE KINGDOM OF GOD*" (John 3. 3), and, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, *he cannot enter into THE KINGDOM OF GOD.*" The Lord does not here connect new birth with entrance into the family of God—though that is the way some of our correspondents seem to read the passage—but speaks of it as the great thing

needful for the kingdom. We may be sure that the Lord was right, and that every word of His is a tried word; and since that is so, we must connect new birth with the kingdom as He has done.

Now, the kingdom of God is not the theme of John's Gospel, it belongs more particularly to the Synoptic Gospels. The revelation of the Father—and, in consequence, the family, and eternal life, which is the life of the family—eternal life fully manifested in the Son of God; this is John's great subject. But at the very commencement of this manifestation, of which men could never have thought, and which had not been the subject of prophecy, we have the kingdom of God introduced, and it is introduced with a purpose.

Nicodemus was well acquainted with the thought of the kingdom. It was that for which Israel looked; but they looked for it, with themselves as the centre of it, because they were the children of Abraham; they wanted it on the line of nature. The Lord shows that this could not be, for the natural children of Abraham, like the rest of mankind, were corrupt and absolutely unreliable. There must be a new generation, and that from God. That is true for the Jew; it will be a necessity on his part for the kingdom when it comes into public display at the appearing of Christ. But the truth goes out beyond the Jew; it is, "Except **A MAN** (anyone) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The thought that connects itself with the kingdom is subjection to rule. The kingdom of God now is moral in its character, that is, it is in the souls of men, not in public display (Rom. 14. 17); but even so it means subjection to God, and a moment's consideration must convince us of the necessity of this if we are to learn the deep things afterwards revealed in this Gospel. How could the Father's name be known and His love become a reality to any man unless he first comes into subjection to God? Man in his best estate is a rebel, and nowhere was this seen more clearly than in Israel. Could rebellious man, whose very nature was enmity against God, enter into the

deep secrets of eternal love ? Impossible. He must have an entirely new nature that will be subject to God ; he must be born again, and so enter the kingdom of God. This is brought about by the Spirit's operation. We know by what means, but we cannot tell how. Nevertheless, we see the result of the operation. There is that within the man who comes under it that which is subject to God and responds in faith to the presentation of the Son of God.

Every one knows the difference between a kingdom and a family ; the thought associated with the latter in Scripture is the greater of the two. New birth is connected with the kingdom, and eternal life belongs, for us, to the family. It will have its connection on the earthly side of it with the kingdom in the Millennium (see Ps. 133. ; Dan. 12. 2 ; Matt. 25. 4-6) ; but we are dealing here with eternal life, not as it is presented in connection with the millennium, but as it was manifested in the Son of God for us. As such it is connected with the knowledge of the only true God, revealed as Father, and with Jesus Christ, His sent One (John 17.).

What may perplex us in this connection is the attempt to make the spiritual work fit too closely the natural figure used by the Lord. There is undoubtedly an analogy between natural birth and being born anew in the fact that it is a new beginning—a new generation, and a thing of mystery ; but this is as far as we may go with the figure. Nicodemus was puzzled and sought a natural explanation of it ; he *knew not* these things. Let us beware of falling into the same error.

Then, according to these words of the Lord to this ruler of the Jews, a man must be born anew before he can enter into the kingdom of God ; he ceases to be a rebel, and comes under the rule of God. What a mighty change is this. Nothing short of "born anew" could describe it. It is a new beginning entirely, not the old flesh made better, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and it cannot be coaxed, educated or forced into obedience to God ; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, there is a new spiritual nature by the operation of God's Spirit ; it is from above ; so that the one who is the subject of this mighty operation will desire to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven ; he is in the kingdom of God.

The Lord turns to heavenly things from verse 12, and we learn in connection with these that whosoever believeth in the Son of Man lifted up, who is also the only-begotten Son of God, should have everlasting life. The same order comes out in John 1. 12, 13. There were those who received the Lord, and to these He gave the right to become children of God ; but they were born of God who thus received Him ; and in consequence, as subject to God, they received the Son of God, and so got the right to be children of God, and eternal life belongs to the family.

There is a beautiful moral order here, and though a man might pass in one gospel preaching from a rebel right into the family of God, and so have eternal life, yet that does not destroy the truth as to this moral order which we have pointed out.

But the question is asked of us, When does one become a babe in God's family ? We reply in the words of Scripture : " For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus " (Gal. 3. 26). And every child—whether babe, young man, or father—has eternal life. Faith in the Son of God puts the one who has it into the Christian position and privileges, such a one has the Spirit of God dwelling within him because he is a son by faith in Christ Jesus, and as such he can address God as Father (Gal. 4. 6). The indwelling of the Spirit means much more than being born of the Spirit ; the one is the preparation of the house, the other the occupation of it.

New birth is a necessity ; eternal life is a gift. New birth is by the operation of the Spirit ; eternal life is through faith in the Son of God. New birth brings the one who is the subject of it into the kingdom of God ; eternal life is the life of every child of God to-day.

Space forbids us, even if we were able, to follow out through John's Gospel the many beautiful ways in which eternal life is presented ; but we would notice that as natural life has its income and expenditure, so also has eternal life, and we might speak of chapter 6. as its income. " I am that bread of life " (ver. 48). " Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life " (ver. 54). " He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him " (ver. 56). The expenditure may

be seen in chapter 7. 38, 39, for there it is life flowing out in the power of the Holy Ghost. The income and expenditure of it may easily be discerned also in chapters 14.-17. We do not speak of expenditure in the sense of waste, but of the energy of life in its outgoings, and if this is to be maintained according to its native vigour there must be the income, the appropriation of Christ in the way that John 6. presents Him.

It has its relationship, environment, conditions, and character also, but all these have been set forth fully in the Son of God, for not only is this life in Him, and we have it as having Him (1 John 5. 12), but He is it, for "This is the true God and eternal life" (ver. 20).

It has been pointed out that Paul nowhere speaks of new birth, but he gives us that which is the outward and manifest sign of it, for he speaks of "repentance towards God." Repentance is the soul's bowing in subjection to the word of God; then he also gives the result of it: "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He also preached the "kingdom of God," the only door of entrance to which is new birth, and in addition to this he taught "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28. 31), which would include the whole range of Christian truth, including eternal life, which in Paul's teaching is presented to the faith of the saints as something to be laid hold upon.

Peter in his Epistle (chap. 1.) carries us further than John 3., and teaches us that, in contrast to those who are of man's generation, those that are born again will live and abide forever, for they are born by the imperishable seed

of God. James (chap. 1.) gives us still another thought, in that those who are begotten by the will of God should bear His character and be doers of the Word.

But both these are kingdom Epistles, that is, the truths contained in them has to do with our life as God's people in subjection to Him in the world; they do not unfold those exalted relationships and privileges which are peculiar to Christianity, on the heavenly side of it. These belong to the ministry of John and Paul.

In John's First Epistle we are on other ground, though even here we do not leave the truth of the kingdom entirely, for we read: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." The Christ is the Anointed, the Messiah, and the Head of the kingdom, and the one who believed in Him in this character was born of God, his faith was proof that he was so born; but then we read: "And every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (chap. 5. 1). This is the family and eternal life, and here these distinctive truths overlap each other, they blend one into the other like the colours of the rainbow of which we have spoken.

The distinction between new birth and eternal life is maintained even in connection with the millennium, for the "sheep" of Matthew 25. were most surely born again—they were "the righteous" (verse 46), and such are born of God (1 John 2. 29)—and they go, as such, "into life eternal."

This we believe to be the truth, however poorly we have been able to express it, and we only ask that it may be tested by the infallible Scriptures.

Prayer is the strategical point which Satan watches. If he can succeed in causing us to neglect prayer, he has won, for where communion between God and His people is broken, the true source of life and power is cut off. Prayerlessness shows that we do not value communion with God. God promises much in answer to prayer. "Ye have not, because ye ask not."

* * * * *

We may lie down in peace, and sleep in safety, because the Shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. No lion or bear can ever surprise our ever-watchful Guardian, or overcome our Almighty Deliverer. He once laid down His life for the sheep, but now He ever liveth to care for them, and to insure to them all that is needful for this life and for that which is to come.

The Holy Scriptures.

(JAMES BOYD).

THE Holy Scriptures are like no other writings. All other writings have had their origin in the mind of man, and with the conviction and expectation that the mind of the reader shall be able to grasp the meaning of that which is written. But this is not at all true of the Scriptures. It is not only not assumed by the writers of Holy Scripture that the mind of man will be able to seize the thoughts therein recorded, but its inability to do so is very distinctly affirmed (1 Cor. 2. 14; Eph. 1. 17; Col. 1. 9; Luke 24. 45). The Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers, is the only One who can enable us to understand that which He has caused to be placed on record for our instruction in the mind of God.

Therefore a mere study of the Word, however necessary it be to study it, is not of itself sufficient to place us in possession of the thoughts of God. It is necessary that we should read it, pay attention to all that it brings before us, believe it even when we do not grasp its meaning, and meditate upon its precious utterances; but this should be done in prayerful dependence upon its gracious Author, and in distrust of our own natural reason, which is always infidel, and always infidel just because it is our reason, the reason of fallen flesh, which ever revolves in its own blind orbit, excluding every ray of light divine.

This should not discourage the student of the Bible, but rather the opposite, for I would point out the true and only way of gaining knowledge; also where, and how it is to be found. It must be found in the Word, for it is there, and nowhere else; and there should be the utmost confidence in it as a revelation from God. Attention must be given to its most minute details, for there is nothing unnecessary placed on record, nor shall we therein find any vain repetitions crowding its pages.

Neither must we imagine that any question has arisen amongst His people, unforeseen by Him, since upon Him, who knows the end from the beginning, it is impossible for the enemy to deliver a surprise attack. Every assault of the wily foe; every twist given to its evident meaning by the stubborn sectarian, who would compel it to lend its support to his miserable counterfeit of the truth; every dogmatic display of isolated texts, wrenched away from their proper connection in order to turn the heart from the living Christ in heaven, all was foreseen by the Author of this wonderful Book, and ample provision made for its detection and exposure. It is a sharp sword for the human conscience, of which the devil himself has often felt the edge. It is a light that lays bare the secret chambers of the heart of man, and manifests its deceitful intentions, with all its bitter enmity against God; but at the same time it reveals the heart of God in all His fathomless love to the guilty. It guides the footsteps of the pilgrim through this wilderness where there is no way, and discloses before his heavenward gaze that celestial home, in which there is fullness of joy, and where pleasures for evermore reside. In its impromptu rhapsodies, melody made by the heavenly hierarchs and the myriads of redeemed are heard; and amid the rumbling of the thunders of its wrath can be detected the wailing of those who have passed beyond the borderland of hope and have entered into regions of despair. It gives us a glimpse into the eternity that is past, and also directs our forward glance to the rest of God, and to the day when all things are made new, bathed in the glory of redemption. The characteristics of the children of the devil it faithfully delineates, and describes minutely those of the children of God. The plottings and the drivellings of the human mind are therein recorded, as are also the counsels of eternal love.

The folly of the creature ; the wisdom of the Creator ; the way of falsehood, the way of truth ; the way of righteousness, the way of sin ; the way of life, the way of death ; the way of man, the way of God ; all is therein recorded for our enlightenment and eternal blessing ; and happy is the man whose confidence is in its heavenly origin, and whose heart and mind are well stored with its precious truths.

Its blessings are health-imparting, exalting, and enriching, and its anathemas are blasting, bewildering, abasing, and impoverishing. Obedience to its precepts purifies the soul, and rebellion against its commandments hardens the heart, benumbs the conscience, and deadens the sensibilities. It criticises its critics, judges its judges, makes liars of its calumniators, and for ever justifies its friends. It will have the last word at the last day, and from its sentence there shall be no appeal. It is a well-spring of living water in this arid waste, and living bread in this famine-stricken land. It makes the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the dead to live. In the might of the Spirit it is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged

sword ; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. God has magnified His Word above all His name ; and as to the one who despises its testimony, good were it for that man had he never been born.

Therefore am I far from discouraging anyone who would seek to study the contents of this wonderful volume. God has given it to us in His marvellous grace, and He would have us approach it with fear and trembling—not because we are not free from its anathemas, for, through the grace of God and the blood of Jesus, every believer is justified from all things and set in new and eternal relationships with Him in Christ—but because of its holy and sacred character. There is no condemnation in its pages for the believer in Christ. His redemption by the blood of Jesus, his relationship to God, and his eternal security, occupy a large place in that sacred volume ; but just because it is a revelation of God, it is to be approached with holy reverence, and not with the lightness with which one may take up any other book.

The Efficacy of Prayer.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS)

ONE of the chief pillars of the "New Theology" has said that prayer is entirely subjective in its bearing, that is, it cannot effect any purpose outside the soul of the one who prays, and is thus only useful in putting us in a more pleasant frame of mind. The devil is well aware that a flat contradiction of the truth would stand little chance of being believed ; hence he has always sought to substitute a half-truth for the whole truth.

In Eden he suggested that by obeying him a man would become as God, knowing good and evil. A statement which was partly true in so far as it went, but one which required the complementary statement that man would also be

unable to do the good or to resist the evil. So Satan wishes to instil into the minds of Christians the half-truth that prayer is subjective, well knowing that limitation of the truth invariably results in its being given up. It is blessedly true that prayer is subjective ; that it has a wonderful, stimulating, purifying influence on the soul of the supplicant.

But it is equally true that prayer has an objective side. It fulfils the purpose of moving the Hand that controls the physical universe, that holds the spirits of men, and that moulds everything material and moral to the accomplishment of His will. Elijah was a man like as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on

the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain. When Elijah stood before the people on Mount Carmel he was God's envoy, and, as such, spoke and acted in virtue of his high commission. But at the close of that busy, memorable day when he came into the presence of the Lord he humbled himself in the dust.

After Elijah had wrestled with God in the depth of abasement of spirit, he said to his servant, "Look towards the sea." the answer came back, "I see nothing." That help does not come at our first cry is a matter of common experience. Men do not expect the harvest immediately after sowing. That this principle should be exemplified in prayer is not agreeable to the natural mind. But it is very salutary to the spirit. If the door of God's treasure-house always opened at our first knock we should feel self-contained. We should seem commanders, become arrogant, and forget our dependent state. We should be in danger of idolizing prayer, and think that in it we have a legal claim on the bounty of God. We must always remember that the door swings on the hinges of His mercy. Our gracious God keeps us standing awhile knocking because long waiting is beneficial to us. Nature thus receives crushing blows; the dull heart is opened up; self-esteem tumbles down to its ruin; and the foundation of truth in the soul is laid deep. At length—when the answer comes—how great is the joy! When at the seventh time the servant returned and said, "There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand," what pen can portray the feelings of Elijah?

The Apostle James brings forward Elijah's success in prayer as an encouragement to us to persevere in fervent prayer, because of its efficacy. But who can recount all the wonderful instances in Scripture when the fervent prayers of righteous men have availed. Through prayer, Moses turned away the wrath of God from Israel, and with outstretched

hands he prevailed over Amalek. Manoah, by entreaty, drew down a visible manifestation from God in angelic form (Judges 13. 8). Through prayer at Mizpeh, Samuel caused the thunder of terror to roll over Israel's foes (1 Sam. 7. 9-12). Through prayer, Josiah died in peace; fifteen years were added to Hezekiah's life; the three Hebrews were preserved in the fiery furnace of Babylon; and to Daniel it was said by the Angel Gabriel, "I am come because of thy words."

The Word of God is full of the power and wonders of prayer, and our Christian life would be full of them too, if we continued instant in prayer.

But with us, prayer is apt to become a sleepy business. For what is so often called praying, morning and evening, according to custom—the dull, listless repetition of devotional language—does not deserve the name of prayer. Prayer is not the repetition of Scripture, nor the rehearsal of certain dogmatic statements which may go to form a creed. God does not want ceremonious compliments. The confessions of a broken heart, the cry of the humble, the expression of godly sorrow, the laying down of cares, the breathing of grateful love, the acknowledgment of dependence, constitute true prayer. In short, all that brings us in contact with the fount of living power may be classed as prayer. Too often we fail to notice God's answer to our own prayers; otherwise frequently we should find, to our glad surprise, that, as in the case of Daniel, at the time of our supplication the command has gone forth to help us (Dan. 9. 23).

Let the call to prayer be ever looked on by us as an invitation to an unspeakable privilege. Let us pray in the Spirit and not in our own self-sufficiency, and we shall pray with power. Pray in faith, nothing doubting, for in the sure and unchangeable Word of God it stands recorded, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you" (John 16. 23).

Notes and Illustrations.

(J. T. MAWSON).

The Drinking of the Cup.

"Abba, Father . . . take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."—Mark 14. 36.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"
1 Cor. 10. 16.

THE drinking of a cup, in Scripture, means the taking into the experience of the soul that which the cup signifies. The cup which the Lord took from His Father's hand was one of bitterness, and judgment, and death. He took into the experience of His soul what it was to be made sin ; what it was to be abandoned of God ; what it was to go into death as the judgment of God. There was no element in all that accumulated sorrow that He did experience in its infinite meaning, and to its full limit.

"That bitter cup, love drank it up."

Yes, drank it to its dregs.

No creature heart will ever know what that meant to the Lord. A thick darkness spread itself over that awful hour, impossible of penetration then, as it will be for ever, by creature intelligence. We know what the anticipation of it meant for Him as He looked into the cup, and knew its bitter ingredients, for we are permitted to see Him in the Garden, when His soul was exceeding sorrowful, and His sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. But the great sacrifice was made in utter solitude, where no eye of man or angel beheld Him ; and in a horror of thick darkness He paid our mighty dues.

These Dead Times.

"The cloke that I left at Troas . . . bring."

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me."—2 Tim. 4. 13-16.

TO deplore the days in which we live and to complain of the indifference of men in general and the deadness of our brethren in particular, is a common practice—and this may be but a cloak for our spiritual condition. Yet, in

"We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear ;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there."

As a result of what He has done we have a cup to drink, but it is a cup of blessing, for is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? It tells of the love of God sealed to our wondering souls by the blood of His dear Son ; it tells us also of the quenchless love of Jesus, our Lord, which could not be swallowed up of death, nor thwarted by all the power of evil ; it tells us of love that came forth and at its own cost made atonement for sin, and we may drink it with thanksgiving. We may take into the experience of our souls what it is to be loved by such a love as this ; what it is to be set in the everlasting favour of our God, of which that blood witnesseth ; and to have in an inalienable title all those great blessings that He had purposed for His assembly in Christ.

This is not doctrine only, to be learnt and held and professed, but a great reality for our present consciousness. so that, moved to our very depths by the glory of this unmeasured love, we may respond to it, without reserve, in love and praise.

truth, the times are bad enough, and there is plenty to make us mourn, and, if the devil had his way with us in the midst of it, to make us hang our harps on the willow trees, and lapse into perpetual despondency. But is there

nothing about which we can give thanks? Is there nothing to make us exult, as Barnabas exulted, when he saw the grace of God at Antioch, and was glad? We believe there is, if we have eyes to see it, and hearts to appreciate it.

The times are bad enough, but do any of us, who desire to follow the Lord, find ourselves in such times as did the great Apostle Paul? The winter winds whistled through the window-bars of his prison cell, and his aged body was made to shiver and twinge by the damp and cold, as he lay bound with a chain. Yet never a Christian amongst the many who dwelt in Rome sought him out in his need, or brought him a garment to protect his aching limbs. He had a cloak, just one, but it was nigh upon a thousand miles away. "Bring it with thee," he wrote to his beloved son Timothy; for he felt the need of it.

The indifference of this day is great, no doubt, but we do not hear of any Christian being tried so sorely as was Paul the Aged. We can rejoice that there is love amongst the saints of God, and that it shows itself in doing good. The Spirit of God is active, and the grace of God is being manifested in His saved ones, not so much as it ought to be; but for what there is, which we shall see if we have eyes to see it, let us praise.

That same lone prisoner stood before

the imperial Nero—a defenceless captive, bowed by age and weakened by a lifelong martyrdom. He stood in the very jaws of the lion, and fearlessly proclaimed the gospel of God, but no man stood with him. His friends forsook him; like frightened hares they hasted to their safety when his head was in jeopardy. Hard times those, when a servant of Christ had no man to confirm his witnessing, or to stand with him in the hour of his supreme trial; when all were ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, and of Paul His prisoner. He felt it, felt it keenly, felt it for their sakes more than for his own, for he prays for them that it might not be laid to their charge.

Not one of us has found himself in such isolation as this in our witnessing for Christ. No doubt it is partly because of our lack of faithfulness to Him, but we believe it also is because the grace of God is working powerfully in the hearts of some at least of His saints, and they must rally to the upraised standard of testimony to His Christ. Let us be thankful, and praise the Lord with cheerful voice for every evidence of His work on earth, and let us so keep our soul aflame with His love that we may be used of Him to rekindle dying embers in the heart of many another of His discouraged saints.

The Conscience must be Reached.

"They were pricked in the heart, and said . . . What shall we do?"—Acts 2. 37.

IT is an absolute necessity that the conscience should be awakened by the truth of God if men are to be truly converted, and the servants of Christ should see that their energies are divinely directed to this end; apart from it, every effort to win a soul is useless. We were asked to see a man who, though he had escaped the hangman's rope, had served fifteen years' penal servitude for murder. We thought: Here will be one who needs not to be told that he is a sinner, and that sin is a heinous thing; but to whom it will be easy to tell the story of free

grace and dying love. We were disappointed, for he had buttressed his soul against the gospel by his own fancied goodness, and claimed that if he had done wrong he had paid the penalty, and so had as good a chance of heaven as any other. He had no need of Christ, his own righteousness would save him.

Then we met a refreshing contrast to this case. It was at the close of a meeting for children. A lad of twelve, with the tears racing each other down his cheeks, stayed to speak to us. We

asked him the cause of his grief, and he answered, "I stole a pencil from a boy." "Indeed," we replied, "and how long ago was that?" "About two years since," he answered. And while he confessed that many other bad things burdened his young soul, this had specially troubled him in the gospel service. It was a joy to hear him plead with God to blot out his sins for Jesus' sake, nor was he kept waiting for that great blessing.

The sin of the man was stupendous, the sin of the boy a mere peccadillo, as we should say. Yes, but it all depends upon the standard by which we measure the transgressions. In the presence of God all sin is "exceeding sinful." And the servant of the Lord who would have true success, must labour to bring his hearers into the presence of God, for there alone will the conscience be rightly affected.

For Those who Serve.

TALKING to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men. More than this, prayerless words in the pulpit and out of it are deadening words.

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I judge that my prayer is more than the devil himself; if it were otherwise, Luther would have fared differently long before this. Yet men will not see and acknowledge the great wonders or miracles that God works in my behalf. If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.—*Martin Luther.*

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To be little with God is to be little for God.

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The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my

carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience and faith are never disappointed. When I find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer everything else is comparatively easy.—*Richard Newton.*

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Speak for Eternity. Above all things cultivate your own spirit. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear and you are full of God's Spirit is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. Remember that God, and not man, must have the glory. If the veil of the seen machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the prayers of God's children.—*R. M. McCheyne.*

* * * *

Study not to be a fine preacher. Jerichos are blown down with ram's horns. Look simply unto the Master for preaching food; and what is wanted will be given, and what is given will be blessed, whether it be a barley grain or a wheaten loaf, a crust or a crumb. Your mouth will be a flowing stream or a fountain sealed according to your dependence upon and communion with the Lord.

Wisdom and Grace ; or, Within and Without.

(H. J. VINE).

WISDOM and grace are choice companions, and their friendship should be constantly cultivated by the believer. They are both of God, for He is "the only wise," and "the God of all grace," who has not only called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, but has also told us to be imitators of Him, as beloved children (Eph. 5. 1).

Wisdom and grace are to be the companions of the believer, especially when he *walks without*. In their company he will not only be cheered, elevated, and made glad himself, but he will most surely benefit others who may be honoured to meet him in such superior society; and the benefit so ministered may not simply be passing; it may be eternal.

Because of this, God has instructed us how to walk and talk when we move about in the world without; as we read, "Walk *in wisdom* towards those without, redeeming opportunities. Let your word be *always with grace*, seasoned with salt, so as to know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4. 5, 6, N.T.). Wisdom and grace thus shed their refreshment and fragrance upon our ways and words; and the seasoning of salt will preserve us from the corruption of the world, and give a lasting character to all our testimony.

There is no legality in this, for it is grace. Nevertheless, those who are instructed by the Holy Spirit, to show demeanour, bearing these divine characteristics towards "*those without*," are themselves first taught to appreciate their holy privileges, in intimate fellowship and love, along with *those within*; for it would be impossible to rightly carry ourselves *without*, if that which is ours *within* were not first understood.

Let us see what is said as to those within in the former part of the Colossian Letter, before they are told how to walk without.

In chapter 1. they have been delivered from the authority of darkness. It has no more authority over them. They have been translated into another kingdom, where the authority is in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, so blessedly called here the Son of the Father's love (vers. 13, 14). Those who have been thus "delivered" and "translated," were once "enemies in mind by wicked works," yet now reconciled to the fullness dwelling in the Son, "in the body of His flesh through death" (vers. 19-22).

In chapter 2. there is expressed the deeply-felt desire that those whom the Father has brought into the circle of grace within should be united together in love, having their hearts encouraged and cheered, "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God;" for in that mystery, which was hidden from the past ages and generations but is now made known, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vers. 1-3). The divine treasury of these riches is in this mystery. In other circles outside, such as creation, and Israel, and the nations, very wonderful riches are to be seen as the works of God; but it is here pre-eminently that the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are to be found; yea, "*all*" of them. The riches of the glory of this mystery, which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory, are so vast, that there is no need to go outside for anything; it is said, "Ye are *complete* in Him" (ver. 10).

In chapter 3. believers are *risen with Christ*. In verse 20 of chapter 2. they are instructed that they "have *died with Christ*" from the elements of the world without. Had that been all, they would have been left in a negative position only; but with Christ they have also been RAISED, and now the things which are above, where He is, are to engage their minds (vers. 1, 2). For

their "*life is hid with Christ in God.*" How completely they are identified "*with Christ*"—in death, in resurrection, in hidden life now—as belonging to the circle of *those within*. But it must be remembered that this circle embraces all those who have "received Christ Jesus the Lord" (chap. 2. ver. 6), although it must be admitted that all of them do not rightly understand it. And this is to their present loss. Those who are zealous for sects, or parties, or schools of opinion, would do well to heed the word: "Walk in HIM, rooted and built up in HIM, and assured in THE FAITH, even as ye have been taught, abounding in it WITH THANKSGIVING" (chap. 2. vers. 6, 7). When our Lord Jesus Christ comes in glory not one of this circle will be missing. For if they are dead with Him, as we have seen, and are risen with Him, and their life is now hid with Him, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall they also "*appear with Him in glory*" (chap. 3. ver. 4).

Much energy and exercise is still necessary on the part of those who belong to this circle, where "CHRIST is everything, and in all" (ver. 11). For even to such it has to be said: "Do not lie one to another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new" (ver. 9). "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long suffering," etc. Rich and rare graces are thus to abound among those who are Christ's.

"Brought to rest within the circle,
Where love's treasures are displayed,
There we drink the living waters,
Taste the joys that never fade."

Finally, the home and business spheres, in which they have to move, feel the benefit of this grace. Wives, husbands, and children; servants and masters (chap. 3. ver. 18; chap. 4. ver. 1), are all to show the heavenly colour in these relationships. The excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light are thus set forth; not themselves,

but Himself. They are thus free from self-occupation. A beautiful type of this is given in Numbers 15. 37-41: The ribband or lace of blue—the heavenly colour—was to be the flower-like fringe of their garments where they touched the ground, throughout all the generations. This was to bring to their remembrance the commandments of the Lord their God, who had redeemed them. The blue was to be always with them, even in those walks of life where they touched earthly things.

Having pointed out in verses 2 and 3 the great importance of persevering prayer, the Holy Spirit then brings us to consider our walk toward "*those without.*"

The abundant blessing which is ours within is not intended to make us "at ease in Zion." We are to consider others for whom nothing is prepared. Again we are reminded of the Old Testament types: Israel, when blessed with abundance themselves in the land, were to leave the corners of their rich harvest fields and the gleanings of their fruits, and even a sheaf of corn when forgotten. The poor and the stranger were to have these. When this divine wisdom and unselfish grace marked God's people, He blessed them greatly in all the work of their hands (Lev. 16. 12; 19. 9; Deut. 24. 19); for they did but express His own gracious and considerate heart in so doing. He has told us that He "desires that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth?" He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are therefore to redeem opportunities, as we walk without, in the unfailing companionship of Wisdom and Grace. We are to be like Him, imitators of God as dear children.

The sun was beginning to shed its gladdening rays over the land one Lord's Day morning as a preacher of the gospel started to the place of his day's labour for the Lord. Along the road he met a

very dejected-looking man. The preacher spoke a gracious word to him, and added, "It's a *good morning*, Sir!" There was no reply; but as that man slowly wended his way home, after his night's debauchery, and turned into bed to try to obtain sleep, he kept thinking: Yes, it's a *good morning* for him—a *very good morning*! He is away to preach the Word of God, and to help others; here am I, and it is a *miserable morning* enough for me! "At last," he said, when telling the story, "I came to this: I will have a *good morning* too! And that night I went to hear the gospel, and trusted the Saviour! It has been a *good morning* with me ever since!" Redeem opportunities. Let your word be *always* with grace. A word fitly spoken, how good it is. Who shall tell the present and eternal results? He that winneth souls is wise.

The better we know these two worthies—Wisdom and Grace—the more highly we shall esteem them; and their most excellent counsel will be increasingly prized and valued by us. No material wealth or knowledge approximates to their worth. The gold and the silver, the treasures of the earth, the rubies and sapphires are not to be compared with them. Nor can the sciences, exact or otherwise, be placed beside them. Materialism, at its very best, does not give us the true knowledge of the blessed God; wisdom and grace do; and they enable us to make Him known to others.

In the sacred Scriptures the Holy Spirit has told us a great deal about them. "*Wisdom*," we are told, "is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (Prov. 4. 7). "She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee" (ver. 9). "*Grace*," we know, "came by Jesus Christ" (John 1. 17), and truth both subsist through Him. Therefore it can be said of those who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, "Of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace" (ver. 16).

Wisdom must not be mistaken for *knowledge*; nor must it be confounded with *understanding*. Those who have *knowledge*, important as this is, are not always wise. It is desirable also to have *understanding*, along with that which we know; so that the right relation of one thing with another may intelligently be seen. But *wisdom* shows itself in the right use and application of the truth; also in the right way and occasion. The Holy Spirit desires for us, the full *knowledge* of God's will, "in all *wisdom* and *Spiritual understanding*" (Col. 1. 9).

Grace is usually spoken of in contrast to *law*; and this is right in so far as the justifying of the believing sinner is concerned. Law condemns him; grace justifies him. And then it is said, "Ye are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6. 14). Rising higher than this, however, we learn that "grace reigns;" grace is enthroned. It is sometimes called unmerited favour; but the wonderful thing about it is, it is favour for those who merited the opposite. It gives character to the glad tidings now; for before "the gospel of the *kingdom*" is preached, and "the *everlasting* gospel," we now have "the gospel of the *grace* of God."

Both Wisdom and grace are seen to be full of divine activities in the Scriptures of Truth. We read, "Wisdom hath builded her house"; also, "Doth not Wisdom cry?" "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom." Of grace we read, "By grace are ye saved." "Being justified freely by His grace." "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Unlike the boasted wisdom of philosophy, divine wisdom is personified. I said to a follower of Taoism, "Even if the wisdom of these old sages were true wisdom," "could you point me to a person in whom it is expressed?" He could not. I continued, "That is just where the glory of divine wisdom is displayed. It is seen expressed in a

perfect Man, God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He was murdered when a little over thirty; about the age when men are only beginning to be wise. Your teachers were old men with long experience, and yet their doctrines are full of flaws: Christ's words, works, and ways were all perfect. Nothing but the truth that he was the Word become flesh could account for all this in One so young in years." We learn divine wisdom in Him in perfection. "Christ Jesus has been made unto us wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1. 30). He is truly that "hidden Wisdom which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory: which none of the princes of this age knew, for, had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (chap. 2. vers. 7, 8). The Lord possessed Him in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. He was set up from everlasting. Whoso findeth Him findeth life. When here upon the earth, He spake of the wisdom of Solomon, but He said, "A greater than Solomon is here." Men refused Him, but God has set Him at His right hand. Believers are in Him; not as Israel, who found their national head in failing Solomon on earth; they are in Him, who is their living and unfailing Head in heaven. He is their wisdom, made so from God.

"In Him from everlasting, the wonderful
I AM,
Found pleasures never wasting, and
WISDOM IS HIS NAME."

Grace has also found its perfect expression in Him. How different are these blessed truths to the cold calculations of mere human philosophy; seen as they are personified in a Man who lived and loved, suffered and triumphed. Tried and trusted by those who knew Him; sinners and saints, ignorant and instructed, sick and strong, fathers, mothers, and children all tasted practically and experimentally the grace that came by Jesus Christ. It did not live as an ideal among the books

of the retired study, to be expressed in terms only from a philosopher's chair, or a well-supported pulpit. It was seen and heard amongst men and women and children, in the everyday circumstances and needs of life.

"He was the Image in man's lowly guise,
Of the Invisible to mortal eyes.

Come to attract the wretched and the
weak,
His joy the wand'ers and the lost to
seek."

The Father, God in grace, has thus been made known by our Lord Jesus Christ. No man had seen God at any time; but the Son, who is ever in the Father's bosom, He has declared Him. We need not therefore go outside to find Him. Jesus could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9); and again, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me."

The more deeply we dwell on these truths, the more profoundly intimate we shall become with our two divinely provided companions, wisdom and grace. Doubtless all believers know them, but we are to know them better; and that will mean we shall value them more and more. To know God is to know them in the truest sense. The world, in the arms of Satan, is opposed to Him, and these things cannot be found there. "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord" (Prov. 21. 30). Therefore in liberty, and free from self-occupation, we need but to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be found answering to His Word, and thus to be agreeable to Him, walking in wisdom towards *those without*, redeeming opportunities; and our word always with grace, seasoned with salt, so as to know how to answer each one. There is a great and generous abundance provided by God for *those within*; we are to scatter wisely and freely to *those without*.

Is it Scriptural to Urge Sinners to Give their Hearts to God?

(H. P. BARKER).

[It may appear to some that to find fault with this popular phrase is a mere quibble, but we are persuaded that it is not so, as we believe the careful perusal of this paper will prove. The notion that God's salvation is given as a result of, or in exchange for, something that the sinner gives to Him is fostered by the indiscriminate use of this phrase, and so the gospel is falsified. Every true servant of Christ desires to help souls, and we shall do this most effectually by discarding misleading phrases, however time-honoured, and adopting in their stead sound words according to truth.—Ed.]

I VENTURE to answer this question in the negative.

This may surprise some of my Christian readers. Their ears have become so accustomed to hear the exhortation, "Give your heart to God," that they have taken for granted that it is a right thing to say.

But we must take nothing for granted. Rather let us bring everything we hear or say to the unerring test of the Word of God. What has it to say as to this question?

The story has often been told of the Red Indian Chief who sought to win the blessing of God by offering first his gun, then his blanket.

"God does not want gifts of this kind from you," said the missionary to whom he had come.

"He wants, not your blanket, nor your gun, but your heart. Give Him your heart."

There is here, I believe, a real and serious perversion of the gospel. At the root of it lies a three-fold misconception: firstly, a misconception as to the meaning of the Scripture which speaks of "giving one's heart"; secondly, a misconception as to the nature of the heart of man; thirdly; a misconception as to the attitude of God.

1st.—A misconception as to the meaning of Scripture.

We are referred to the verse in Pro-

verbs, which says: "My son, give Me thine heart," as if that were ample warrant for the words being repeated to all and sundry.

It must be noted, however, that this verse implies a known relationship between the One who speaks, and the one addressed: "*My son*, give Me thine heart."

Now, while God is the Creator of all, and all mankind are His offspring, He is *Father* only to those who are His children by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3. 26). None but those who have believed in Christ, to the saving of their souls, can claim to be children of God. None but they have the right to call Him "Father."

To all such, the exhortation "Give Me thine heart" applies in full force. We are bidden to "yield ourselves unto God," soul and body. Our hearts are now to beat for Him; our affections, transferred from the world and sin, are now to find their centre in Himself, as revealed in Christ. Shame upon us if we keep any chamber of our heart locked against Him who has so abounded in love to us, and who is worthy of all our love and gratitude.

To say this is one thing, but to urge an unconverted sinner to give his heart to God *in order to be saved* is quite another. Great care must be taken to rightly divide the word of truth, and not to apply to the unsaved words which properly belong to the children of God.

2nd.—*A misconception as to the nature of the heart of man.*

Who that knows anything of the true character of his own heart would think for a moment that it would be a suitable offering to present to God?

What is the testimony of Scripture as to this?

“Every imagination of the thoughts of his *HEART* . . . only evil continually” (Gen. 6. 5).

“The *HEART* is deceitful above all things, and desperately [or incurably] wicked” (Jer. 17. 9).

“Out of the *HEART* of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mark 7. 21, 22).

The heart, then, is filled continually with evil imaginations; it surpasses everything in deceitfulness; it is desperately wicked, and contains the seeds of all vile and awful things. Is the salvation of God to be purchased by the gift of a thing like *that*?

Nay, indeed; until the heart has been changed and renewed by the grace of God, let no one talk of giving it to Him.

3rd.—*A misconception as to the attitude of God.*

Though God Himself remains unchangeably the same, His ways with men and His attitude towards men change. In the day when the Law was given by the hand of Moses, God took the attitude of a *demanding* God. He demanded, as He had a perfect right to do, the love and obedience of His people Israel.

The coming of Christ into the world and His death upon the cross has, however, brought about a wonderful change in the attitude of God. Instead of coming to men with holy and rightful demands, He approaches them as a *GIVING* God, abounding in grace and

blessing, of which all are invited to partake. In the olden days, man was put in the place of the giver, and God was the Receiver. But it was conclusively proved that man had nothing to give to God. His heart was desperately wicked; his life full of corruption.

So God, in rich mercy, took the place of Giver, and put poor bankrupt man in the place of the recipient. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable *gift*.” “The *gift* of God is eternal life.”

Did the Lord Jesus counsel the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well, to give her heart to God? Nay; He spoke to her of what *God* had to give. “If thou knewest the gift of God,” He said, or, as it has been rendered: “If thou knewest *THE GIVING GOD*” (John 4. 10).

Yet how often does one hear of sinners being urged to give their hearts to God. I take up the current number of a missionary magazine, and I read of a visit paid to a dark African village. The headman offers a fowl as a present.

“No, no, my friend,” says the missionary, “never mind about the fowl; you are all very poor here, and I have not come for what I can get. *Give your hearts to God.*”

So in Heathendom, as well as in Christendom, this perversion of the gospel is common, and it is well that attention should be called thereto.

One may think that the matter is not of great importance. But the writer has met with persons who have been driven into the by-paths of doubt and legality by the use of the phrase in question.

Awakened to their own sinfulness, and desiring to be right with God, they kneel down and seek to give their hearts to Him, and to dedicate their lives to His service.

With a sense of relief in having made the “surrender,” they rise from their knees determined to live a holier life in the future.

Before very long, however, they find by bitter experience that their hearts instead of beating with love to God, are just as bad as ever, and that the old, sinful thoughts come crowding into their minds again.

Perhaps they think that the surrender has not been whole-hearted enough. Kneeling down again, they try with greater earnestness than before, to "give their hearts to God." With what result? Alas! After the first impression of relief and expectation has passed away they have again to acknowledge defeat, and soon conclude that it is "no use trying any more."

So they sink into a hard, indifferent state of soul, and perhaps turn to the attractions of the world, hoping to deaden their feeling of heart-disappointment by flinging themselves into the whirl of its pleasures.

How much better, then, for those who have opportunities of helping others to set the glad tidings before them as given to us in the Holy Scriptures, and to show that God is the Giver, and that they have but to receive, and to bow in repentance and gratitude in the presence of such infinite grace.

The Humiliation and Love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

LET us look at Jesus, our Lord, and see the perfect strength of His love. He did not please Himself; He emptied Himself and humbled Himself to the place of our disobedience, but not only so: in that place of love He was contented to be utterly rejected. The flesh in us is very subtle, and if we have rendered a kindness and get no return—not even a kind word—our hearts faint in the exercise of love.

With our Lord the only consequence of His humiliation was that, by man, He was less respected and more humbled. Men took occasion of His lowliness to treat Him with the utmost scorn. He looked for comforters, but he found none; the disciple who had been most forward to declare his adhesion to Him denied Him with oaths and curses.

He found no outlet for His grief when cast out by the scorn of those He came to love. His soul turned to God; but the wrath that man deserved was resting upon Him, and God hid His face from Him. There was nothing to sustain His soul but the power of love—that love which we shall know and taste for ever; this supported Him; and, if

He emptied Himself of everything else, there was in Him this fullness of love; for He is God, and God is love. We have found love in Him, and that shall be our everlasting portion.

In His life He went about doing good, and there was much in His works that the natural mind could approve; it pleased them to have their diseases cured and their dead raised; but there was no putting forth even of this power on the cross—there was no miracle—nothing but weakness and degradation, but with this there was fullness of love.

Naturally we do not like the power of the cross; it stains human glory; and we do not like thus to receive the blessings of salvation. Many Christians are cherishing things which keep them from knowing the full power of this love in their hearts.

Whatever nourishes SELF, honours, talents, learning, wealth, respectability—anything, everything that the natural man delights in—renders Christ less precious, and our enjoyment of his love less. Let us bless God for everything that puts down self. (*J.N.D.*)

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 3.

(JAMES BOWD).

The Church—Christ's Body.

I AM persuaded that the difference of judgment regarding this supremely blessed hope arises in great measure from a defective apprehension of the different ways in which the saints of God of the present dispensation are viewed in Scripture. It is plain that the hope of the church, as *such*, is the "*Morning Star*," in contrast with the "*Sun of Righteousness*," which is the hope of Israel. The presentation of the Lord in the former character to His heavenly people, the church, in the last book of the New Testament; and in the latter character to His earthly people, Israel, in the last book of the Old Testament, cannot be without some significance; and that the transference of His saints from earth to heaven must be secret from the world is beyond question for those who believe that His resurrection and ascension is a pattern of theirs, and that their appearing hangs upon His; that is, that they do not appear until He does, and that then they are seen coming with Him. That they shall be transferred from earth to heaven, and be with Him before He is manifested to the world, and that they shall be manifested with Him at His manifestation, nothing but ignorance of Scripture or blindness as to its meaning would lead any one to deny.

At the same time, this does not alter the fact that the appearing of Christ, and the things which will take place at that appearing, are never absent from the thought of those who look to be caught up to meet Him in the air at His coming again. Indeed, in the very place in which He presents Himself to us as the Bright Morning Star, He couples with it the great truth that He is the "Root and the Offspring of David" (Rev. 21. 16), thus giving us the assurance of the fulfilment of all that was set forth in the son of Jesse. For what is the morning star but the forerunner of the day? It does not usher in the day, but it tells us of its near approach. But only those who watch during the night have their hearts gladdened by its brilliant beams. Indeed, none else see it, for when the sun rises it

sinks out of sight into the blue of heaven. When the day dawns the sun rules supreme, for he is both its creator and its lord. And such shall Christ be in the day of His glory.

I trust that what I have been led to say regarding the Scriptures (see "*The Holy Scriptures*," page 97) may be used of God to prepare our hearts to receive unquestioningly its communications concerning the character of the present dispensation, and the different ways in which the saints of God are viewed in the Epistles which are by the Holy Spirit addressed to them. I am not pleading that saints should accept *my interpretation* of Scripture, but that Scripture itself should have full authority over all our hearts and minds.

It is to the Epistles of Paul that we must look for light regarding the church in its heavenly character and in its relationship to its living Head in glory. John never mentions it. I am well aware that he speaks of the seven churches in Asia, churches which existed in his day but which have long passed away from this scene. Of the church in its universal and united character, as the body of Christ, composed of those who in their natural condition were Jews or Gentiles, but now neither the one nor the other, but one new man in Christ, no one speaks but Paul. Of this mystery he was the only minister.

Here we come to something more than the kingdom, however great a thing the kingdom may be. While the Lord was with the disciples the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was the thought uppermost in their minds, and that thought the Lord so little disturbs that they again refer to it, as we have seen, after His passion and resurrection; but not even then does He do more than put the matter off for a little. Nor does Peter set before those to whom he writes any higher hope, except his allusion to the new heaven and the new earth. He tells them that the apostles had not followed any "cunningly

devised fables" when they had placed before them this prospect, and refers them to the vision in the holy mount, which confirmed to their hearts the prophetic word.

It may be said that Paul also, in quite as definite a way as Peter, brings before those to whom he writes this blessed hope and expectation of the kingdom, and tells them it is for this they suffer. Surely: indeed he never loses sight of it. But he has something much higher to tell them about; something which comes not only much nearer to their hearts, but also much nearer to the heart of Christ. Could anything be as dear to a man as his body and his bride? "*No man ever yet hated his own flesh;*" and, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself;" and this is spoken "*concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph. 5. 25-33). What is the kingdom compared with this? What to the heart of the Lord? What to the heart of the one who loves Him?

I do not underrate the appearing and the kingdom. It will be a joy to our hearts beyond all thought to see the stigma taken from the name of Christ in this world; to see the world coming to the knowledge that it was love to the Father and obedience to His command on the part of Jesus that took Him to that cross of woe (John 14. 31); that He was obedient unto death, and such a death—the death of the cross; to see His name excellent in all the earth; to see every knee in heaven, earth, and in the infernal regions, bend before Him, and to hear every tongue confess Him as Lord; to see Him accepted where He was rejected; supreme where He was set at naught; honoured where He was mocked and derided; justified where He was condemned; eulogized where He was anathematized; honoured where He was dishonoured; crowned with glory where He was crowned with thorns; enthroned where He was crucified; judging where He was judged; and where He was the song of the drunkards praised continually by heaven and earth. Haste, Lord, that day of glory, that we may see Thee adored by all; yea, that we may be the very first to cast ourselves at Thy feet and own Thee supreme in the universe, which once witnessed Thy

humiliation at the hands of Thy creature-man!

Will a wife be regardless of her husband's honour? Surely not. But is he himself not more to her than the kingdom which is his? Infinitely more. And is she not more to him than the honour of his kingdom? Much more indeed. Is she not supreme in his affections? Is he not supreme in hers? What intimacy exists between those in such a relationship! What holy affections! At what a distance stands the highest in his kingdom compared with the nearness which is hers. To His church Christ is entirely devoted. For her He gave Himself; and from the day in which He laid down His life that she might be His own He has been occupied with her, and shall be until the day in which He shall present her to Himself glorified, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing.

With His church the rapture is connected. He will present her to Himself. She is already united to Him. The marriage in heaven will be the public declaration of this union. When this takes place He will be able to appear. He will not appear without her. In His universal supremacy the Last Adam is not complete without His bride. At the beginning God made man male and female, and blessed them, and called their name Adam. Therefore in the day in which Christ is manifested the church will be with Him. God 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). It will not be a Head without a body that will appear, but Head and body—"The Christ" complete (1 Cor. 12. 12).

Then again, it is not in connection with Him simply as King of Israel that the church is found, but it is in connection with Him in *universal* supremacy. It is the earthly Jerusalem that is viewed as the bride of the King of Israel. Psalms 2. and 18. set before us the extent of territory placed under the Messiah, but it is Psalm 8. that shows us One supreme in the whole creation of God. Not only a King set on the holy hill of Zion, getting the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, but the Son of Man placed over everything that the hand of God

has created. Nothing is excepted but the One who places everything under Him (1 Cor. 15. 27).

Now it is with Christ viewed in this glorious position that we are said to be united. It is not to the *King* as such, nor even to the *Bridegroom*: for both these terms have reference to Christ only in His relations with Israel; though, of course, if we speak of the bride, a bridegroom is supposed, but the term *Bridegroom* is not applied to Christ as the Husband of the church; in this relationship it is the Husband and the wife. This is clear from Ephesians 5. 25-33; and in 2 Corinthians 11. 2 we read, "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." "The kingdom under the whole heaven" (Dan. 7. 27) is surely His, and the day is coming in which He shall assuredly take it; and when He reigns we shall reign with Him; but there is the dominion which is His, which is as far-reaching as the utmost limits of the whole creation, and with Him in this universal dominion also we are associated. I fail to see how the throne can be set in heaven, as we have it in Revelation 4., until His church is with Him. Were it so He would be beginning to assume universal dominion as Head without His body. And it is "to the church, which is His body," He is "Head over all things." Hence, it seems to me, He will not move in the direction of the acquisition of the inheritance without the one who is to share all with Him.

The idea in most minds is that the Head and the body have little or no reference to anything but the kingdom under heaven; hence the church is, in their minds, indissolubly connected with this earth. Now when we come to the way in which we are viewed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which is the one Epistle in which the church in her true position and privileges is set before us, I find that she is already set in Christ in the heavenlies, and has no more relation to earth than to any other part of the vast realm of God, though the individuals who compose the church have direction as to their walk on earth at the present moment. We have a great deal about the earthly kingdom in the Old Testament, but not a word about the

church. Why is this? and why should Israel be so prominent? Simply because, though we get "*all things*" spoken of as put under the feet of the Son of Man, this is not the subject of the revelation. God is there presented as dealing only with the world, and putting Israel in the place of head over the nations of the earth; as He says in Deuteronomy 32. 8, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam [referring to what we have in Genesis 10.], He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Here we see that even from the confusion of tongues at the building of Babel, the supremacy of Israel was in the mind of God. He would govern the nations through Israel. They failed Him, and He scattered them. But He will again take them up, and there will be no failure in that day. But until that day comes there will be no peace among the nations of the earth. Then they will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.

But when we come to the church, it is not the secret in the heart of the Most High who divided the nations, but it is "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world [not from Babel] hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3. 9). This was the grand secret of the Creator. It was not that the church should be supreme amongst the nations of the earth. No; that was to be Israel's place; but it was to be at the centre of the whole vast universe of God. There all the light that ever God gave to man shall be effulgent; there it shall shine forth to the utmost limits of creation. The Father in the Son, and the Son in the heart of the bride (John 17. 23), illuminating, warming, cheering, nourishing, with infinite grace and love, redeemed creation. The Husband and the wife, the Last Adam and His Eve, Christ and the church, enlightening, directing, controlling, ordering everything in heaven and upon earth for the good of the whole creation.

Now if this be so, what would be the natural expectation of a heart filled with the knowledge of this mystery of His will? Would it be found looking for the appearing of Christ when He would come to judge the world, as the moment

of meeting Him? or as the moment of appearing with Him? Surely the latter. And this is just what Scripture says. Here, and now, we do not appear, except as lights in the midst of this darkness: we are dead with Christ as regards this world, and our life is hid with Him in God (Col. 3. 3); we are also risen and seated in Him in the heavenlies, and waiting the moment of His appearing, that we may appear with Him.

In view of this marvellous mystery we can well understand the deep desire of the heart of the aged Apostle that caused him to go down on His knees and pray, "To the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family [or every family] in heaven and earth is named, 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 fulness of God."

With a true view of the church the rapture is seen to be a necessity before the appearing. It is a heavenly thing, has its place already in the heavenlies, is seated there in Christ; therefore the raising of those that are asleep, and the quickening of the mortal bodies of the living, are all that is necessary to complete the salvation which is already ours in Him; so that when He shall appear we may appear with Him in glory. But the glory in which we shall appear is a glory that will not only illuminate earth, but will send its brilliant and beneficent beams to the confines of creation. As Israel will have her place at the centre of the nations of the earth, and under her King in Zion will rule in the fear of God, and judge with equity, so will the church have her place at the centre of the universe, the glory of Him who is both the Morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness, the effulgence of God's glory, and the expression of His essential being. "To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

LUKE X.

LUKE 10 depends upon what has gone before in the rejection of the Lord, and the glory of His Person thereupon revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration. "From this onwards," as it has been observed, "to the commencement of the closing scene (18. 31), what we read in LUKE is either not in MATTHEW and MARK, or is here connected with other subjects than the historical ones found in those Gospels; and the various circumstances are introduced in their *moral* connection." In the sending out of the seventy into every city and place whither He Himself would come, only given by LUKE, there is an urgency and finality more marked than in the sending of the twelve, though presenting in common with that mission the kingdom of God as come nigh, and this whether the testimony was received or refused. If the latter it would be more tolerable for shameless

Sodom and Tyre and Sidon, the cities of human pride, in the day of judgment than for them. For to hear them would be to hear the Lord, but to despise them was not only to despise the Lord, but the Father who had sent Him. They return from their mission with joy, telling of demons being subjected to them through His name; and this brings before the Lord the overthrow of Satan's power in the heavenlies (see Rev. 12.). But for them there was a deeper joy in that their names were registered there. The scene on the mount had indicated the opening of the Father's house; now we have a people for it. To this everything tends more and more in LUKE. His own joy follows, but not as in MATTHEW 11., following upon the dispensational rejection of both John and Christ's testimony, but much more in connection with His people's blessedness. The full

triumph over Satan, and the coming to light of a people who had their place and portion in heaven, things hidden from the wise of the world had been revealed to babes, according to the Father's will. The incomprehensible glory of the Son of God was the difficulty to the pride and will of man. All things were delivered to Him of the Father; no one knew who He was but the Father, nor who the Father was but the Son who had come to reveal Him. To His disciples privately He declared their blessedness in the fact that they saw and heard what kings and prophets had not, much as they desired it. Everything proves the dispensational change to be great; the moral answer to it is found in what follows, peculiar to LUKE.

A lawyer, who connected life, to which the law pointed, with eternal life of which prophets had spoken in its millennial conditions (Ps. 133.; Dan. 12.), and who would know what he must do to inherit it, is referred by the Lord to the law, of which he was able to quote the substance from Deuteronomy and Leviticus. There was no other standard, if man would live by his doing, though the law says nothing of eternal life. Lawyer-like, he raises a question on the terms—"And who is my neighbour?" The answer of the Lord brings out that a neighbour's need was enough for divine love; neither priest nor Levite would or could touch it, and the heart to meet it was only found in the despised Samaritan. But He became such a neighbour to the one in need that he never needed a neighbour again. How sweet the revelation of the ways of grace that were to form a heavenly people in contrast to legal measures and requirement. But conduct moulded upon such a model can only be formed by personal acquaintance with Him, and is to be found as with her who sat at His feet and heard His word, and to be maintained by prayer (chap. 11.). For the next thing is that as He was praying, His disciples would learn of Him how to pray, as JOHN also had taught his. And the Lord responds to their desire,* and, by the

illustration that He uses, encourages them to earnestness, and even "shamelessness" (as the word for "importunity" really is,) indicating the gift of the Holy Spirit as in the Father's purpose for them that ask Him (see John 7. 39; 13. 16, 17).

The casting out of a demon from the dumb is the occasion as in MATTHEW 12. of the blasphemy that attributed it to the chief of the demons, instead of discerning in it the finger of God, and the kingdom of God come upon them. Without this, whatever the apparent reformation, the unclean spirit would return in sevenfold increased possession, and the last state be worse than the first, though the application to the final state of the nation is not given here as in MATTHEW. True blessedness was found not in knowing Christ after the flesh but in hearing and keeping the Word of God. There had been a moral effect wrought (even upon Gentiles) by the preaching of Jonah and the wisdom of Solomon; a greater than either was found in the blessed person of the Lord. What hindered light, made so conspicuous for all, reaching men? The eye was at fault; if it were single the whole body would be lightsome, and bear the light for others to see it; if evil the body was darksome, and what might have been light to it became itself darkness. Woe is then pronounced upon the Pharisaism of resting in external performance, and upon the lawyers that bound burdens upon others they would not touch themselves. They had taken away the key of knowledge; entering not themselves they hindered those that would enter in. They were but filling up the sins of their fathers. And according to Proverbs 1. 20-23, which the Lord here interprets and expounds (*cf.* ver. 31. of our chap.), this would be brought to the proof by the prophets and apostles He would send, some of whom they would slay, that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world might be required of this generation. The difference between this judgment of the state of the religious leaders, and the sevenfold denunciation of woe upon them in connection with the final judgment of Jerusalem as in MATTHEW 23., will be felt by all, and seen to be characteristic of each Gospel in its place.

* According to the idea of a form of prayer, the copyists have early added to what was found in Luke 11. 2-4, from Matt. 6. 9-13. But with all critical authorities we must read simply "Father, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; give us day by day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation"

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 14.

(H. J. VINE).

Isaiah (2). Section 1. Chapters 41. to 48.

God's Witnesses.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is given "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners" (42. 7). Israel needs Him to do this for them, for they have become blind; and a people "hid in prison houses" (vers. 18-22). They had sinned against the Lord, become idolatrous, and consequently as the Lord's national servant and messenger Israel was useless (ver. 19). But brought into contact with Christ the personal Servant, their eyes will be opened, and the works of God will be publicly manifested in the nation, as it was in the one blind man of John 9. "that the works of God should be manifested in him" (ver. 3). Here He says: "I am the Lord; that is My Name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images" (42. 7). Israel's eyes shall be opened, and they shall know the Lord and believe; thus shall they be His fitted witnesses (43. 10), against idolatry, and of the one true God, beside whom there is none other. "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art MINE" (43. 5).

In His wonderful grace He has wrought to remove their sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, He will righteously redeem them; and restored to Himself He will say to them, "Ye are *My witnesses*, saith the Lord, THAT I AM GOD" (ver. 12); again, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (ver. 21).

The impotency of idols is seen, and abandoned for the true God. An idol is "a block of wood!" "An abomination!" (44. 19). But Israel knows God, the God who has "blotted out as a thick cloud" her transgressions (44. 22); therefore "Sing, O ye heavens; . . . the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and GLORIFIED HIMSELF IN ISRAEL" (ver. 23).

How tender are His pleadings with His people, His future witnesses, in chapters 45. and 46. He raised up Cyrus for their sakes (45. 4). He had remained faithful

to them all along, though they had rebelled against Him. "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" (46. 4). "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory" (ver. 13). Among the nations who followed idols such things were unknown, and God raises the challenge: Who among the nations "can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth THEIR WITNESSES, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, *It is truth*" (43. 9). But to Israel He says, "Ye are MY WITNESSES, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen . . . before ME there was no God formed, neither shall there be after ME. I, EVEN I, AM THE LORD; AND BESIDE ME THERE IS NO SAVIOUR" (vers. 10-11).

There is no God else beside Me.

Through Israel this shall be known in all the earth; when Israel herself is "saved *in the Lord* with an everlasting salvation" (45. 17); then "*in the Lord* shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (ver. 25). Thrice happy are those favoured believers, who to-day, while Israel rejects Christ, know the "salvation that is in Christ Jesus;" true indeed it is that "in Him all that believe are justified from all things." In the coming day of which we speak, Israel shall witness to the Lord; "*There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me*" (ver. 21). Over and over again the Holy Spirit reiterates this all-important fact in chapters 43. to 46. No less than ten times it is intensely stated, *There is none else!* Israel's God is the only God! He "*created*" Jacob! He "*formed*" the nation! and though, like her father, she "would deal treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb" (48. 8), yet He "*redeemed*" her! Yea, He "*called*" her by her name; "*thou art Mine!*" She can therefore witness not only against idols, but to the only God. Now the call is rightly heard, and it will bring rapid response in all the world. "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved,*

all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and *there is none else*" (45. 22). He "*raised up*" Cyrus to overthrow idolatry; He "*called*" him; He "*declared*" the end from the beginning; therefore it is finally said (46. 9), "Remember the former things of old: for I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE; I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE LIKE ME."

Babylon.

But before we leave this, we are allowed to see another who rises up, and blasphemously claims this divine distinction; we twice hear her say, "*I am, and none else beside me*" (47. 8 and 10). Her name is Babylon; of both Chaldean and Babylonian lineage; she is their daughter, even if we find her again in Revelation, as the "*mother of harlots*" (Rev. 17. 5). There is no mistaking this vile system; pleasure-loving, religious, superstitious, idolatrous; she is opposed to faith, and guilty of evil intimacy with a Christ-rejecting world. She is "the lady (or mistress) of kingdoms" (ver. 5); she becomes wearied with her "multitude of counsels" (ver. 13); she persuades herself she shall not know sorrow (ver. 8); but she is irrevocably doomed (vers. 3, 9, etc.), as we also see in Revelation.

Rationalism, Ritualism, and Religion without the true and only Saviour God, our Lord Jesus Christ, combine to exalt her to such proud and blasphemous heights. "*I am, and none else beside me!*" she says in her heart; but she is cast as a millstone into despairing depths, and the true assembly in heaven is heard to say, "True and righteous are His judgments" (Rev. 19. 2), "for He has judged the great harlot;" and once again the voice is heard, "Allelujah!!"

In Revelation, as here, God's earthly people are called to come out of her (Rev. 18. 4; Isa. 48. 20). God rightly looks for true separation to Himself, and indeed lasting joy and happiness are only to be found there, as now, in that path; for God no sooner says, "Go ye forth of Babylon" (48. 20), than He adds, "With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob." But here as in the next section, this ends by saying to the lawless among the people of God, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked (lawless)" (ver. 22). The true God, the only God, fully revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, looks for faithfulness to Himself.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 4.

(C. E. H. WARREN.)

Psalm VII.—X.

THESE Psalms form another series analogous to the first seven, but in place of being instructed as to God's government on earth and His purposes concerning Christ, as in the first two Psalms, we are introduced to the actors and circumstances* of the last great

crisis before the kingdom of our Lord is established. In that day of trouble the devil will put forth all his power and subtlety, by Antichrist and his allies, to keep God's King out of His inheritance. The conflict going on now under restraint (2 Thess. 2.) will then be fought out with all the fierceness of the devil's "great wrath" (Rev. 12. 12), and God will use this time of crisis for purifying His saints. "The wise who understand" will then find in these Psalms an utterance of the Spirit prepared for them in their fiery trial (Dan. 12. 3, 10). The character of this purifying is mentioned in Isaiah 1. 25, 27; Malachi 3. 3; Zechariah 13. 9. The study of such scriptures in their context seems quite sufficient to prove that the saints referred to are a remnant of Israel and not the church; but, while admitting this, we should carefully

* These two constitute one Psalm in the Septuagint, followed by the Vulgate, and together form the first of the so-called Abecedarian Psalms in which successive verses or sections begin with letters alphabetically arranged. Psalm 119. and the Lamentations are the most perfect of this kind of composition. Here the structure is irregular. One of the irregularities is the omission of six letters in the description of the Antichrist in Psalm 10. This remarkable hiatus suggests the import of these acrostic Psalms, and may indicate that this construction is "a symbol of order impressed by a governing mind" (*Grant*). From this control the wicked one is permitted, for the time, to escape. "He does according to his own will" (*cf.* Luke 22. 52).

remember that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for *our* learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." Thus we may prove for ourselves that *all* Scripture is profitable. Surely it is suggestive of encouragement to ourselves to see how the Spirit has prepared a song of victory for the faithful before the "times of trouble" are over. What He writes for all will find very various measures of realization, but in the Psalms there is no imperfection, for God could propose nothing short of perfection according to the circumstances and character of the dispensation. The understanding of what is Jewish should enhance our appreciation of what is Christian.

PSALM 7. with more detail presents little that differs from the four Psalms that precede. It concludes with addressing God in His Millennial title—The Most High—which is taken up again in 9.2. Between them comes the great Millennial Psalm 8.

Psalm 8. presents the wonderful results of the incarnation, for we learn from Ephesians 4. 10, that it is Christ who went down into the lower parts of the earth (*cf.*, Ps. 139. 15), who is now ascended above all heavens. In Him, the Son of Man of verse 4, the glory of Jehovah is set, not only above the heavens, but at last, the long centuries of strife ended, His Name is excellent in all the earth, and He himself holds a dominion over all things—heavenly, earthly, and infernal. From Ephesians 1. we may learn that involved in this is a Headship from which blessing flows to all things over which He is Head, which of course does not, like dominion or Lordship, include hostile powers. The "all things" over which He is Head are those filled with His glory. It will be evident to any reading this in the light of the New Testament, what an amazing display of victorious power is revealed. From the highest heavens down to the humblest of God's creatures His sway is owned. But, however great and glorious the prospect, there would be a lack, did we not know from Ephesians 1. that there will be a living testimony, not only to almighty power, but to an infinite love, seen in the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all things as being in all. Wonderful that the world will

learn in the church the love of the Father to the Son (John 17. 23; see also Eph. 2. 7).

There are certain difficulties in the Psalm which may now be briefly dealt with: and first as to verse 2. An able scholar has suggested the translation "From the mouth of children and sucklings hast Thou ordained the ascription of strength." Hence the reference by the Lord in Matthew 21. 16, which is taken from the LXX, would give the sense without justifying its verbal correctness. The enemy is probably a reference to the Antichrist, the leader of the apostate Jews. The avenger would then be the external power of Daniel 8. 10, 11. The verse would thus mean that the power that deals with these forces, both hostile to the faithful, is the subject of the praise of the children and sucklings—Jehovah's little ones (Zech. 13. 7).

In verse 4 there are two words for man. What is Enosh (poor frail creature), that Thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam that thou visitest him? "Adam is the common designation in Hebrew of mankind at large." We may thus learn the blessed grace in which God in the person of the Son connected Himself with the ruin of this world, Himself unstained, to put it away for ever according to this Psalm.

In verse 6, the word translated angels is "Elohim" the name of God, but used besides for God's representatives either the judges of Israel (Exodus 21. 6 and 22. 8, 9, 18; Ps. 82. 1, 6), or angels (Ps. 97. 7).

In Psalm 9, as in many other Scriptures, we find, at the beginning, the end to which the Spirit would lead the believer, "the whole heart" is tuned to the praise of Jehovah who is acclaimed as "the most High." This title ensures the making good by power all the purposes of God, and faith can thus assume their accomplishment even while the testimony is maintained in suffering and oppression. Similarly in our day, when God speaks according to His purpose, as in Ephesians we read, "and hath put all things under His feet," while in Hebrews 2. it is written, "we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour," the Man of God's right hand whom He has made strong for Himself, and in whom victory is

achieved over sin and its consequences, and over every hostile power. Who, in the joy of such a revelation, could abstain from praise "with the whole heart," even in the midst of trials and difficulties? So in the Psalms, while it is evident that the saints are not in full deliverance, yet Jehovah is praised, "the One dwelling in Zion." The part of speech employed indicates the character of His reign, though actually He is not established there yet. In the last two verses praise and exultation give place to prayer, but it is prayer in perfect assurance of an answer, for who is frail man (cnosh) in opposition to Jehovah.

Psalm 10. begins not with praise but with urgent appeal to Jehovah "in times of trouble." The soul feels as if He is hiding Himself, for Antichrist in his unchecked power is before Him. The Spirit's description of this embodiment of Satanic opposition to God follows in verses 3-11. The terms used should be carefully compared with Daniel 11. 36-39, 2 Thess. 2. 4-10, and Revelation 13. 11-18. The person referred to is the same, but each writer speaks from a different point of view. The Psalm describes his inward character, Daniel his acts and policy, Paul tells of his Satanic inspiration, while John describes the power whereby he deceives, "if it were possible, the very elect." Paul

viewing all this in the spirit of prophecy sees also that the principles which will find full expression in Antichrist are working secretly in the church, and he tells us "the mystery of lawlessness doth already work." So early was the will of man at work in the sphere where Christ should be all and in all. Doubtless, then, that evil expressed itself under Jewish forms. Since then an appalling development of this insidious mischief has taken place, deriving its parentage not only from fallen Jerusalem, but also from Babylon—the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (Rev. 17. 5). Let none venture to boast that I, or we, are exempt, for man's will works in associations where it might least be expected, so that "the whole is leavened." May the Spirit work in many hearts, even now, that true confession and contrition which is becoming in the present state of the church.

The alphabetic construction recommences in verse 12, where God is brought in by prayer to cope as He alone can with this oppressive power. In verse 16 the glorious result of God's intervention is celebrated: "Jehovah is King for ever and ever, the nations are perished out of His land." Before Him the frail man of the earth is seen by faith, in his insignificance, dazzling as his appearance may be before men (Rev. 13. 2, 8, 12).

God will bear no witness to any doctrines but His own.

* * * * *

"*The love of Christ . . . passeth knowledge.*" Eph. 3. 19. He it was whose trial abounded, who had suffered the loss of all things, who wrote the triumphant words: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors,"—not through our love to Him, but "through Him that loved us." Let us only firmly grasp this truth, and beholding, we shall reflect this joy of the Lord, and be able, not merely at some times, but at all times, to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—*J. Hudson Taylor.*

* * * * *

"*The word of God.*" Eph. 6. 17. We ask whether in all the equipments of life there is aught to be compared to the word of the Lord? There is none like it for variety of adaptation. We find in the Word of God weapons that we can turn in every direction—weapons that suit every mood and every combination of circumstances by which we are surrounded. . . . We find in the Word of God—without consulting any other author—the precise answer to every difficulty, the right method of meeting every opposition, and the one true solace that can get to the heart and heal it with the succour which it needs.—*Parker.*

Dont go to Extremes !

(A. J. POLLOCK).

THE quaintness of the presentation of a truth often arrests one, where otherwise it might pass as commonplace, and be easily forgotten.

Such a presentation of truth is seen in Ezekiel 44. 20.

Let me pass it on for your consideration : " Neither shall they [the priests] shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long ; they shall only poll their heads."

A passage like this pulls one up. It says as plainly as it can be said : DON'T GO TO EXTREMES !

Here are two priests. One is altogether shaven ; the other has long flowing locks. Here are extremes ; they are one-sided, and both are wrong.

Here are two brothers. One is all soul, heart, fire, zeal, earnestness. He is impatient of the restraint that association with his brethren imposes. Divine principles as to fellowship and service are nothing to him. He is all for the salvation of the sinner, and cares for nothing beyond this. We may admire his zeal, but we deplore his one-sidedness ; in this he is wrong.

The other is well instructed in the Word, he is all for the church, and knows how everything should be done. He does not understand the zeal of his brother, love for souls does not seem to move his heart, he is a wet blanket to those who are seeking to spread the gospel. We may be thankful for his intelligence, but we wish he had more warmth of heart ; he is one-sided, and that is wrong.

The former is in danger of superficiality, indifference to principles and worldliness.

The latter will be dogmatic, cold, dry, formal, and possibly legal or worldly, for it is extraordinary how departure from the divine balance of things tends to the same practical result. They may be as

far apart as the poles as to their attitude to things, and yet strangely united in practice. They may envy, despise, and anathematize each other by day, and be bedfellows at night.

We do not want less zeal in the gospel, or less intelligence in or love of the truth, or regard for divine principles. We want more of such things all round. But how shall the one rightly balance the other, so that we be saved from extremes ?

We answer in one word, CHRIST. It is by being kept in living touch with Him.

In touch with *Christ*, each will value the other's service, will esteem the other better than himself, will seek to profit by what the other has learnt of Christ, and so zeal will be tempered by intelligence, and intelligence be of practical value because warmed by zeal.

In touch with *Christ*, the evangelist will learn in a *practical* way that he is a gift from the ascended Lord to His church, he will learn that his converts are saved for the church, the church that is the body of Christ.

In such case the teacher will value deeply the evangelist's work, and the evangelist will esteem much the teacher's work. Love will be at work. Hearty co-operation will be seen.

The evangelist will not lose his zeal in the gospel ; rather, since he knows the great end for which it goes forth, will it be enhanced, and his presentation of this gospel have a positive tone about it that will bear abundant fruit for God's glory.

The teacher will not lose his aptitude to teach, but there will be more soul, sap, fervour, and unction in the presentation of truth.

May our zeal in the gospel, and our love for the truth grow exceedingly, but DON'T BE ONE-SIDED !

" *The love of Christ constraineth us.*" 2 Cor. 5. 14.—It is comparatively easy to lay the sacrifice on the altar that sanctifies the gift, but it requires divine compulsion—the cords of love—to retain it there.

Calling and Election Made Sure.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

TO make his calling and election sure is as much the duty of the Christian as is obedience to any other command which God has given him. (See 2 Pet. I. 10).

But how, the reader may ask, can I call or elect myself? Is that not God's sole prerogative? Is it not He who alone can either call or elect any one? How, then, can it be done by me?

Notice, however, the wording of this most important command. It is: "Make sure your calling and election." These are to be certified and made good experimentally. It is assuredly God who alone can elect and call; because in this act, as in all else, He is Sovereign; and it is impossible for the sinner to do that which the sovereign grace of God alone can do.

It is, however, incumbent on the believer to make his calling and election sure; to produce in his own soul the certitude of this blessed act of God; to be clear, distinct, fearless, and sure that he has been both elected and called of God. Let me beg of you, dear reader, not to fear the word "election." It need cause no fear.

Well, but if some are elected to salvation it follows that others must be elected to damnation. No; that is not a consequence at all. It does not follow. It is a conclusion of the mind that has no warrant in Scripture. There is not, so far as I know, a single passage in Scripture which goes to show that God chose any for eternal damnation. One exception may be found in the case of Judas Iscariot the traitor, but his case stands alone. He was "the son of perdition," and was "a devil."

What has, for very long, been a help to my own mind in this matter is the fact of the complete ruin of the entire race of man, and its alienation from God, by wicked works. Once that truth is accepted, in humility and shame, then

whatever God may be pleased to do, whether in judgment or in grace, whether in the condemnation of the rejecter of mercy, or the punishment of the sinner—and all have sinned over the face of the world—or else in the exercise of saving power to any, all is in His hand. He is righteous in judging the sinner; He is also righteous, by virtue of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in "justifying him that believeth in Jesus."

This is divinely helpful.

I am aware that no truth is more distasteful than that man is insolvent, ruined, corrupt to the core, and in revolt against God; but, assuredly, proof is not needed by any whose eyes are not blinded.

Nature is beautiful; human nature being fallen (that is, sinful) is loathsome. A religion of humanity can only be labelled "rank poison," sweet though it may appear. It will not do for God.

Can you tell me of a single system of religion except Christianity that does not propose, as its goal, the reformation of man as he is?

Methods may differ but the idea is the same in all, and the result is absolute disappointment. The spots of the leopard remain. Sin is bred in the bone and cannot be extracted. The flesh is essentially and unimprovably corrupt, incapable of amelioration even under the very law of God, or by His visible presence.

If so, where is there any hope? Only in God Himself. Had He seen fit to say of the race what He said of Ephraim: "Let him alone"; had he never interposed in mercy, or in the love that gave His Son to the death, then we should simply have sunk into the doom that our sins deserved, and that for ever. But God has deigned to bless; and had He elected but one of Adam's teeming posterity for the smallest favour at His

hands, such an one would have been an absolute debtor to His mercy, nor could any make the least objection; but He has been pleased to act in grace with countless myriads and call them to participate in blessing, both earthly and heavenly. No credit to them! All glory to Him! And no trace of partiality anywhere. If it be sin which alone alienates man from God, clearly it cannot be election that does so. This shuts in the penitent, but shuts out none.

The universal command is that all men should repent. The repentance of but one of them thrills the courts of heaven; he is kissed, clothed, fed, welcomed, amid strains of divine rejoicing; and what then becomes of such an one?

He should simply endeavour to take it all in—the kindly welcome, the exquisite clothing, the tender kiss, the circumstances of Home, the Father's

boundless love—to make sure in his heart of hearts that he, the quondam prodigal, is the unexpected recipient of favour so divine. He would surely make the blessing an actuality; he would trace it back to the Father, whose exceeding and abounding grace would overwhelm his soul, but he would take good care to certify to himself that all was his. He would respond in life and conduct to a call of which he had been so absolutely unworthy.

And mark: "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." How wholesome a word for to-day, when "falling" is alas, so deplorably common, and when the grace of God is lightly esteemed. Thank God, "He is able to keep us from falling;" but while that is sweetly true we are, at the same time, commanded to "make our calling and election sure."

Answers to Correspondents.

T.P.H.—We are glad that the paper on "Prayers for the Dead" was helpful to you. If you understand the meaning of "*being baptized for the dead*" (1 Cor. 15. 29), you will have no difficulty as to this passage. The Christian company is there viewed as an army in the line of battle. The enemies' fire was directed upon them and men were falling daily, suffering martyrdom. The gaps in the ranks had to be filled, and they were being filled by those who were baptized—baptism being the initiatory Christian ordinance. There is no thought in the passage of being baptized *instead of*, but rather, *to take the place of* the dead. Those who became Christians, the outward sign of which was their baptism, did so with the full knowledge that it would mean odium, persecution, and possibly death. If they had not had resurrection in view, their sacrifice for the name of Christ, so willingly made, would have been useless.

In these favoured lands we are not called upon to suffer martyrdom now; nevertheless, Christians are brought into

the fellowship of the Lord's death; this is what baptism means; "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6. 3). A statement like that should cost us some prayerful thought.

R.V.S.—We must not conclude that because Abram is mentioned first amongst Terah's sons that he was the first-born. It is very probable that Haran, the last named, was the first-born, for Nahor, the second of the three, married his daughter. The Old Testament is a history of the chosen nation of Israel, and so, in the generations given in Genesis, their direct line of descent is the great thing. This is seen in the case of Noah's sons. Shem is always mentioned first, but Japheth is called the elder (chap. 10. 21). So Abram comes first in point of importance amongst Terah's sons, the first of whom was born when Terah was seventy years old. If this is so, it removes the difficulty which you have as to Terah's age at his death.

From a Doctor's Note-Book.

(T. PEARSON).

The Comfort of God.

"That we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1. 4).

THOSE who have themselves experienced the comfort of God in trial and testing have received a divine impression that can never be forgotten. It is by such an experience that God fits us to be comforters of others, and we are made thereby the trustees of a great treasure—the "comfort of God."

Adverse circumstances are calculated to bring about faint-heartedness in the Christian life, so we are admonished "to comfort the feeble-minded" (faint-hearted) (1 Thess. 5. 14).

A few weeks ago I was travelling from a South of England watering-place to London by train, and had as a fellow-passenger a lady who looked decidedly agitated and in trouble. After a few moments of general conversation she told me the cause of her sadness. She had been wired for, as her sister-in-law had died suddenly; her brother also had just been put away in an asylum. She felt everything was against her, and expressed her keen disappointment in God.

I let her finish her tale of woe, and then asked her, "Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?" She immediately said, "Are you a Christian, sir?" "Yes," I answered, "Thank God, I am, through grace." "Well," she said, "I was converted when fifteen years of age, but I have had such a life of hardship that I have begun to doubt God's love." I said, "I am always glad to meet a Christian, but I hardly thought you were one, for I have not seen a bit of brightness in your face, nor have you made any reference to the Lord Jesus all the time we have been talking." I asked her, "May I read a verse from the Bible to you?" She expressed her

willingness to listen, and I read the 7th verse of 1st chapter of Nahum's prophecy, "*The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.*"

"This is what the Bible says, but you seem to think that "The Lord is unkind, and useless in the day of trouble, and He knoweth not them that put their trust in Him."

The tears filled her eyes, and she said, "Please read the verse again; it is beautiful. I have never seen that verse before. God has sent you along to comfort me."

She had been occupied with her troubles, which indeed were very real ones, and forgetting that she had the God of comfort and consolation to look to, and this one verse from His Book brought back her thoughts to Him.

Before long she arrived at the station at which she had to change trains, and stepping out she again expressed her thankfulness for the cheer she had received from that beautiful verse.

How many there are like this harassed and faint-hearted believer in this world of sorrow, but our great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, thinks of them, and it is a happy service to tell them this and so lift their thoughts to Him whose succour is equal to the greatest sorrow. God cares for them too, and will use those who are usable to administer His comfort to them—"the comfort of the Scriptures." May we always be ready for this good work, always ready to "comfort one another with these words."

Perfectness.

(EDWARD CROSS).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1. 10.

THERE are three words used in Scripture to express completeness, perfectness, each carrying with it a distinctive meaning.

1. *holoklêros*. This implies completeness in all its parts, so that there is no deficiency. We find it in Acts 3. 16, for "perfect soundness" of body, and again in 1 Thessalonians 5. 23, for being "wholly, entirely sanctified," not in part only, not lacking any Christian grace. It is used also in James 1. 4, in conjunction with the following word, *teleios*, "perfect, and entire—complete, deficient in nothing."

2. *teleios*, means rather what is adult, full-grown, in contrast to the immaturity of youth, and as such, reaching the end or object of its being. This word is of frequent use in the N.T., and is very characteristic of Christianity, in which is revealed to us the consummation, the final perfecting of the purposes of God in Christ, made good in us now, morally, in the power of the Spirit, *c.f.*, 1 Corinthians 2. 6, Ephesians 4. 13, Philippians 3. 15, while we are still waiting for their final accomplishment in the power of resurrection, *c.f.* Philippians 3. 12-21, Romans 8. 18-25.

3. *artios* (2 Tim. 3. 17). This, with the words allied to it, means completeness, perfectness, with a special aptitude or suitability for the purpose for which it exists; without which its existence would be in vain. The word itself is derived from a root that means joining together, on to, fitting; and from it comes our word "article," that which determines the existence, the individuality of the thing itself; and again, the word "articulate," which means "distinct," as the sounds of the human voice in contrast to the indistinct, incoherent noises of the brute creation. It is also used as the joining together

of the bones of the body in appropriate position, which is thus made ready and fitted for service. "It is not the *state of the thing as such* that is spoken of, but the state as antecedent and preparative to conduct" (*Cremer*). It is with this word, and in this aspect of it, that we are specially concerned here.

From the foregoing it appears that the word refers to something that for practical purposes can be regarded only as existing in that articulated state—as having no existence apart from that state. A watch is an article composed of various parts put in a certain relationship one with the other—as we may say, "articulated," although the word is not so used, because not anatomically correct, and in so far the figure fails; but, inasmuch as the parts can be taken asunder, and the watch thereby destroyed, the illustration holds good for this purpose. Now the parts of the watch may be in existence in various factories, but until they are brought together, and put into position, *the watch does not exist*. So, again, if taken apart for repair, the watch would cease to be, although the parts were all there, while they lacked adjustment. The essential to the formation of the watch, *not to the creation of its parts*, is its adjustment, its mechanical "articulation." Accordingly, the word implies both "constitution" and "restitution." Constitution as the thing is thereby constituted; restitution as the thing is thereby restored, when it is out of order. Compare the note on this word "perfectly united" (1 Cor. 1. 10) in N. Trans. by J. N. D., as meaning, "where all the members have each its own place, or make a whole; or, if broken, are restored to one complete and perfect whole" (*cf.* Gal. 6. 1).

The practical importance of this self-

evident truth is borne out by the fact that after the failure of "the church," as set up and sustained by the ministry of Paul, when we come to the writings of John, he does not speak of "the church," but of "churches," *i.e.* not of the church as viewed in the unity of one body, but in its divided state, as represented by seven lamps, so that while the church still maintains its mystic perfection in the mind of God, it is not so addressed in Revelation 2. 3, but as so many separate bodies in its fallen and historic state. And as no one would look to a broken watch for the right time, so, no one would find in these chapters directions for his guidance in the midst of the surrounding ruin. They give us, not directions for the conduct of the church, but the Lord's judgment on the ruin in its various phases, and the reward of the overcomer in the midst of it.

It is plain that the ideas connected with *creation* and *articulation* are separate and distinct. The one is the making of the parts, the other is their adjustment. Both are the work of God; yet the one is absolutely and only so; the other allows for the introduction of the human element. There is thus an analogy between them and the two tables of the Law. The first table has to do wholly with God; the second has to do with your neighbour. Yet they are put on a footing of practical, if not of absolute equality (Matt. 22. 36-40.) To fail in the first would be to fail in the design of the law itself: to fail in the second would be to fail equally in result. The failure in the first led to idolatry and the worship of "no-gods"; failure in the second led to the corrupt and polluting practices that belong to that false religious system. Whether the chain breaks at the top or the bottom the result is the same. The top link went first, and the people quickly fell into idolatry (*c.f.* Exodus 32., Deuteronomy 29. and 30., and their history throughout). The consequence of this apostasy was their captivity in Babylon for seventy years; and this apparently cured them of this evil spirit of idolatry in its outward

form. Henceforth they were orthodox in their religious observances; and the remnant, who returned from the captivity, are not addressed by the post-captivity prophets on this head, *i.e.* in respect of the dogmatic requirements of the first table, but in respect of the practical requirements of the second (see Zech. 7. 9, 10; 8. 16, 17):

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."

"These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord."

And, later on, Malachi proffers against them the charge of profanation, not on the ground of idolatrous rites, but in the way of practical unrighteousness, viewed alike religiously, socially, and domestically (*c.f.* Mal. 2. 9, 10; 3. 5; 4. 6). They might be orthodox in the Pharisaic performance of outward ceremony; they might say "corban" to a gift that should go to the relief of a parent in distress; and yet be regardless of their duty to their neighbour, as may be witnessed in a Jewish sweating den to-day, when no charge of idolatry could be brought against the Jewish nation.

Now in all this we have a striking analogy to what occurs in the history of the church. There are, as might be said, two sides to it; first, the divine basis on which it rests: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid"; and second, the perfecting or adjustment of the parts as the fruit of the ministry provided to that end. He gave some apostles, etc., for the perfecting—the adjusting, the articulating—of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all arrive at the

unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man—*teleios*—at the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ (Eph. 4. 12, 13). That was the practical object of the ministry, whereby was to be effectuated the glorious purposes set forth in the opening chapters of the Epistle. It is in view of that that we are exhorted to be found “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” “This is not the power of union—that is, the Holy Ghost; but *practically uniting in fact*, as amongst men on Earth” (J. N. D.).

This was the point on which they broke down at Corinth. They were enriched by the grace of God in all utterance and in all knowledge, and they came behind in no gift, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed amongst them (1 Cor. 1.). What, then, was the burden on the Apostle’s heart in respect of them? Knowledge and gifts they had in full measure; but the practical working of the body, its articulation, they had not even thought of as an essential necessity. They gloried in men—the babies! And as they broke the watch to pieces, they paraded each his little part, as though it were the whole. Divided up into parties and into schools, they had no sense of “the unity of the Spirit”; they had no appreciation of the true meaning of “the church”; and as Satan before had *deceived* Eve, so now they were enamoured of their ruin, as though it were the consummation of eternal life.

Therefore, what the Apostle desires at once for them, is not more gifts, more knowledge, more utterance; but that, “ye all say the same thing, and that there be not among you divisions, but that ye be perfectly united [articulated] in the same mind and in the same judgment” (chap. 1. ver. 10). To assert that a number of saints scattered into various parties, or divided amongst themselves, can be regarded practically as “a whole” and “perfectly united,” is directly opposed to this Scripture, as it is plainly contrary to common sense.

That the assembly at Corinth is addressed as “Christ’s body” characteristically (12. 27) in its unbroken unity, according to their call, and consequent responsibility, in spite of their dissensions, is as true as when he says, “purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lamp, as ye are unleavened” (5. 7). They were “unleavened” according to the call of God; they were “leavened” according to their actual state. So the church is one, unbroken and irrefragible in her mystical perfection before the eye of God; she is broken up, scattered, and non-existent as “the church of God” in her actual state. Israel ceased to be recognised as a nation when the ten tribes revolted, and were finally carried into captivity, and Judah only remained; yet God is “the God of Israel” (Ezra 1. 3), and the people are spoken of as “the people of Israel” (Ezra 2. 2), and frequently in the later books, their actual state notwithstanding, seeing they were but “a remnant that had escaped” (chap. 9. 8, 14, 15.) So likewise the actual state of the assembly at Corinth was practically an open contradiction to the fellowship to which she had been called (1 Cor. 1. 9); and yet she is addressed according to her original calling.

But it is not only at the outset that the Apostle expresses his desire for this articulation—this “perfect uniting” on their behalf; this thought remained uppermost in his mind with respect to them, right on to the end; and so we find it again, twice over, in 2 Corinthians 13. 9, 11, in his final and pathetic exhortation. It was the one great thing he desired for them, their “perfection.” Without it all else would be in vain; gifts, knowledge, utterance, and all such would be futile apart from this. All the parts of the watch might be there, and each part perfect in itself, but without this adjustment of the parts in working order, the *timepiece* would have no existence.

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Gleanings from the Past.—No. 3.

Extracts from Sermon entitled "Grace to the Chief of Sinners,"
by Benjamin Grosvenor, D.D. (1676-1758).

"... Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM" (Luke 24. 46-47).

REPENTANCE and remission of sins are both the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; since it behoved Christ thus to suffer and rise that they might be preached. Had He not died and rose again, there would have been no forgiveness. There might indeed have been a kind of repentance, such as in hell, or such as that of Judas, which sent him thither; a repentance unto death and despair; but repentance unto life, and remission of sins are the blessed fruits that grow out of the accursed tree, and do rise with our Lord Jesus out of the same grave. . . . These great blessings of repentance and remission of sins are commanded to be offered in the first place, to some of the vilest sinners, beginning at Jerusalem. . . . It is very affecting that the first offers of grace should be made to those who, of all people in the world, had done it the most despite! That the heavenly gift should be tendered to those first who least deserved it! Not that any can deserve it at all, for then it were not grace; but they of all people had most deserved the contrary! That they who had abused Christ to a degree beyond the most pitiful description should yet lie uppermost in His care, and stand foremost in His pity, and find so much mercy from One to whom they showed none at all! . . . As if the Lord had said, "Go unto all nations and offer this salvation as you go; but lest the poor House of Israel should think themselves abandoned to despair, go, make them the first offer of this grace. . . . Let them that struck the rock drink first of its refreshing streams; and they that drew My blood be welcome to its healing virtue. Tell them . . .

though they despised My tears, which I shed over them, and imprecated My blood to be upon them, tell them it was for their sakes I shed both, that by My tears I might soften their hearts towards God, and by My blood reconcile them to God. . . . Tell them you have seen the prints of the nails upon My hands and feet, and the wounds of the spear in My side; . . . that every wound they have given Me speaks on their behalf, pleads with My Father for remission of their sins, and enables Me to bestow it. . . . Nay, if you meet that poor wretch that thrust the spear into My side, tell him there is another way—a better way—of coming at My heart, if he will repent, and look upon Him who he has pierced and will mourn, I will cherish him in that very bosom he has wounded; he shall find the blood he shed an ample atonement for the sin of shedding it. . . . Though they have gainsayed My doctrine, blasphemed My divinity, taken away My life . . . endeavoured to murder My reputation too, by making me an impostor, go to Jerusalem, and by beginning there, show them such a miracle of goodness and grace, that they themselves must confess that nothing can be greater than their sin except this mercy and grace of Mine, which where their sin has abounded does thus much more abound, *beginning at Jerusalem*. . . . Begin at Jerusalem, and after the saving efficacy of My grace appears there, no one will question the possibility of their own salvation."

Shall not a poor penitent sinner be accepted, when the vilest of sinners are courted? Poor sinners of the Gentiles must not question His grace when they see it offered to His murderers.

When Christ came into the world bringing salvation, to whom did He offer it? Was it not to publicans and harlots? Publicans, the worst of men accounted; and harlots, the worst of women: giving this reason, that "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It was with this good design He kept such bad company. . . .

To covetous Zacchæus He says, "This day is salvation come to thy house." Salvation to be had for fetching was great grace, but He brings it home to his house.

* * * *

How He dignifies His sufferings. How He turns the ignominy of His cross into glory, by proving the saving merits of His death in the conversion and salvation of the dying thief! There the poor wretch hung, bleeding his last. With what eyes, with what heart and thoughts must the expiring criminal survey a Jesus hanging by him upon a cross, covered with blood and scorn, so as to collect the remainder of his breath into such a prayer, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom?" What! to a dying person for life? to a crucified Jesus for a kingdom? To One that appeared outcast by Jews, and deserted even by His own disciples, to such an One, for admission to the kingdom of glory! How extraordinary the request? How gracious the inward operations that produced it! And how speedy and full the answer: "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." "I will carry thee up with Me into heaven, as the fruit of the present travail of My soul, as a trophy of My victory over Satan, and will show thee there as part of the spoils that shall adorn My triumph over hell and its powers, and as the earnest of the full recovery and salvation of all those for whom I am now dying." He snatches from the very brink of hell one that seemed not only void of grace, but past grace; and melts the heart in an in-

stant that had been hardening for many years.

* * * *

The crucifixion of our Lord was the dolefullest tragedy cruelty ever acted or sorrow can describe. Wherever the guilt of it could fall, one would think it would be with weight enough to sink them below the reach of mercy. The Apostle charges it home upon Jerusalem: "Him you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Never can any again preach to so wicked an auditory. . . . Yet, to wash these wicked hands from the guilt of all they had done, He tenders to them the laver of the blood of Jesus, inviting them to "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, *every one* of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Every one of you, not excepting any of those priests that persuaded the multitude to ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus; nor him that spat in His face, or struck Him on the head; nor him that thrust the spear into His side—if any of these should be in the crowd. . . . And he was so happy as to prevail with about three thousand of them at one sermon.

Who can say after this that the mercy of God was not great enough to forgive his sin, or the grace of God not strong enough to overcome his corruptions, when this mercy and grace is offered to the vilest of sinners? . . .

* * * *

Here, then, with the Apostles, let us stand, and gaze and wonder, and worship, as they did after He had said these things. Things so divine call for a special act of adoration; the whole God shone forth in this goodness. His miracles did not speak Him more divine.

Jesus! with what a mind and frame of soul didst Thou leave this world, and go up to heaven? And art Thou still the same? And is that grace still as free, as full, as extensive, as sufficient as when first offered to Jerusalem? Then I am Thy captive; for who can hold out against this?

By the Skin of his Teeth.

(J. T. MAWSON).

A YOUNG man of our acquaintance who had lived a careless life was lying extremely ill. One night he dreamt that he was in a room filled with the most beautiful specimens of wood-carving. Now wood-carving had been a special hobby of his, and, in consequence, he examined these works of art with deepest interest. Suddenly the room and all the works in it burst into flames, and he, with great difficulty, just managed to escape from the burning building—by a window, we believe—when it tumbled into ruins. He was saved by the skin of his teeth.

“God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

In a dream, in the vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed” (Job 33-14, 15).

This dream was evidently God's voice to our friend, and when we heard it, 2 Peter 3. 10-13 sprang to our minds. The passage reads: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, THE EARTH ALSO AND THE WORKS THAT ARE THEREIN SHALL BE BURNED UP. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? . . .

Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, “look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

In the face of such a statement as this, so plainly writ for us by the Spirit of God, it cannot be wisdom to engross the mind and heart with the things of the world, no matter how harmless and attractive some of them may be; for a wise man will not place the results of his patient toil in a building that he knows might be demolished at any moment, nor will he expend labour and wealth upon it, much less will he make his home in it.

We are not raising the question of the right or wrong of things, but pointing out wherein wisdom lies. If we are assured that new heavens and a new earth are to displace these that are present, that a creation which will abide without decay is to appear instead of this one which is so sadly marred by unrighteousness and sin, our wisdom is to secure for ourselves a place within that which is eternal, and work for it; for all the work wrought with the present world-system in view will be surely destroyed. This is the interpretation and the warning of our young friend's dream, and this solemn truth the Scriptures undoubtedly and plainly teach.

There is another arresting word in 1 Cor. 3. 12-15, which, though it refers primarily to professed Christian service, might well come in here. Every man's work is to be tested by fire; and some—and their folly must be evident—are building wood, hay, and stubble; such material will perish in the devouring flames, and “if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” The man referred to in the passage is a man whose soul is safe through the precious blood of Jesus, but who has wasted his precious life upon perishing things, and, like our young friend in the dream, escapes by the skin of his teeth. His soul saved, but all his work lost, and his life—in which he might have builded gold, silver, and precious stones—utterly wasted.

Needful is the exhortation, “Let every man take heed how he buildeth.”

“For every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.”

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5. 17).

The Widening Breach.

(WALTER B. WESTCOTT).

THE believer is exhorted to "let his yieldingness be known unto all men," but this exhortation has no place where the foundations of the faith are in question. It is the fashion of the hour to preach compromise and plead for toleration, and this is carried to such an extent in some quarters that almost every fundamental element of the gospel is sacrificed for the sake of peace and in the name of "charity." Heresy-hunting is never a profitable pursuit, but heresy and truth are now expected to dwell together, like the lion and the lamb in the millennium.

The happiest and most profitable occupation for the Christian at all times is to proclaim what is POSITIVE and EDIFYING, but it behoves us all to be awake to the strength of the enemy's attack, so that we may not be taken unawares. It may be stated therefore, as a fact that can be demonstrated, that of recent years the departure from the faith has developed in the most alarming fashion. In almost every "denomination" the same distressing features are easily discerned. So completely in fact is error in the ascendancy that practically no attempt is made to deal with it. If a clergyman or minister commits adultery or disgraces "the cloth," he is still liable to discipline for decency's sake, but let him break his ordination vows, repudiate the authority of Scripture, and deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus, and he pursues his way without a protest. This is no exaggerated statement, but sober fact, as the following extracts from recent utterances will prove :—

At a conference of representatives of Sunday-school Unions at Swanwick held last month, one of the speakers (G. K. Hibbert, M.A., B.D.) is reported to have said that there were one or two miracles recorded in the New Testament which he could not accept as authentic because they seemed to be false to the conception

he had of Christ, namely : the finding of the coin in the fish's mouth, and the withered fig tree. The former he regarded as "an Arabian Night's story, invented at a later age." As to the latter he refused to believe that Jesus, *in a moment of petty spite*, performed such an act unworthy of His character. It was a parable and not a miracle, in which conclusion there was the support of St. Luke, as against the narrative of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Nor did he believe the actual record of the Gadarene swine, a story which provoked the mirth of Huxley. . . . As to the resurrection, it was no more a miracle than any act of healing—such a personality as Jesus could not die. He did not believe the story of the turning of water into wine as an actual record, but as a sign or symbol of the old dispensation giving place to the new ("Yorkshire Post," March 24, 1913).

We may well ask, with mingled feelings of indignation and dismay, what will become of the scholars in the Sunday-schools if the teachers pronounce or tolerate such statements, undermining the truth of the Gospel records ?

A lengthy correspondence was carried on in the "Methodist Times" not long ago on the subject of "Liberal Theology." The promoter of the discussion, who styled himself "A Lay Representative," openly avowed that he regarded "the Eden story as simply a Hebrew myth, founded on ancient Babylonish legends." He "regards the doctrine that God could not forgive sin without exacting an equivalent penalty, as due to a false Eastern conception of God as a sort of 'Sultan in the skies ;' as totally contrary to the whole spirit of Christ's teaching; and 'in particular' as diametrically opposed to the lesson of the parable of the Prodigal Son."

Further, he regards the doctrine that "spiritual blessings ['salvation' if some of your readers prefer the term]

are only to be obtained by the shedding of innocent blood, as Jewish or Pagan, but not Christian. Careful readers of the New Testament can easily see that Christ nowhere gives this doctrine any sort of sanction. . . . The idea of 'imputed righteousness' is a figment, and the Lutheran doctrine of 'salvation by faith' is full of danger to morality."

As to the Bible, he regards it as "worthy of all reverence, and repaying the most diligent study, but Liberal Christianity cannot shut its eyes to the obvious fact that the sacred volume contains a large alloy of myth, legend, perverted history, contradictory statements, and imperfect morality." Moreover, this Lay Representative "fails to see why the Christian conscience of the twentieth century should be bound by Paul's view of the sacrificial character of Christ's death, any more than by his injunction that women must keep silence in the church." "Liberal Christianity," he asserts, "rejects the doctrine of the Fall, and its corollary—human depravity; and sees in man a being very imperfect indeed, and retaining the traces of his lowly origin, but more prone to good than to evil, and slowly evolving to a higher plane."

The foregoing statements might be dismissed as the idle words of an *open* enemy of the truth, but unfortunately this would be a grave mistake, for in summing up at the close of the correspondence the editor of the "Methodist Times" (the Rev. J. Scott-Lidgett, M.A., D.D.) refers to the writer as "A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH." Comment is superfluous.

The same correspondence reveals the distressing fact that the above negations are shared by many others in the Methodist Church, and even so well-known a preacher as Professor W. J. Moulton, M.A., is quoted as saying:—

"Archæology has forced us to re-write the early history of civilized man. Once it was possible to read the Old

Testament and to think that the oldest records of the human race lay before us. . . . Now all is changed, and some adjustment of our views has become absolutely necessary."

A more famous preacher, no less a person than the Rev. R. F. Horton, M.A., D.D., an ex-President of the Free Church Council and an ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union, makes the following pronouncement:—

"We may assume to-day that the great majority of people *who are instructed, and who think*, are quite aware that it is impossible to maintain either from the Bible itself or from any external authority that the Book was guaranteed by the Divine Spirit against the possibilities of error. It is impossible to say that it was either written, or transmitted to posterity, under such guarantees that we are entitled to speak of it as infallible. . . . This theory (of an infallible Bible) is, in a word, an idol of the creation of man. As soon as the iconoclast with a keen mind, and without reverence, begins to handle the Bible in the light of this theory, to bring it to the bar of criticism, historical or literary, he is able to overflow it with derision, and just as the infallibility of the Church is the cause of unbelief in Catholic churches, *the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible is the cause of almost all the difficulty in Protestant communities*. Our great object, therefore, should be *to save men from the delusion*, the error, which asserts that the Bible is an infallible Book."

In the same strain and with equal emphasis the Rev. E. Griffith-Jones, B.A., Principal of the Yorkshire United College, Bradford, writes as follows: "No *progressive theologian* can any longer take for granted that a statement is true simply because it is found in Holy Writ, or that a doctrine is true simply because it can be deduced from a verse of Scripture, much less that the inspiration of various portions of Scripture is on the same plane of authority."

In the same article we read: "I fully accept the new factors which historic criticism have introduced into the realm of Christology, and *I have parted gladly* from the old, unreal way of conceiving Jesus as omniscient, potentially omnipotent, and so on, as a modern form of Docetism, which we *have happily outgrown.*"

Seeing that the foregoing are all quotations from prominent ministers and "leaders of religious thought," it must be admitted that it is difficult to over estimate the seriousness of the position, in the light of faithfulness to the Word of God and loyalty to Christ.

A striking commentary upon the present religious position is furnished by the decision of the University of Oxford to recommend the grant of the D.D. degree to successful candidates by examination without any statement of faith being required. It is thus—as has been pointed out—quite possible for an atheist or a Mohammedan to qualify as a doctor of divinity.

What is perhaps the saddest feature of the present apostasy—we can scarcely use a milder term—is the way in which those who set out professedly as "Defenders of the Faith" play into the enemy's hands. For instance, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, Vicar of Brixton, one of the best known preachers in London, and a prominent lecturer on "Christian Evidence," thus overthrows the faith he defends: "I was taught as a lad that you could escape [suffering] if you believed in Jesus, and if you did not believe in the theological Christ, then God would punish you; but the whole view of suffering was the view almost of vindictive punishment, attached to which was *the ghastly doctrine* of eternal punishment. People no longer believe this. I am astounded if I come across a man who occupies the position of a Christian minister and does believe it. . . . Here and there you may meet a man who believes in everlasting punishment—but always for somebody else, never for himself! . . .

Take another doctrine. It used to be preached that it is necessary for a man to believe certain things about Jesus Christ. I may say what I have said in my own pulpit: My father was an extremely good and kind man who at that time was a Plymouth Brother. But he would rather have had me come home drunk than have me come home and say, 'Father, I don't believe in the virgin birth.' He would have thought if I had died a drunkard that night there would have been a chance for me; but if I had died disbelieving in the virgin birth I was destined to eternal torment."

A very distressing feature about an inquiry of this kind is that we are confronted at almost every turn with overwhelming evidence that the precious truths which some of us hold dearer than life itself are repudiated by the majority of the great preachers of the day. For example, the Rev. Frank Y. Leggatt, M.A., speaking first for himself, says, "I do not believe that the stories of the miraculous birth are essential to faith; it seems to me that a man may be a believer in every adequate and proper sense of the term, even when he cannot give assent to these miraculous stories." He then proceeds to say: "And let me say not that this is the opinion of Mr. (R. J.) Campbell, because some of you do not trust Mr. Campbell at this moment, nor take him as your lead—but let me say that this is the opinion of Principal Forsyth, who is a pillar of orthodoxy, while it is the opinion of Dr. Horton, who is trusted among evangelicals, and of the Dean of Westminster as well. *It is not essential to faith* to believe that Jesus was 'conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' as the Creed says." . . .

"I cannot help," he concludes, "including the birth stories among the things that do not matter. There are some things that matter a great deal. There are some life and death matters, if it comes to that, but this is not one of them. *It does not matter.*"

The inspiration of the Bible—in the traditional use of the term—is so generally denied to-day that it is a difficult matter to select a representative statement.

The Rev. Newton H. Marshall, M.A., D.D., preaching before the Baptist Union, affirms emphatically the general trend indicated above:—

“To-day it is impossible for a well-informed man to take up this attitude [as to verbal inspiration] with regard to the books we have in the New Testament. The doctrine of verbal inspiration has been given up by *the vast majority* of theologians. . . . In short, to-day theologians have to recognize that the historic sense of the age insists that error is possible in respect of any statement of fact involved in the Gospel story, and that whether error in any given case is actual, or not, must be decided by the historian according to the evidence. . . . History must be allowed to examine and check the historic statements involved in the Gospel, applying her own standards.”

Instances might be given of prominent religious leaders who proclaim the Universal Fatherhood of God, and along with this deny the eternity of punishment. So much, in fact, is the last-named doctrine scouted to-day, that it is almost impossible to name half a dozen preachers of note who believe in it.

Exaggeration has been carefully avoided in this article, and no extracts have been given from such notorious “heretics” as Mr. R. J. Campbell; nor have the withering utterances of the leading Higher Critics—such as Professors Cheyne and Driver—been cited.

Enough, however, has surely been

given to prove that we are faced with a widespread departure from the truth on the part of those who occupy prominent positions in the religious world, and it is time that a halt was called. There is no need for uneasiness on the part of those who firmly believe the great facts of the Christian faith, and who acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. “*Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*” But it is no time for such to hold back or hide their convictions. In the firm belief that while “there are many devices in a man’s heart, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, **THAT SHALL STAND**”—we must “preach the Word, be vehement in season and out of season.” The breach is widening daily between those who desire to “keep His word, and not deny His Name,” and the great mass of mere religionists who are drifting to apostasy. It is not ours to judge others, or to determine their relations with God, but we dare not parley with error, or compromise the truth.

The judgment-seat is at hand, for the Lord is coming quickly. There are true believers greatly distressed by the existing state of things, and a bold and fearless proclamation of the eternal truth will strengthen and encourage them.

The unveiling of error is a painful—albeit sometimes a necessary task, but to witness for the truth is happy, edifying and God-glorifying work. Let us remember that it is but a little while and the Lord’s “Well done!” will amply compensate for any suffering that faithfulness involves.

(The italics throughout are the writer’s, and “chapter and verse” can be given for all the extracts quoted.)

“I am afraid that all the grace I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours, might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file? Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house.”—*Spurgeon.*

"Perilous Times."

(EDITOR).

WE have published the foregoing paper, "The Widening Breach," in the hope that it may arouse many of our fellow-Christians, who, because they are ignorant of the determined and deliberate abandonment of the truth on the part of many of the most prominent religious leaders, rest secure in the thought that all is well. We believe that these are the "perilous times" of which the Scriptures speak, in the which men—yes, religious men—are "lovers of their own selves," and not of God, and, in consequence, have no regard for His majestic truths. They see nothing more in these great and eternal verities than time-worn and obsolete doctrines, and they discard them as one would discard a moth-eaten garment of a past generation; they refuse the glorious light of revelation, and walk in the sparks that they have kindled out of their own perishing imaginations, sparks that shall perish like the imagination that gave them birth, in that day of solemn reckoning, when the unprofitable servant shall be cast into outer darkness (Matt. 25. 30).

The devout Christian will not need to be told that that which is held up as orthodoxy, and discarded in some of the quotations given is not the truth. He will not need to be told, for instance, that it is a travesty of the truth to represent that "salvation can only be obtained by the shedding of innocent blood." He knows that salvation has been secured for men by the blessed God at His own cost, not by the shedding of *innocent* blood, but by the offering of the infinitely blessed and holy Lamb of God, who—the Son in the Godhead—became Man, that He might make the great sacrifice, and by *His own blood* redeem us from the power of sin and from everlasting hell; and that in making this sacrifice He might by it declare, in all its strength and fullness, the love of God to men, and that in such a way

that eternal justice might suffer no attain, but that the throne of God might stand in everlasting majesty—inviolable and pure. How blind must those be, who see no glory in Christ crucified! And how Satanic is the effort to rob lost men of this, their only hope!

But the man who tells us that "it is not essential to faith to believe that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the *Virgin Mary*," sweeps all this away; for if Christ were not this, He is not the Word that became flesh—God incarnate; and if He is not that, then the gospel is a fable and the believer a fool.

The servants of God, in former days gloried in the Cross. It was to them "the wisdom and the power of God." They had had a soul-history; had felt the burden of their guilt; had cried to God in their distress, and had found deliverance and peace through the sacrifice of Christ. By that sacrifice they were emancipated from Satan's thralldom; by it God was revealed to their wondering souls; by it they had a certain hope of heaven; by it they did great works amongst the multitudes dead in trespasses and sins; for they preached it, and the Holy Ghost honoured their work, and saved their hearers. But now, there is a generation standing in their places, their successors in office, but utter aliens to the life and blessing and power which was theirs; and so shameless are they, that they seize eagerly upon weapons of the Bible-hating sceptic in order to destroy the truths that their predecessors loved dearer than life. They are the leaders of those who will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts are heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 10. 3). It is sufficient for these that their chosen leaders be men of culture, educated and brilliant. But it is not by such that God's work is done; He hath not chosen these; as it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will

bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. 1).

It is not a pleasure to call attention to this serious apostasy from the truth; but it is necessary that the alarm should be sounded, that those who love God and His truth might know how to act in regard to it; quit them like men; hold fast that which they have, and earnestly contend for the truth. There must be no compromise with the evil; there must not be, if we are to be loyal to Christ, any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; clearly and insistently comes the call, the command,

"From such turn away" (2 Tim. 3. 5). "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19). "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 10, 11). These commands cannot be ignored; they are as much the Word of God, as the truths we desire to defend; and disobedience to the one must weaken our hold upon and joy in the other. May God enable His servants to understand and obey.

The Upturned Eye.

(W. N. HILL).

THE following thoughts which occurred to me on reading the paper on this subject in the March issue may interest the readers of "Scripture Truth." There was One, our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name let it be adored for ever, who always kept His right place on earth in relation to God. It is written of Him that at the grave of Lazarus, as He was about to put forth most wonderful power, power over death, which proclaimed Him to be as none other upon earth, that *He lifted up His eyes to heaven*. Then, after words which tell of His changeless communion with His Father, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth."

Again, as the One who satisfied His poor with bread in Matthew 14., *He looked up into heaven* as He blessed the bountiful provision of His hand.

All this, and every act of His lowly life, proclaimed His perfection as the dependent Man. He rendered all that was due to the glory of God, and He always acted as being consciously in relation to Him.

Nebuchadnezzar, the first of the great world-kings, stands in marked contrast to this. He was made head of the Gentile world which displaced Israel in the ways of God, because of her disobedience and sin. See what came out in him,

placed so peculiarly in responsibility above all else. He was filled with pride, and instead of lifting his eye to God, he took all the glory to himself, and as a result was debased to the level of the beasts of the field that he might learn in whose hand is all power. The point of departure, as ever, is when pride and self-sufficiency fills the heart. And for Nebuchadnezzar, as for all, the point of recovery is when God is given His rightful place. He had become outwardly almost like the beasts that do not look up to heaven at all, but there was still within the spirit of man which is "the candle of the Lord," and when the candle was illuminated at the end of the days, he said, "*I . . . lifted up my eyes to heaven*, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation, . . . whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. 4. 34-37). Here we learn the ways of God and the responsibility in which man stands to Him as possessing a spirit, such as is not possessed by any other creature in this lower creation.

In John's third Epistle when church order had failed, we are thrown upon the deeper joy of seeing children walking in the truth (ver. 4). John honoured the church by committing Demetrius and his companions in the ministry of the gospel to it; but he was disappointed; then the personal grace of his beloved Gaius became the refuge of his heart.—*J. N. D.*

Four Beginnings.

(JAMES C. TRENCH).

I. THE ETERNAL PAST.

"I was set up from everlasting, from the Beginning." Proverbs 8.

The most ancient history is the Bible, and Genesis 1. gives the first as well as the inspired record of the creation of all things. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—but when was that? No reply can be given; it may have been millions of years ago.

And what was there before those supposed millions of years? Answer: GOD! "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from eternity to eternity, Thou art GOD" (Ps. 90. 2).

And if we seek with the mind's eye, as it were, to pierce that vast eternity, and to conceive what the blessed God was doing in those ages before time began, we are baffled, for though we may give free scope to our imagination and speculate abundantly, we shall not find out the secret. Yet we *know* that which is written in the Scripture of Truth, but there we have God's revelation in contrast to man's imagination; and what He has revealed we know, and nothing more.

But does Scripture reveal to us anything of God in the ages that existed before time started? Yes. "Wisdom" speaks in Proverbs 8. 22 in these words, "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old." Who is the "Me" in this passage? 1 Cor. 1. 24 answers that it is Christ who is "the wisdom of God."

"I was set up from *Eternity*, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." "When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields [marg.

"open places"] nor the highest [marg. "chief"] part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there; when He set a compass [marg. "circle"] upon the face of the depth; when He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep; when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth—THEN I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

This most beautiful passage then reveals to us something of the Eternal past.

1. Jehovah was there. "Wisdom" was there—"set up from Eternity, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Long before there was anything that ever had a beginning, He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was there.

2. He was "by" Jehovah, as one brought up with Him.

3. He was Jehovah's delight.

4. He was always rejoicing before Jehovah.

5. He was rejoicing in the habitable parts of an earth not yet in existence.

6. And His delights were with the sons of men long ages before there were any of them.

Turning to the Gospel of John 1. 1, we read: "In the beginning was the Word." He was there *before* "the beginning" *eternal* in existence; "and the Word was with God"—distinct in Person; "and the Word was God"—divine in Nature; and He was not only with God, that is, distinct in Person FROM the time of the "beginning"—but the Word "*was* in the beginning with God"—He had *always* been a distinct Person.

Ephesians 1. 3-14 sheds further light

on what was going on in those far-distant ages, in the thoughts and counsels and purposes of the heart of God, for the glory of the Son in connection with the sons of men.

Other passages might also be adduced, but those referred to will suffice to give food for reflection in connection with the beginnings of things.

We are lost in wonder and praise when we find that in those uncounted ages that preceded time, the blessed Persons of the Godhead were delighting in themselves, and in their purposes and counsels with regard to an earth still uncreated; and not only so, but in the parts of it to be fitted for habitation, and more definitely still in the sons of men that should be the inhabitants thereof.

2. CREATION.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1. 1).

Geologists demand very long periods to account for the stratas of the earth's surface and the fossils of animal and vegetable matter therein contained, and they are welcome to as many millions of years as they think necessary, provided they place them between verses 1 and 2 of Gen. 1. There is room for them there. How long ago it is since that creatorial power was first put forth none can tell.

The chapter does not profess to be an account of creation beyond the statement of the all-important fact. From the 3rd verse on, which gives us what took place in the six days, the inspired record details for us the *formation* of the earth which was *created*, possibly, long ages antecedent: the garnishing of it as a habitation for men.

Versè 2 states, "And the earth was without form and void," "waste and empty," "and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This was *not* the condition of the earth when *created* by God. Isaiah 45. 18 states definitely "He created it not in vain."

How the earth got into that chaotic condition we are not told, but that it did so is a fact. How long it remained in that chaotic state we know not either—possibly millions of years.

But ultimately God began to rearrange the long-before-created world as an habitation for man. There are three words used in Genesis 1. and 2.: "Bara"—create; "yatsar"—form; "asah"—make; and all three are used in the construction of man.

The word "bara"—create—is only used three times in Genesis 1.; as to the heavens and the earth (ver. 1), as to whales (ver. 21), where the *soul* is introduced, and as to man (ver. 27).

The fossils, denoting (as is alleged) a creation of animals and plants of millions of years ago, had to do with a period anterior to the chaos of the second verse of Genesis, but we know from the same chapter that man is a comparatively recent arrival, of probably from 6000 to 8000 years ago, and Genesis 1. 3-31 sets forth, as has been said, the fitting up of the earth as we know it for man.

There is one very important thing that we must not fail to observe, and that is the *condition* in which man *first* appeared on the earth. "God created man *in His own image*, in the image of God created He him" (chap. 1. 27). In the day that God created man, *in the likeness of God* made He him (chap. 5. 1). Evolution in stages had therefore no place in man's construction. He was created when he first saw the light in God's image and likeness—and God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." He was made head of God's earthly creatures, and a helpmate was provided for him, and the pair were introduced into Eden—the garden of delights.

Swiftly he fell from his lofty estate by listening to the voice of the Serpent who, so early as in Genesis 3., invented the three cardinal points of the "New Theology."

1. The denial of God's Word (chap. 3. 1).
2. The denial of punishment for sin (ver. 4).
3. The assertion of man's equality with God (ver. 5).

The boasted "new" theology of this twentieth century was invented by Satan, promulgated in Eden's garden, and resulted in the dire fall of man, involving sin, disease, misery, banishment, death, and judgment for Adam and his guilty race.

And thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12).

3. THE INCARNATION OF GOD'S SON.

Clearly the sons of Adam, fallen under Satan's power, were not the "sons of men" in whom God could delight. There must be a new Man, and a new race, and another beginning.

This new beginning is alluded to by Mark and Luke, and fully brought out by John. In Mark 1. 1, "*The beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*"

In Luke 1. 2 the evangelist speaks of those who "*from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word,*" and John in his 1st Epistle, (chap. 1. 1), writes, "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon [contemplated], and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*"

Adam's sons, according to what they were by nature, were tested for 4000 years, under conscience, law, and grace manifested in the Person of the Son of God, who, in infinite love, came down to earth, born of a woman, laid in a manger, not having where to lay His head, telling out in His own lowly, obedient walk, and in His works and words the Father's love, "In Him God

was manifested," and in Him man was seen in perfection before God. But each succeeding test only proved the more conclusively that they that are in the flesh cannot please God; and the sin of that guilty race reached its climax when, at Calvary, the world rose up and crucified God's Son. That dreadful act showed out in lurid light that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God," and God at long last closed the long successive probationary period by condemning sin in the flesh, in the judgment of it, in the Person of His own Son made sin for us there (Rom. 8. 3).

He glorified the Father upon the earth, and finished the work He had given Him to do. In His atoning death was laid the glorious basis for pardon and peace with God, and in that same death God executed His judgment on man in the flesh, and closed man's history morally: "if one died for all, then were all dead."

But God raised Christ from among the dead; placed HIM at His own right hand in glory; and thereupon began the new creation of which He is the risen and glorified Head in heaven.

4. THE NEW CREATION, and ETERNITY FUTURE.

This the Apostle Paul treats of in Colossians 1. 18. The Lord Jesus was *the beginning* of the new creation of God in Himself personally, but having accomplished redemption, He is now "Head of His body the church; who is *the beginning*, the firstborn from among the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." His body is formed of all who have received the glad tidings of their salvation, and have been sealed by the Holy Ghost, and He is "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 first creation had been defiled and ruined in man's hands, and its end is to be burned. "Therefore if any man be

in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ " (2 Cor. 5. 17, 18). And, "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them " (Eph. 2. 10) ; for the truth in Jesus is "that ye put off . . . the old man, . . . and . . . ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness " (Eph. 4. 22-24). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature " (Gal. 6. 15).

We have to wait until the old creation is not only morally ended, but actually burned up. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, . . . are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness " (2 Pet. 3. 7-13).

But although we have to wait for the new creation in its fullness, it has already begun, and the Epistle to the Ephesians shows how God has found in Christ risen and glorified the Head of that new creation ; and that it is our holy, happy privilege now, while still on earth, to take up our place as the objects of His love and delight. He having made us accepted in the Beloved, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." He will yet realize to the full the glowing words of Proverbs 8. in having His delights in the sons of men, according as He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love : having predestinated us

unto sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace (read the rest of the passage) (Eph. 1. 4-14).

What God was prospectively enjoying in the Eternity before the first creation (now revealed to us so that we can, in measure, already enter into it), will be realized in fact in the coming Eternity, in a new heavens and a new earth, built upon the unshakeable foundation of redemption, when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God " (Rev. 21. 3).

Time comes in between the two Eternities, and what was the subject-matter of purpose and counsel in the one finds its glorious fulfilment in the other.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, THE BEGINNING and THE END." So speaks the Lord Jesus as the canon of Scripture closes.

We have thus had in review four Beginnings, viz. :

1. The Eternal Past ("I was set up from everlasting from the beginning").
2. Creation ("In the beginning God created").
3. Incarnation ("That which was from the beginning").
4. The New Creation ("The Beginning of the Creation of God." "The Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead").

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

Scriptural Fellowship in the Breaking of Bread.

(EDWARD CROSS).

THERE is much exercise on the part of many as to this subject. Nor is there anything novel about the fact. The unchanging principles of Scripture, together with the abiding nature of what the church is according to God, and the honest desire to hold fast to the truth of it, on the one hand, render it all the more difficult, on the other hand to accommodate the Spirit of grace to the Spirit of truth, and to meet a condition of things wherein the people of God find themselves mixed up with so much confusion as exists all around. In judging according to the truth, abstractedly, and condemning all that is not in strict accord with it, there is the tendency to become a system of pharisaic self-righteousness: "Stand by thyself, come not near to Me; for I am holier than thou." While, if we think of grace only, we are equally liable to miss the mark, and make *Christians* and not Christ, our object. "The law was given through Moses: grace and truth came into subsistence through Jesus Christ." "I will sing of mercy and of judgment:" says the Psalmist, "unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing" (Ps. 101. 1). There is a way of uniting both, whereby nothing is lost for the glory of God; not one particle of His truth shall suffer; while, at the same time, all that grace can provide is made accessible to man. It is to the practical realization of this, that the Spirit would direct our souls.

There is nothing plainer in Scripture than that the privilege of breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord is the portion of every true disciple of His—of every Christian as such, walking in a godly and upright way. Indeed, it might be said to be incumbent on him, so far as circumstances permitted, according to the parting words of the Lord to His disciples: "Do this for a remembrance of Me." It would be, therefore, an act of real unrighteousness, both towards Christ Himself,

as well as towards the Christian, while professing to honour Him, to refuse to accord to His saints the privilege that He has accorded to them. This is the evil of sectarianism—an evil which, it has been truly said, is "inherent in the fallen heart of man." And, be it affirmed again—and noted—that the evil is not merely directed towards the disciples of Christ, but really towards Christ Himself.

It will, of course, be understood here that this is not a question of those who, on account of immoral conduct, evil association, fundamental false doctrine, or such-like things, are rightly under the discipline of the assembly. Scripture is abundantly plain as to sundry causes that render a man defiled, and his company defiling. But where such does not exist, no company has the *right* to refuse him whom the Lord receives. To do so would be to refuse the commendation of the Lord.

It is not infrequently said that there should be "room at the breaking of bread for every member of the body of Christ who is walking uprightly." This is to bring together two ideas that are not brought together in Scripture—the breaking of bread and the body of Christ. The breaking of bread is, in 1 Corinthians 10. 11, connected with the one body of *Christians*, as opposed to idolators; not with the one body of *Christ* (Eph. 1. 2, Col. 1. 2). *

"The body of Christ" is composed of living, indefectible members, and has nothing to do in itself with the breaking of bread. Certainly, where it exists, in fact, or before the mind, no thought of judgment, disunion, discipline, or defect could enter. It would be impossible; nor does Scripture contemplate it. But, where the breaking

* "The body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10. 16), must not be confounded with "the church which is His body" (Eph. 1. 23), as the former part of the verse (1 Cor. 10. 16) shows.

of bread is in question, it is not there the "body of Christ," but, "we being many, are one body; for [because] we are all partakers of that one bread." This oneness is connected with "our partaking;" the oneness, or unity of the "body of Christ" depends on "the Spirit." The one is within the sphere of the responsibility of man: the other is wholly the work of God. The want of distinguishing between these two things is answerable for much of the confusion that exists in the minds of many. It fails to recognize on the one hand what the church is in the actuality of a new creation in Christ; and on the other hand, the responsibility that devolves on the assembly to maintain what is due to God, in the administration of the order, and the testimony that belongs to His house.

Again, we must remember that no assembly, whether large or small, is an independent, local unit, which, like a bead on a chain, is strung together with other local assemblies to form "the assembly." The assembly, the body of Christ, is not formed of assemblies, but of *members*; and every local assembly is representative of the whole: it has this character; and when it acts in judgment, or in discipline, it acts in Christ's name, and by the Spirit, for the whole. It is thus not a question of an aggregation of assemblies, but of one Lord, one Spirit, one body. Plainly, what is done in the name of the Lord, and in subjection to Him by His Spirit, according to His written Word, in one place, carries the authority of His name, and is sanctioned by Him everywhere. This is not confined to any one place locally, but is valid the earth over, and in heaven also, according to His Word, "What ye shall bind, or loose on earth shall be bound, or loosed in heaven," likewise (Matt. 18. 18); "All power is given unto Me," He says, "in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28. 18); "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him" (1 Peter

3. 22). Accordingly, where two or three are gathered to His name, He is in their midst, in the exercise of His governmental power, for the administration of the things concerning the kingdom of heaven. This does not refer to the powers of the assembly *in se*, although power is delegated to her to act for His interests and in His name, but to the authority and sufficiency of the Lord Himself, the weakness of those who may be so gathered together notwithstanding. And this abides in force through all the period of His absence—"until He comes" again.

We cannot then gather from these passages the idea of an assembly acting locally in its own freedom and responsibility, independently of other saints elsewhere. If it acts in the Lord's name, it acts for all; and to this must be added the seriousness and solemnity of so acting, that it should carry the consciences of all everywhere, who are subject to the written Word. If the action traverses the Scripture, it is of no avail. Saints cannot be bound by it, whatever its pretension to being done in the Lord's name.

Again, the idea of "amalgamation," in connection with the assembly, has no place in Scripture. Amalgamation, in the first instance, means the mixing of quicksilver with another metal to produce an alloy different from both. Hence, the mixing of any opposites, resulting in a compound different from either. But the binding, or loosing in the assembly is not the amalgamation of different local assemblies submitting to the voice of one, or to some central authority, but the authority of the Lord in the whole, and it is thus the Apostle addresses the assembly at Corinth: "Paul . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1. 2). He calls upon the saints everywhere, for uniformity of assembly judgment; not as an amalgamation of separate assemblies, but as saints sanctified in Christ Jesus, and

members individually of one body, into which they have been all baptized, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 13).

It is no question, therefore, of justifying the evil use that the church has, from ancient times, and in various ways, made of the authority that has been delegated to her, or of her failure in the responsibility attaching to this trust. To judge her failure, *i.e.* our common

failure, is right; to deny her responsibility, ever and now, would be wrong. But, in view of the general confusion all around, and to escape the difficulties of the course already prescribed by the Spirit, to propound some novel procedure of our own, would be to set up for greater wisdom, however unconsciously, than that which has been already laid down for us in Scripture; and the difficulties we thus sought to avoid would be only increased thereby.

The Dangers of Maturer Years.

(J. T. MAWSON).

“Thou hast left thy first love.”—Rev. 2. 4.

IT has become the usual thing in public addresses to exhort young believers to devotion to Christ, and to warn them against worldly and Satanic snares. The inference is that older ones are not in the same danger as their younger brethren; but is this true?

We were arrested recently in reading the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, to find that it was not in youth that these kings who did right in the sight of the Lord went astray and turned their backs upon their God, but, in middle life and old age.

Passing over the pathetic history of Solomon's decline, from which he does not seem to have recovered, we come to ASA, the son of Abijah (2 Chron. 14.). He began his reign well, and showed much zeal in the removal of idolatry from the land, and made the law of the Lord God of their fathers the law of the land; so he prospered and his enemies were defeated, and he enjoyed a long peace. But after thirty-six years of the goodness of God to him in this respect, he turned from Him, and preferred the help of Ben-hadad of Damascus against his foes, to the arm of the Lord. Moreover, he persecuted God's prophet who pointed out his folly, and oppressed the people of God. During the last five years of his life he was afflicted by an “exceeding great” disease in his feet, which was

but an outward evidence of the inward moral condition which had caused his departure from God.

JEHOSHAPHAT began well, and, indeed, to the end he maintained a tender conscience, and so the Lord was with him. Yet he joined hands with God's enemy, Ahab, and it would seem that his object in doing so was to make a suitable marriage for his son Jehoram. This act brought forth a harvest of sorrow for Judah.

JOASH did that which was right in the sight of the Lord in his tender years, and so long as Jehoiada, the priest, lived. But when that faithful counsellor was removed he fell a prey to the flattery of his princes, allowed them to bring back groves and idols; he slew Zachariah, the son of his old friend when he bore witness to the truth, and finally died by the hands of his own servants.

AMAZIAH did right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, at the beginning of his reign, but in the end he worshipped the gods of Edom and would not listen to God's prophets. “Now, after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem . . . and slew him.” (2 Chron. 25. 27).

UZZIAH was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and he sought God, and He made him to prosper. But in his old age his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, and in his presumptuous pride he transgressed against the Lord God, and died a leper, in his sixty-ninth year.

HEZEKIAH was one of the most noble of Judah's kings, and was wonderfully helped of God in all his ways, but in his later years "he rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him" (Chron. 32. 25).

JOSIAH was eight years old when he began to reign; and full of instruction and encouragement is the record of his godly ways, but after thirty years he refused to listen to the voice of God, by Necho, and was slain.

These things are written for our learning, and the failure of these seven kings of Judah should teach us that none are safe, no matter what their experience of God's goodness may have been, unless they continue in dependence upon Himself.

Biblical knowledge and spiritual experiences become a snare if the heart is lifted up because of them, and if the soul is not kept in the sense of its own nothingness, and the need of constant grace from God. It was to the Ephesian church, after forty years' experience of the richest spiritual knowledge and blessing, that the Lord had to complain: "Thou hast left thy first love." May God preserve those who are growing older in spiritual experiences from pride of heart, and keep them in exercise of soul and energy of faith for His glory, and the blessing of those who are younger in the faith.

Desiring but not Progressing.

(H. J. VINE).

When one knows that he is saved and desires to get on; but has very little desire for prayer or the fellowship of saints, and makes no progress, which is a grief to him, what would you say is wrong? What would you advise?

SUCH an one as this question describes is in an unenviable state of soul, and his danger is great. There is a wily, watchful enemy going about, seeking to permanently harm such, and what spiritual strength can they have with which to resist him, or what refuge from his malignant wiles?

Here is one who has heard the call of God in the gospel. Grace has led him to accept our Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. He knows, through the goodness of God, that *he is saved*. Everlasting woe, which he deserved, shall never be his; heaven, with its peace and joy, shall be his portion instead. Through the work of God in him *new desires are his*, desires which are not of the flesh. Notwithstanding all this grace bestowed upon him by

God, *he is prayerless*, though not altogether so, it may be hoped; he *neglects the gatherings* together of the saints of God, his brethren in the Lord; and therefore *makes no progress* in divine things.

Clearly this is a case of grace received but not properly appreciated. How shameful to receive so much, and respond so little. The blessed God, who has made him His at the cost of giving up His beloved Son, is coldly neglected; His love slighted, and the company of His own forsaken; and forsaken for what?

And all the while the conscience, enlightened by the gospel, cries out in protest, and the renewed nature within craves for what alone can satisfy it. That the cry and the craving are not

utterly silenced and dead is of the mercy of God.

To such an one we say, *Awake ! AWAKE!!!* But not as though we did not feel for him. He may have unwarily got into such a state and position through wrong instruction by would-be teachers, whose teaching is unscriptural and not of God. Those who have received Christ Jesus the Lord need to be built up in HIM. Grace and peace are multiplied to such through the knowledge of Him. The Holy Spirit leads souls on in that direction. But schools, sects, parties and their claims, are often forced upon Christians, instead of Christ, and thence their souls are damaged. Let such get into the presence of Him who loves them better than the best teacher, and He will surely guide them aright.

RIGHT DESIRES.

All who are born of God have desires which are according to Him, as has the one whose case we are considering. But these desires are to be rightly directed. Self-condemnation and the discovery of sin within accompanies this stage of soul experience. Deliverance is deeply desired. It is a proof of God's work in us, though, in the midst of this struggle, the soul often wonders whether it belongs to God at all. It blames itself for unreality, insincerity, and all sorts of things, till the lesson that there is *no good in the flesh* is learned. Then the Deliverer, our Lord Jesus Christ, is looked to, the One in whom *all good* is. He becomes the Object for the heart and mind then, and not self.

"*One thing have I desired,*" said the sweet Singer. It is well when the soul comes to this—"one thing"; then the eye is single. But mark, he does not stop at the desire. He goes on to say, "*That will I seek after*" (Ps. 27. 4). There is purpose of heart. This is what is needed.

PURPOSE.

The Apostle Paul could say to

Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my . . . *purpose,*" as well as teaching, conduct, and faith. Our blessed God has a "purpose;" He has called us according to that purpose. He makes all things work in view of it. Now right desires are not enough; there must be purpose, and purposefulness to say, "*I will seek after,*" and not only to say it, but to do it. Not as though we were to seek something which is difficult to find, for all is now revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. There might be difficulty in the Psalmist's day "to behold the beauty of the Lord," but now it is all seen in its attractive perfection in our blessed Lord; and the Holy Spirit is here to give power to behold the beauty of the Lord. But there must be real purpose of heart.

PRAYER.

Prayer then becomes a joy, as well as a necessity to us. We shall be found making known our requests "with joy," answering to the word which says, "Rejoice always; pray unceasingly." But many have proved by experience that it is when the heart is purposefully set in this direction that all sorts of stumbling-blocks and hindrances are found in the way. How often when seeking the presence of the Lord is one hindered unless there is purpose. Someone may come just at that moment—perhaps a brother in the Lord, perhaps someone greatly loved—claiming the attention. Under these circumstances, it must ever be remembered that *He must be put first*. As this is kept steadily in view, obstacles are overcome.

A well-known and much-used preacher used to set aside one night in the week to be alone with God and His Word. Another servant of the Lord called upon him when he was so engaged. He was told that he would see no one. He pressed for an interview, only to receive the quiet but firm answer: "*Tell him I am engaged with his Master.*" That

is the whole matter—the Lord must be put first.

PROGRESS.

As a matter of consequence, progress will follow; the company and gatherings of those who love and cleave to the Lord will be greatly valued; and our profiting will appear to all. Even in the sluggard's soul there is desire, but he "desireth and hath nothing;" on the other hand, the soul of the diligent is made fat. Purpose, prayer, and progress go together; but let the believer only become purposeless and prayerless, then paralysis will soon creep over the spiritual system.

The Holy Spirit, however, is here, and He leads us to behold the glory of the Lord. He delights to show us things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ in all the Scriptures of Truth. As we behold His well-loved features our hearts will long to see him, and hasten forward to the day of His coming. We shall not then forsake "the assembling of ourselves together

as *the custom*" of some is; but encouraging one another, and by so much the more as we see the day drawing near" (Heb. 10. 25). If the following verses go on to show us the awful danger of "*the custom*" of forsaking the gatherings, leading to apostasy and "a certain fearful expectation of judgment" on the part of those who are not truly converted, it is that we might be braced up to go forward. "For yet a very little while He that comes will come, and will not delay" (ver. 15).

There is no time to waste dallying by the way! Soon the faithful servant shall hear His sweet, "Well done!" The everlasting joy of the Lord shall be his portion! The time of testing and trial will be passed and over! The present privilege of service in suffering gone for ever! Eternity with the Saviour! Like Him, in glory, eternally! For ever with the Lord! We shall see His face! Then may the sincere purpose of our hearts be—"FORWARD!!"

Thus ever on through life we find
To trust, O Lord, is best.
Who serves Thee with a quiet mind
Find in their service rest.
Their outward troubles may not cease,
But this their joy shall be:
"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace
Whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Ye who look for so much in another world may well be content with little in this. Nothing is more contrary to a heavenly hope than an earthly heart.

The nearer we reach heaven in *hope*, the farther we recede from earth in *desire*.

The Turks say that we Christians cannot believe heaven to be so glorious a place, else we should not be so reluctant to go there.

What you fill the vessel with, that you must expect to draw from it; if you put in water, you cannot bring out wine. What dost thou fill thy heart with all the day? Is it the earth? Then how canst thou expect to find heaven there at night?

It was a sweet speech of a dying saint, that he was going to change his place, but not his company; for he had always been living in communion with God.

Questions and Answers.

The Striving of the Spirit.

1. *Have we any scriptural authority when preaching the Gospel to quote Genesis 6. 3 as an argument, that, if the Holy Spirit is resisted when He is working in the heart of any hearer that God will take Him away from such a resister, and such hearer may never be wrought upon by the Holy Spirit again? J.R.*

Great care should be taken by any one essaying to give the divine declaration above referred to a present application to individuals. Attention may rightly be called to it as a divine statement in Scripture, of solemn import to the impenitent, who have been warned of coming judgment and have had the salvation of God proclaimed to them. The statement in Genesis 6. is very general—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man"—and then the door of mercy is kept open through God's longsuffering for 120 years. The passage may be applied in a general way to the present "day of salvation"—as in 2 Peter 3.—as that which may end in judgment at any moment, or to an individual with whom God's longsuffering may end at any moment, as, in His government, He may take them away with a stroke, as in Luke 12.: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." I am not aware that the New Testament warrants any further application of it in the way suggested in the question. Certainly the statement

in Genesis and its application at the time it was uttered point to the fact that the Spirit would not cease to strive with man until he was cut off in judgment. But God's ways with individuals, as such, are not indicated there at all. I think also it is a mistake to change the word "strive" to "work," and to say "the Spirit of God will no longer work with a man." On the other hand, *it may be*, that God may leave people to their determinate choice after clear testimony and warning—as in the case of Pharaoh or—and to come to the present church period—as in the Lord's pronouncement to Thyatira: "I gave her space to repent . . . and she repented not" (Rev. 2.). While attention may be called to these instances, given for our instruction and warning, in a general way, we must guard against arbitrary statements in matters which God reserves for His own sovereignty.

Preachers may well bear in mind that something defective in their preaching or manner of life—or even manner of preaching—may be the reason why the hearers are so unaffected at times. Where is the preacher who can take up the language and sentiments of 1 Corinthians 2. 1-5, and 2 Corinthians 4. 1-11 and say: "These truly describe my manner and character of life and preaching?"

(S. M. Anglin).

The Parable of the Talents.

Will you please answer the following questions on Matthew 25. ?—*China.*

1. *Does Matthew 25. 14-30 refer to the judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ?*

The parable of the talents refers to the account which the Lord shall take of all those who take a place of serving

Him during the time He is hid in the heavens.

2. *Who does the "wicked and slothful" servant represent?*

The wicked servant is a servant in

name only. He does not know his Master; and no one can faithfully serve Him who does not know Him. Hence he wastes his time in idleness and sloth. But having taken the place of a servant he is judged accordingly.

3. *What does "outer darkness" mean?*

Outer darkness is banishment from the light and favour of the face of God, than which nothing can be more terrible, for only there are life and true happiness found. Every true believer will have some fruit to show for his labours.

4. *Will the "wicked and slothful" servant stand with the faithful at the judgment seat of Christ?*

We are not told that "he is amongst the faithful at the judgment seat." The servants come one by one, and are separately examined. But every soul of man must stand there at some time or other (Rom. 14. 10; John 5. 22, 27). All must give account to Him, though not all at the same time. Judgment seat means simply the throne upon which He shall sit as Judge. The results of the giving account to Him are in view rather than the time of it.
(James Boyd.)

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 5.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalm XI.-XV.

PSALMS 11.-15. form the experimental instruction of the Spirit suited to the conditions presented in the two foregoing Psalms. Faith is thus educated to respond to the light vouchsafed for the time of trial. In Psalm 11. the suggestion to escape by flight is seen to be a snare of the enemy; at another time it will be the only right thing to do (Matt. 24. 16). Nothing can take the place of that spiritual sensibility which discerns the path of God's will for the present moment. The last King of Judah might quote the word of Isaiah to resist the Chaldean, but he should have listened to the Lord's message by Jeremiah (chap. 38. 17). He refused God's word for that moment and was ruined. In this Psalm there is no other resource for the faithful but Jehovah; the foundations—all that outward order committed to man to maintain for God—are destroyed; what can the righteous do? Jehovah abides as ever in the temple of His holiness and no power of the wicked can reach His throne, and He controls the very malice of the devil so that the saints are, in result, blessed. "Many shall be purified and made white and be refined," says Daniel (chap. 12. 10), "For Jehovah is righteous, He loveth righteousness, His face beholdeth the upright," words, true for all times, on which faith can rely.

PSALM 12. presents a very peculiar and painful character of trial. The faithful finds himself isolated among treacherous and powerful foes. This is rare for the Christian except in times of open persecution. Jeremiah tasted the sorrows and knew the very solace this Psalm affords (see end of chap. 15.) when he says, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Truly the words must be found, and this is more than the mere possession of the inspired volume.

In verse 6 Jehovah answers the distress of the suppliant and assures him of the intervention of His delivering power. Can His word be trusted when all appearances are against its verification? "The words of Jehovah are pure words." No trace of man's insincerity is in them; they are like silver which has undergone a sevenfold purifying in a furnace, so that no alloy remains. Paul gave no other resource than these Psalms contemplate when he commended the saint to God and the word of His grace in view of the impending corruption of the assembly. If this tests our spirituality it should be remembered that Satan's opposition is permitted for this very object.

PSALM 13. has six verses divided into

three couplets, two steps up from distress and conflict to song. For the Christian who should know the unchanging grace of God, which only finds its measure in Christ, it would be utter unbelief to ask "How long wilt Thou forget, or hide Thy face from me?" But here the saint realizes the enemy is over him with a power he knows not how to meet. Taking counsel in the soul will not deliver, that only increases "sorrow in my heart." The second couplet finds the soul turned to Jehovah "my God," a happy advance on the first two verses; in those Jehovah was addressed, now He is appropriated as "my God," and the prayer is not for outward deliverance but to have the eyes enlightened, "lest I sleep—the death." It is as if he would say: "Let me see Thee or I die, and if I die, death would be a witness of the enemy's triumph."* In the third couplet there is trust, and in that trust the Spirit teaches to sing to Jehovah.

PSALM 14. is cited in Romans 3. to prove the guilt of the Jew: "Whatever things the law saith, it saith to them under the law." Hence the application of this Psalm to the covenant people is sure, an important point to bear in mind when attempts are being made in high quarters to suit the recitation of the Psalms to Christian worship by the omission of the prayers for vengeance. Not thus is God worshipped in spirit and in truth, and the attempt to do so is just the mixture of the old things with the new, which Christ condemns. Each has its place, the mixture spoils both.

There are interesting points in connection with the last Psalms of this series, such as the comparison of Psalm 14. with 53. and the repetition of the divine name seven times in both, as if the Spirit would thus answer the atheism of the fool. Isaiah 33. 14, 15, may also be compared with Psalms 14., 15. We must not pass over God's solemn verdict on what man is in nature (Ps. 14.) and the

contrast in the next Psalm, what he is by grace. Since David's day man has been tested by the presence in this world of the Son of God and has asked for a robber and murderer instead. This was not the criminal classes clamouring for the life of a comrade, but the deliberate choice of the most privileged and enlightened of humanity. Plainly, therefore, all are involved in the scathing quotations from Isaiah and the Psalms given in Romans 3. The negation of God in the heart leaves the individual to corruption as surely as when the soul leaves the body; abominable works follow and God finds none to seek Him. Have we learned to see ourselves thus exposed in the innermost shrine of our being? If so evidently salvation can only come from God. Romans 3. shows how this can be in righteousness and in grace.

In PSALM 15. when the question arises, Who shall be with Jehovah in His tabernacle? the place of communion and worship (27. 4) or in His holy hill, the place of testimony (Matt. 5. 14): the answer comes in a description of character not title; the latter must for us always be in the virtue of the sacrifice, but character (in its place quite as indispensable) must be in accord with the divine nature (*cf.* Eph. 1. 4), for God could not have before Him what is unsuitable to Him. The heavens opened upon the beloved Son tell how perfect He was in this place. Thus He who was manifested in flesh is the key to the mystery or secret of godliness (1 Tim. 3.). What is divine in manhood, perfect in Jesus, should be and is perpetuated in His saints in measure. It is that which is born of God which overcomes the world, according to the incorruptible character of the Word of God (1 Peter 1. 23). So the Psalm closes: "he that doeth these things shall never be moved." Thus grace has its subjective triumphs as well as its provisions for faith.

* Death is always thus regarded in the Psalms except in Psalm 16. It needed the N.T. (Rev. 14. 13) to give light for this trial.

CORRECTION.—In "Studies of the Psalms,"—No. 4. The prefatory remarks on pages 116, 117, should precede Psalm 9. They having references to Psalms 9—10.

In prosperity we talk of living by faith, and darken counsel many times with words without knowledge; but in adversity we come to have the practical knowledge of what it is to live by faith.

As the presence of Christ makes a heaven in the heart, so it stirs up the heart instantly to the work of heaven, to sing His praise and to glorify His name.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 15.

(H. J. VINE)

“I am He, the First and the Last.”

Isaiah (2). Section 1. Chapters 41. to 48.

Before we leave this wonderful and rich section, we shall do well to linger a little over a divine title, which, remarkable to say, only occurs here and in the last book of the Bible.

Its first mention is very striking. Did righteousness call for a mighty warrior like Cyrus; did victory attend his arms against the idolators: “Who hath wrought and done it?” Mark the divine answer, “*I the Lord, the First, and with the Last; I am He*” (41. 4). In chapter 43. 10 it is said, “Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.” In chapter 44. 6, the King, the Redeemer of Israel, says, “I am the First and the Last; and beside Me there is no God.” The final mention in Isaiah, is in the last chapter of our section, 48. 12: “I AM HE; I AM THE FIRST, I AM ALSO THE LAST. MINE HAND ALSO HATH LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND MY RIGHT HAND HATH SPANNED THE HEAVENS.”

Unless the believer is established in the true grace of God, we could well understand his fear before this great and mighty God, who punishes the wicked; this only and Eternal One, the Ruler and Redeemer of Israel, this everlasting HE, the omniscient and omnipotent Creator of the earth and the heavens. John said, “When I saw HIM I fell at His feet as dead” (Rev. 1. 17). Who was it he saw shining in such supreme judicial majesty? The One who loved us and died for us! Mark what He says to John, as He lays His right hand upon him, “*Fear not; I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST: AND THE LIVING ONE: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades*” (Rev. 1. 17, 18). This is Jesus; our Lord, our Saviour; this is HE. His precious word therefore to the believer’s heart is “*Fear not.*”

In Revelation 2. 8, addressing Smyrna as the assembly which was about to endure tribulation, He cheers them by

showing Himself to be “The First and the Last, who became dead and lived.”

Finally, in Revelation 22. 12, 13, He reminds us of His coming again. He says, “Behold I come quickly!” He has visited this earth before; He is going to return, and He says, “My reward is with Me, to render to every one as his work shall be.” Again He adds, “I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.” Once more let us repeat, THIS IS JESUS: THIS IS HE.

These seven scriptures speak of Him as the First and the Last. In all the scriptures we are to see the things concerning Himself. The Holy Spirit guides in this direction.

Mark well, beloved saints of God, these final God-breathed facts concerning His Son. He is “*The Alpha and Omega.*” These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used in writing the completion of Scripture. This is to teach us that the revelation of God is in Christ complete; and in Him alone.

He is also “*The Beginning and the End.*” There is nothing of God of which He is not “the Beginning;” nor is there anything divine of which He is not “the End.” He is the divine Terminus.

Finally, He is “*The First and the Last;*” as well as the Alpha and Omega, and The Beginning and the End. Being “*the First,*” there was no one before Him; and being “*the Last,*” there is no one to come after Him. How cheering, how comforting, how strengthening and establishing this is to the believer. He has reached God’s Finality in Christ, and can sing with grace and gladness, making melody in his heart to the Lord:

“’Tis Jesus THE FIRST and THE LAST,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We’ll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that’s to come.”

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.

(J. ALFRED
TRENCH).

LUKE XII.

THE Lord, now in rejection on earth, directs the hearts of His disciples to heaven, first of all removing out of the way that which would have obstructed the light of heavenly things. Verse 2 applies the principle of the judgment-seat of Christ to the exposure of the hypocrisy of the Pharisee and also to the encouragement of outspoken testimony whatever the consequences; the fear of man being displaced by the fear of God. But He who was to be the only object of their fear counts the very hairs of their heads as God, while the Son of Man would own the true confession of His name before the angels of God, and when brought before the authorities the Holy Ghost would teach them what to say. A rejected Christ cannot take the place of judge or divider of property here, that one of the multitude would put Him in, and makes it the occasion of warning against "all covetousness." It was not in these things man's life consisted; and the parable of the rich man solemnly enforces the worthlessness of possessions here when the soul is taken into account. While for the disciples the care of such things is superseded by the care of God for them, as the ravens and lilies may teach even as to the necessary food and raiment. A Father's perfect knowledge of us is enough for those who know Him.

The fear of man and the care of earthly things being disposed of, we are brought to the positive springs of the Christian life. The heavenly side of the kingdom as in the Father's counsels for them [verse 31 reads, "Rather seek ye His," *i.e.* the Father's, "kingdom"], a present treasure in the heavens; and lastly the hope of the coming of the Lord to form His servants in His absence—blessed in watching for Him whatever the actual time of it. In the power of these things their loins were to be girded about, and the lights or candles lit, (the word being the same in chapter 11, verses 33, 34, and 36 there and verse 35 here) to burn brightly. What a portion too would be theirs when watching was over: the Lord Himself having taken the servant's place, to keep it for

ever, would find fresh occasion for serving the objects of His love in ministering to them the richest joys of the Father's presence. But there was work to do too that would bring the faithful servant his reward in the kingdom. This leads to the contrast of the unfaithful servant, who puts off in his heart the Lord's return, opening the way for further phases of departure, and his judgment finally as false to the place he had taken as a servant. Many stripes in that judgment would belong to him who knew his Lord's will and did it not, as compared with the few that would fall upon those who knew not and yet did things worthy of stripes; responsibility being commensurate with privilege conferred.

Parts of this instruction are found elsewhere in other connections, but here, as always in LUKE, they are brought together without regard to their historic place, with deep moral purpose.

In what follows the Lord looks at the actual consequences of His having come. Peace had been presented to the earth in Him personally (chap. 2. 14); but the effect had only been to draw out the flesh's enmity. The fire of it, already smouldering in men's hearts, was about to break out in vehement flame. Divine love was there, but pent up within itself (though we would have little thought it), while the question of sin lay in the way. But going to meet the baptism of divine judgment due to it the flood-gates would be opened, and the love free to flow forth in all its fullness. The result—that of peace—was established in heaven with God for the soul (chap. 19. 38), peace was taken from the earth. The strongest ties of kindred would not hold the family together when Christ entered into it to claim hearts for Himself. But how morally blind were the mass that could judge of the weather but not discern the character of the time, incapable even in themselves of any right judgment. They were on their way with their adversary, but might even still come to terms with Him

—if not, to be delivered over to the governmental dealings of God, out of which they should not come till they had paid the last mite. (Isa. 40. 42, and Ps. 103. 10; for Jehovah's and Israel's estimate of this dealing may be compared). For in the close of the chapter as well as chapter 13., we are on the ground of the Lord's relations with His ancient people, though leading out into great principles of truth that go beyond those relations. There must be individual repentance, or all would perish alike. The parable of the fig-tree sets forth the position. Three years the Lord of the Vineyard had been seeking fruit of it without result. This was the last year of His culture; it was but a cumberer of the ground and must be cut down. Nevertheless, where there was need the work of grace in power was not restrained, and the woman eighteen years bowed down with infirmity is loosed from it, and the hypocrisy of those who would shut out that work because it was the Sabbath is exposed. Then what should take the place of Israel, the kingdom of God not in power but in testimony and responsibility, is given, with its failure to answer to the thoughts of God, in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. In answer to a question as to the number of the saved remnant, the Lord turns it to that of the exercise that was essential

to enter by the strait gate into the kingdom. No mere profession or external privilege would avail to obtain an entrance when once the gate was shut; the workers of unrighteousness would be excluded, though not only patriarchs and prophets, but those from the four quarters of the earth should be seen in the enjoyment of the blessing.

Meanwhile the Lord would pursue His work, undeterred by the treachery of professed friends or the craft of Herod; There would be the to-day and to-morrow of testimony, till the third day of consummation and perfecting in resurrection. But it could not be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem, hence the touching lament of the Lord over the long-loved city, and the revelation of the glory of His Person, who, after all was lost to her on the ground of responsibility, would come in at the end, according to His sovereign mercy, and be greeted as the "Blessed One that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The earnest student of Scripture will not fail to notice, how the opening of the heavens to the faith and hope of His people (chap. 12.) before the earthly scene of man in responsibility, whether looked at in Jewish or Christian profession, breaks down in failure (chap. 13.) according to the analogy of God's ways in grace.

The Power of the Saviour's Love.

EARLY in the seventh century the good King Oswald of Northumbria requested the Scots to send a missionary to his people. The brethren of Iona sent them an austere, though well-meaning man named Cormac. He soon returned dispirited, saying the people were too obstinate to be converted.

"Ah," said Aidan, standing by, "had Thy love been offered to this people, O my Saviour, many hearts would have been touched. I will go and make Thee known—Thee, who breakest not the bruised reed." He went and told the Anglo-Saxons of the Saviour's love. Wondering multitudes listened, wept and were won.

"Behold He Cometh."

HOW His appearing will darken all the glory of the world, and make it disappear, as the stars at the rising of the sun! . . . O how little does the believer think of the world, when this greatest of all coming events shines before his soul! "*Behold He cometh;*" and earthly crowns, kingdoms, thrones and sceptres are but little despicable toys. Here—here is an object worth the beholding. Let mine eyes be ever turned away from beholding vanities: "*Behold He cometh.*"

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 4.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Church—Christ's Body—*Continued.*

THE administration of this mystery was in the wisdom of God, committed to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. John never mentions it. In contrast to what we have seen in Paul's writings, he keeps up the distinction between Jews and Gentiles (1 John 2. 2; 3. 7), though the word "*whosoever*," which is so largely used in his writings, gives the grace of which he speaks a very universal bearing. But as I have said, he does not speak of the church, however he may forecast, by the Spirit of prophecy, its downward career, as indicated in the seven then existing churches of Asia. I do not doubt we have it in the bride at the close of the book of Revelation, but there it is the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb, as the earthly Jerusalem will be the bride of the King of Israel (Ps. 45.). From his writings you could never learn anything of the one new man, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile but new creation.

Peter, even in a more pronounced way than John, keeps up the distinction between Jew and Gentile. He writes to the believing remnant scattered throughout five different regions, and exhorts them to have their conduct "honest among the Gentiles," and tells them that the time past of their lives should suffice them "to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" (1 Pet. 2. 12; 4. 3). The place of blessing among the nations, forfeited by Israel on the ground of law, the remnant inherits on the ground of grace and faith. They have this place of favour *now* amongst the Gentiles, but not yet in the way of authority, power, and government, but as holy priests to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" and as royal priests, to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2. 5, 9). They were to be "sober, and hope to the end for the grace which was to be brought to them at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (ver. 13); then the apostate people would be dealt with, and the remnant would take their place as head of the nations. All along the line

of this dispensation Peter treats them as the Israel of God, who would come in for the kingdom at the appearing of Christ. They are like the manslayer who killed his fellow by mistake, and found an asylum in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest, when he returned to his inheritance (Jos. 20). Christianity is that to the remnant of the Jews who believe to-day; and those that were being saved out of Israel the Lord at the beginning added such to the church (Acts 2. 47). But when Christ abandons His present place of priestly intercession and comes forth to reign, then the Jew will take up his place in his own land under the reign of the Messiah.

This is the way in which Peter views those to whom he writes his two short Epistles. But in these he lays before them how much greater their blessings are during the present dispensation than were Israel's in the past, even had they been able to inherit them on the ground of works of law. All was but *shadow* in the past, now they had come to the *substance*. In the city of refuge their blessings were greater than they had been before they were compelled to fly for refuge from the Avenger of blood, when by terrible mischance they had slain their Messiah. An inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, was reserved for them in heaven; and they were guarded by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time: in contrast with an earthly and corruptible inheritance, which they were to hold by the fulfilment of their obligations; and also in contrast with a salvation, such as was theirs at the Red Sea, which was then open and manifest to all the world. Not on Jehovah did they call, but on the Father; and not by silver and gold had they been redeemed, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and spot; by whom, and not by Moses, they had now believed. They had also been born again, this time of the living and imperishable Word of God. And in contrast with Israel after the flesh, who had to do with a material

temple and a carnal priesthood, these were the temple themselves, living stones, every one of them instinct with the life of Christ. They were also a holy and a royal priesthood, as I have already observed.

This is the way in which the *remnant of the Jews who believe on Christ* are viewed. Accidentally they had slain Him whom God raised up to be their Saviour, and have fled for refuge (Heb. 6. 18). Their links with the nation which now stands guilty of His murder (Acts 3. 17; 7. 52), have been severed by baptism (Acts 2. 38, 41), and by this means they were also received into the city of refuge. I refer, of course, to what was outward and dispensational. For all that is vital, personal faith in Christ and true repentance toward God are requisite. Out of their earthly inheritance all must remain until the death of the high priest, according to the type; that is, I take it, until Christ abandons His present priestly place of intercession and comes forth to judge the world. Should the manslayer come out of his place of refuge before that day arrives, he falls into the hand of the avenger, and is treated as a murderer. This is what *sinning wilfully* means in Hebrews. Therefore it is said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10. 26-31).

It is the same remnant which flies for refuge in the beginning of the Acts that enters the kingdom in its earthly character at the appearing of Christ: not the same individuals, I need scarcely say, but still the remnant of Israel viewed in an unbroken line, but during the church period having their part in the blessings of Christianity.

Now one would not expect such to be found looking for the rapture as their expectation, but rather for the moment of the appearing, when they would return to their inheritance. Viewed in this way, the appearing must be that for which they are said to be looking. They would no doubt form part of the churches to which Paul wrote, and through him would learn something of the body and bride of Christ, and of the privileges and hopes connected with this mystery; but from Peter, as far as we have any record, they hear nothing of this. To every

servant of Christ the Lord gave his own special work; and though all the apostles and prophets of the New Testament knew the mystery as well as Paul, to him alone was the administration of this grace given (Eph. 3. 3-10).

But this is not peculiar to the truth of the Mystery: where does Peter speak of "eternal life," or of the "Son of God" except in his confession of Him as such while the Lord was on earth (Matt. 16. 14)? In Matthew, Mark, and Luke we have eternal life relegated to the world to come (Matt. 19. 28, 29; Mark 10. 30; Luke 18. 30); in Paul, to glory and the eternal state (Rom. 2. 7; Titus 1. 2); but in John we have it as in present possession (John 3. 36). This is the way that God in His wisdom and love has been pleased to teach us His truth, and we may be sure it is the best way. We have to learn it in sections, and only His Holy Spirit can teach us, and only He can put it together in our souls.

The following is a strange statement: "There were with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Olives, a few days before He suffered, a portion of that church which He desired to instruct: whatever He then said to Peter, Andrew, James, and John was not addressed to them for themselves merely, but to them as a portion of that one body to which, among other endowments, there had been given corporate hopes."

A statement like that by a prominent teacher, reproduced by another as light for the people of God in these difficult days, condemns the whole pamphlet in which it occurs, and disqualifies the writer of it as utterly unfit to enter into this special field of controversy. That these disciples eventually were amongst those who on the day of Pentecost were by one Spirit baptized into one body is not to be questioned; but to say they were of that body before the body existed is but the imagination of the writer. They were the Jewish remnant who had attached themselves to the Lord, and had believed on Him, as all the rest of their brethren should have done; these He commands to do what the scribes and Pharisees said to them as they sat in the seat Moses. And in a few days afterwards He eats the Passover with them. That He gave them to see that

His own death would take the place of the pascal lamb in the affections of their hearts is true, but there is not one word said by Him that was calculated to disconnect them in their thoughts from the nation of which they formed at that moment part.

Not only that, but at the ascension of our Lord, when He was parted from those who had accompanied Him to Bethany and carried up into heaven, the disciples are expressly forbidden to make heaven the object of their hearts; and not until the stoning of Stephen do we find the Spirit of God turning the hearts and minds of the saints thitherward. Nor, indeed, does there appear any thought of breaking entirely with the earthly system until the revelation of the Mystery. That they were no longer to view themselves as true Israelites was never hinted at by the Lord while He was with them upon earth. When they ask Him after His resurrection if He intended at that time to restore the kingdom to Israel, His answer is, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Then, "While they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1.). They are turned back to earth, to wait for the kingdom to be given to Israel at the appearing again of the Lord. Hence they go back to Jerusalem, God's earthly centre, and to the temple and its worship. The question regarding the relation of the Jews with Jehovah was not yet closed, and Peter tells them that if they would repent God would send Him back.

Their answer to that was given in the stoning of Stephen, which was the message sent after Him, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke 19.). But for many a day afterwards Christianity was regarded by all as a sect of the Jews (Acts 28. 22). It is questionable if many of the leaders amongst Christians in Judæa ever got clear of their Jewish prejudices, and Paul himself when in their midst fell under their carnal influences and got himself into no end of trouble on account of it. They were all zealous of the law, their sacrifices were continued, and temple worship religiously adhered to. And yet these believers had the apostles dwelling amongst them and were continually under their instruction.

From this state of things nothing delivers but the truth given to the Apostle of the Gentiles. No doubt Peter points out to them that they had everything now in a spiritual way, but with him it is *Jews* who have it, and that in contrast with the Gentiles, who are viewed as giving a loose rein to the flesh and walking in abominable idolatries (1 Pet. 4. 3). With Paul, Jew and Gentile are alike guilty before God; short of the glory, with no difference between them: this as regards their state by nature. But "*in Christ*," justified, dead to sin, to law, to the elements of the world, alive to God, sons of God, with the Spirit of His Son in our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, united to Christ, who is the Head of the body, the Jew no longer a Jew, the Gentile no longer a Gentile, but both together "*one new man*" in Him heavenly, quickened with Christ from being dead in sins, risen and seated in Him in the heavenlies, and blessed there with every spiritual blessing. Our portion is not upon earth, therefore the man of the earth does not stand between us and it. We do not require his removal in order to our entering into it. The Jew does; hence he gets nothing until the appearing. The Lord give us to know better where our place and portion are.

He is no mean Christian who can duly balance the duties of affection and faithfulness, and show us how to smite the sin and love the sinner—to denounce the error, and yet to cultivate affection for the brother who has fallen into it. He is a wise chemist who can in right proportion blend the pure and the peaceable.

God's Building.

(JAMES GREEN).

1 Corinthians 3. 9-17. Ephesians 2. 20-22. 1 Peter 2. 4-7.

EVER since Satan succeeded in bringing about the fall of our first parents, he has been active in building up the great organization of **THE WORLD**. Vast in its conception, consisting of such variety of detail, there is a place in it for every imagination of the heart of man, and room for all that it is possible to evolve from the working of the desires of the flesh and of the mind, but no room for God.

At the root of this world system there is, however, one fatal error. By the fact of its exclusion of God it has not been possible for its founder to provide it with a foundation ; it is a house built upon the shifting sand of Satanic falsehood. The unstable condition of the structure is only too well known to many of its builders. Unaware of the spirit who energizes them, thinking only of the advancement of man, their hearts fail for fear of those things which are coming upon the earth. The day will surely come when this great system will be judged, the evil powers that are in the heavens which uphold it shall be shaken, and all that has been built by Satanic ingenuity and human workmanship shall be smitten by the stormy wind of Divine judgment, and great shall be the fall of it.

The coming of God's Son into the midst of this world was the introduction of One who was to be God's foundation. On Himself, the solid rock, a super-structure was to be raised which should not pass away. In Him the words of the prophet were to be fulfilled, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28. 16). To the builders of this world He was of no account, only a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; they could find no room for Him—for religion and its outward ritual, Yes; for that which would

add to their own exaltation, Yes; but for the Person of God's Son, No.

Nevertheless, God has triumphed, and in the death of Christ every moral question has been settled, the unchangeable basis of righteousness has been laid, and resurrection has declared Him to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness. No power of Satan, death, or hell, can touch this solid rock; excluding all else it abides in its eternal verity, "the foundation of God;" for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On this is built that assembly which, in contrast with all that Satan and man have wrought, is said to be God's building. This plan of God is worked out here on earth, and like every other dispensation, proves the utter inability of man to understand His ways.

1 CORINTHIANS 3. 9-17.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

To Paul was committed the initiation of the assembly in this character. He was chosen as a fellow-labourer with God, to be the wise master-builder, who should lay the foundation by the setting forth of the doctrines and mind of God in respect of all that He had established and would bring to pass as the consequence of the death of His Son. We are not here contemplating the assembly as *the body of Christ*; in that aspect we have members united by the Spirit to a heavenly exalted Christ; but in the view before us it is the figure of *the house of God*, stone added to stone, and these built upon a foundation. But there would be other workers besides the Apostle who would set their hands to this work. If they built of the right material, well; if their doctrines and teaching were in accordance with the Person of a crucified, glorified Christ,

then such work would stand the day of testing by fire. It would partake of the character of gold, silver, and precious stones—the Divine righteousness, perfect redemption, and consequent value in His sight of all His saints. Again, others would build upon this foundation with the best of intentions, but using materials of natural growth—wood, hay, stubble. Such a workman will find his work consumed by the testing fire, he will suffer loss although he himself shall be saved, because salvation rests not on the work of man, but on that of the Son of God. Still others—“deceitful workers” Paul calls them in 2 Cor. 11. 13-15—transforming themselves into angels of light, after the fashion of their master, Satan: these men bring in defiling doctrines, subversive of the truth, and shall be destroyed by Him whose name and temple is holy. All this presents to us God’s building in as far as good and evil servants are connected with it. How very much inferior and corrupting work has been associated with the name of Jesus Christ throughout the church’s history is most sorrowfully evident. May God increase the number of those who build His materials, and prosper the work of their hands.

EPHESIANS 2. 20.

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

In this passage God is the sole workman—the foundation remains unaltered—it is that of the New Testament apostles and prophets, no other could be. They were used of the Holy Ghost to unfold the glories of the Person and work of the Son of God, and these must ever be the basis on which God builds, and the Scriptures are the witness of them. But then this structure is for the glory of the Son, and hence Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone, uniting Jew and Gentile, making in Himself of twain one new man, there is no room in the edifice for man as he is in flesh. Surrounded on all hands by the work of man, this building of God is growing unto a holy temple

in the Lord; His authority the law of the house; His holiness its character. Not yet complete, but destined to be the eternal tabernacle of God, the Holy Ghost has already taken possession of it—it is at this present time the habitation of God in Spirit. This is important, because by His presence the Spirit has formed a unity, which, though we, alas! may fail to keep it, nevertheless abides for the joy of all who seek to walk worthy of the calling; and it entails an obligation on all who partake of the privilege to know how to behave aright in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 PETER 2. 3-5.

“The Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.”

Further details of this workmanship of God are here given. The Lord is that living stone, the sure foundation, and every believer is likewise a living stone. To Him they come, on Him they are built up a spiritual house, in which every stone is likewise of the order of the holy priesthood, to offer to God the acceptable fragrance of the preciousness of Christ. In the midst of His own redeemed God shall abide, for no temple made with hands, of lifeless stone, could be the eternal dwelling-place of the living God. Happy they who know in the power of the Spirit their high and holy calling. Gladly will they accept the path of rejection in association with Him whom the builders have disallowed; knowing that in the place where He is chosen and precious they too are accepted in the preciousness of Himself to God.

In 1 Corinthians 3. the house is built by the labours of men, fails in their hands, and becomes like a great house (2 Tim. 2. 20) with vessels to honour and dishonour in it. Separation from iniquity in this state of things is the only resource for the man of God.

In Ephesians 2. it is the habitation of God in Spirit, and a walk according to the Spirit, in the unity He has formed, is the path indicated for faith (ch. 4. 1-3). There is also that which God is building, the holy temple, into which no failure can come; here the heart can rest, in the knowledge that every thought and purpose of God will be fulfilled in Christ to His own eternal glory.

In 1 Peter 2. it is still God's work,

and the object of its construction is set forth that it may be filled with the adoring worship of those who surround Himself. This holy occupation is the happy privilege of those redeemed by His precious blood, while they wait for the coming of their Lord. In the eternal day of God this worship will be rendered in all its fullness.

“ There only to adore,
My soul its strength may find,
Its life, its joy for evermore,
By sight, nor sense, defined.”

“ Two Magnitudes ”

(A. J. POLLOCK).

NEARLY ninety years ago in the Assembly of the Church of Scotland Dr. Chalmers had been nobly standing for the truth.

An opponent endeavoured to score against him by quoting from one of his old pamphlets sentiments the reverse of those he was now advocating. He endeavoured to fasten the charge of inconsistency upon Dr. Chalmers.

That great divine, mathematician and philosopher, replied in language that did him credit as an honest man and a Christian, and which strengthened immensely the arguments he was putting forward.

He replied:

“ I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and proportions of magnitude. But *then*, sir, I had forgotten two magnitudes—I thought not of the littleness of time—I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity.”

It is the disregard of these “ two magnitudes ” that is responsible for the unconverted condition of untold thousands. Time is everything to them. Eternity—treated as if it did not exist.

But even Christian men and women, who have grasped the import of these

“ two magnitudes ” sufficiently to realise their need of a Saviour are not fully governed in their present lives by their “ magnitude ” “ and proportions of magnitude.”

To put it plainly, we live far too much for time and earth, and far too little for heaven and eternity.

Robert Annan of Dundee was drowned in attempting to rescue some one who had fallen into the water. The last thing he had done on leaving home that morning was to chalk the word—**ETERNITY**—on his door-step. In memory of his earnest Christian life and heroic death the authorities had that word carved upon that step. Would that eternity were carved in deeper letters on our hearts!

An exhibitor at an Educational Exhibition was showing a very interesting globe, carrying with it an apparatus for explaining the phenomena of night and day, eclipses, etc., when he said to his listeners with a laugh, “ The great difficulty is to imagine that you are an angel.” He meant to express the need of his hearers detaching themselves in thought from their actual physical position, and transporting themselves outside the earth in order to take up the position of onlookers.

Let the Christian reader seek grace to take such an outlook. Let him

imagine himself in eternity. We are obliged by the very poverty of our ideas and language to express ourselves in figures of time, where no figures of time have the least value or meaning. Imagine that age upon age, countless for multitude, have rolled by, absolutely failing to reduce the eternity still future by a single stroke of time. You recall this earth floating in space. When living on it you spoke of buildings "hoary with antiquity." You stood beside the tomb of some ancient king, and marvelled. You shook hands with some octogenarian and paid homage to his age, experience, and memory of long-past events.

Now all is changed. How small the earth! Floating in the company of millions of monster suns, how insignificant she appears! How you marvel that you paid so much attention, and spent so much time over trifles of time and earth, and forgot that as a Christian you belonged to heaven and eternity! And you echo Dr. Chalmers' words with a deeper meaning, "strangely blinded that I was."

Many years ago, as we speak, I caught sight of a crowd of people one Lord's day evening. A young man was preaching. His earnest face is impressed on my memory—his joyous voice I cannot forget, as the words rang out, "You ask me for my *permanent* address. It is the Father's house in heaven." He had the right detachment of thought, the right prospective.

For time is so brief that it is worse than valueless if it is used only for time, and with no motive higher than the height of the crown of your own head. But just because it is so brief, it becomes valuable in inverse proportion to its brevity, if used for God and for eternity. I think the adjective applied to it by a Christian friend is quite correct. He speaks of it as "tremendously small."

Christian friend, have you awakened up to the reality of these things? Oh! be in earnest. Be a man or woman of purpose, of one desire, one pursuit, one object. You will never regret it. True we have to spend a great deal of time over earthly things, and rightly so. Business, the care of the family, etc. etc., take up much time, thought and strength. But if necessary things are done for God's glory, the time spent is well spent. And if we do the necessary things of this life in this spirit we shall certainly use our free time, plan the spending of our income, in a way that will show we know something of "the two magnitudes."

If we did, how luxury and ease and self would be set aside, and we should live indeed for Christ and eternity. His interests instead of being patronized would be the paramount care of our hearts.

Let us turn our backs upon worldly ambitions and gains, and let us live for eternity. We are told to "think imperially" nowadays. Let us think universally and in relation to God, Christ and eternity. Then when we pass from this fitful life, instead of wood, hay and stubble to be reduced to black ashes, there will be the indestructible gold, silver, precious stones. Our lives will make their mark on eternity, a deep, indelible mark, for God's glory.

Christian, rise up to your opportunities, and say with one of old, who grasped the import of "two magnitudes."

"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1. 21).

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 13, 14).

The City of the Living God.

(JAMES GREEN).

“The Lamb is the Lamp thereof.”—Rev. 21. 23.

“With the light of the Stone most precious shall the city of God be fair ;
He shall shine who is like to the jasper in His cloudless glory there.”

“Undimmed in that wondrous vessel, that light of surpassing love
Shall illumine the earth in its gladness, and shall fill the heavens above.”

THE glories of the Lord Jesus Christ are to be manifested in the church that God has given to Him, to be His body and His bride. This is the purpose of His love.

The full unfolding of this belongs to the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ; but it is the privilege of the Christian now to know that the secret working of God by the Holy Spirit is going on during this period of the Lord's absence. This wonderful vessel—the church—through which His glory shall shine, is being formed with divine skill, according to the power which works in each believer. The wisdom of its conception far exceeds all that it is possible for the mind to ask or think. Its construction is so marvellous, its every detail is so perfect, and so worthy of its divine Designer and Maker, that it shall abide to the never-ending ages the masterpiece of God : the jewelled vessel of pure gold like to transparent glass, through which His glory shall shine to the utmost limits of the universe of bliss. But wonderful as the church will be and is, apart from the Lamb who will fill it with glory it is nothing.

We may compare it to some lighthouse erected to guide the mariner over the trackless waters. Within the top of its tower is an arrangement of lenses of marvellous beauty: mathematicians have exhausted their skill in calculating their curves and angles, the highest technical excellence has been called into

play in the polishing and finishing of each piece of glass, each part has been set in its place and made so dependent on every other part, that to displace one by the fraction of an inch, would mar the symmetry of the whole. But the end of all this skilful construction is not for the exhibition of itself. In the centre of the lantern is the lamp, the source of the light ; the whole revolves around it, each lens is focussed upon it, without that light all would be dark, without that lamp no guiding ray would reach the sailor on the deep. But as each facet and curve abides in the light, not obscuring but gathering up its power, and sending it forth far upon the waters, so is the end of the designer fulfilled. It is but an illustration. The nations shall walk by the light of that Holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's wife: for the glory of God has enlightened it and the LAMP thereof is the Lamb. Without Him its perfect design and construction would be as useless as a lighthouse without a lamp. With Him, the purpose of its artificer and constructor will have its fulfilment, and all things will learn the depths of His love and grace in the light of the Lamb once slain. To know the church, you must know the worth of its glorious Head; to know the perfections of the city of God, you must consider the glory of God that fills it, for in His saints He shall be glorified; and in all that have believed He shall be wondered at.

We need never be afraid to recognize our own incompetence, and we have no need to minimize or hide from ourselves the magnitude of the difficulties that beset our path; exulting faith will go in the strength of the Lord, singing, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”—*J. Hudson Taylor.*

Answers to Correspondents.

The Assembly of God.

L.—You ask, after describing your church position: "Is the party with which I meet the assembly of God"? To make such a claim would be gross assumption, for the assembly, or church of God, in any place must include all "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1. 2) in that place. No few members of the body (see chap. 12.) can claim to be the body; you must have all the members for that. In New Testament days the difficulties of numerous sects and parties in *open* division had not arisen. Mankind was divided into but three classes: the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God (1 Cor. 10. 32). So that Paul's letter, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,*" would reach its destination without difficulty, and the Addressee would be able to claim the communication. But if a letter were addressed to the church of God in L——, where you reside, what *party* of Christians there could claim it?

Infinitely sad is the state of division and sectarianism into which the church of God has fallen everywhere; and the terrible indictment pressed home upon the Corinthians by the Apostle Paul is more than ever true to-day. "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, ARE YE NOT CARNAL, AND WALK AS MEN." This condition of things should be a cause of sorrow to all who love the name of the Lord; and the more so since it is in many quarters gloried in.

To unite the warring sections *upon the basis of the truth* is impossible. What then are we to do? You may be sure that the Lord who loves every one of His saints with an unchanging love has not left us to grope our way as best we can through the maze. His truth and His way for His own upon earth are fully revealed in the Word for us. There we may learn the true character of the assembly of God, *and without any pretension of being anything that others are not*, we may act according to the Lord's own directions. Two great facts must be recognized: (1) The Lord is the sole and great Administrator in the Christian

assembly; (2) The Holy Spirit of God, here now upon earth, and dwelling in believers, is the one power by which anything can be done according to God. If these facts are taken up in faith, and have their power over us, we shall refuse every way and organisation of men that is contrary to them, and we shall find grace and power to walk in the truth.

"Upon this Rock."

C.R., INSIM.—You cannot understand how Christ can be both the foundation and the builder of His church (Matt. 16.), and so conclude that the Papists must be right when they say that Peter is the foundation, and not Christ. Your difficulty arises, we believe, from a too materialistic conception of the building in question. Dismiss the material idea from your mind and you will be better able to understand the spiritual thought. The great point of the passage is: Who the Lord is. Men connected Him with that which had failed, they connected Him with a dying dispensation. The missions of John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremiah, and the other prophets had produced no lasting result, because, as under the law, they came on the line of man's responsibility, and on this line there was nothing but failure. The gates of hell prevailed against everything that was built, for there was no moral foundation in man upon which God could build.

But the people could conceive nothing greater than that which had gone before. Jesus was merely a prophet to them; they did not perceive the glory of His person, nor that He had not come to patch up and improve the old but to be the Beginning of that which would be entirely new; for His church was something new; and this is the first mention of it in Scripture. And if the disciples were to know the glory of His Person, it must be by the direct revelation of the Father. To Peter He revealed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Dwell prayerfully upon that wonderful revelation of this great Person. When man had been fully tested and signally failed, God intervenes by and in His chosen One, His Anointed, who was Israel's Messiah, but much more also—"the Son of the living God." He

has been manifested in this glorious way by His resurrection. Romans 1. 3 reads: "His Son; [come of David's seed according to the flesh, marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead], Jesus Christ our Lord" (N.T.). Here is an impregnable foundation upon which to build, for "the Christ, the Son of the living God," having abolished death, is the revelation of the power of God in resurrection, and it is here that God begins; it is from this point that Christ builds. Here is a foundation against which nothing can prevail, for it is not what man is, but what God is in His triumph over the power of death through Jesus Christ our Lord. "This rock," then, is the truth as to the Lord, revealed to Peter by the Father.

But Peter—what of him? This was his new name, signifying a stone, and defining the place that every one that comes to the "Living Stone" has through grace. He was only a sample of all who were to follow, to whose souls Christ should be revealed by the Father as He had been revealed to him. This is plain in the second chapter of his Epistle: "To whom coming, a living stone . . . ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house." If Peter is the foundation in this passage then so are we, for we have the same place as he. What a poor foundation Peter would have been! You may be sure that it is not for naught that his denial of the Lord and his great failure at Galatia are recorded in Holy Scripture.

With what triumph is the soul filled when by faith we see Christ in resurrection, and ourselves, as living stones, associated with Him beyond the reach of failure, decay, and death! This we need, and it will give us stability of soul in the midst of the wreck and disaster that has overtaken everything that has been put under the responsibility of man. "God's Building," page 154, will answer your other question.

Peter's special place in the Lord's ways comes out in that the Lord gave to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven—not the keys of the church. These were not given to anyone else but Peter, and he used them in Acts 2. and 10., opening the

door of the kingdom, first for the Jew and afterwards for the Gentile.

Spiritual Gifts.

INQUIRER.—We should entirely refuse the statement that the Lord only gives spiritual gifts to those who before their conversion lived upright and moral lives. If this were so it would make the gift dependent upon something in the vessel, whereas gifts are given according to the sovereign will of the Giver, whether viewed as by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12.) or by Christ the ascended Head of the body (Eph. 4.)

The verses to which you refer, 2 Timothy 1. 3 and 5, have no connection, we believe, with the bestowal of gifts, but they show that no matter how dark the days, or great the confusion, and the departure from God, He has always had those who were faithful and served Him. Paul served God, but so also did his forefathers, with a PURE CONSCIENCE, and it is very likely that Paul's forefathers would go back to Abraham; then there was UNFEIGNED FAITH in Timothy, but it had first dwelt in his mother and grandmother. This should yield great encouragement to us, and it is so intended, for 2 Timothy contemplates these very days, and in them, perilous times though they be, we may serve God with a pure conscience, and with unfeigned faith, counting upon Him to maintain us as He has maintained others throughout all the times that are past.

How important these things are, will be seen by the way Paul presses them in his writings to Timothy: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a *good conscience*, and of *faith unfeigned*: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling" (1 Tim. 1. 5, 6). "... *Wear a good warfare; hold faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck*" (ver. 19). It is because these things have been let slip that such a condition of things as 2 Timothy describes is upon us, but we may be those who serve God with this character of service, and count upon the help of God in so doing. To the end of the day of testimony for Him He will have such on earth.

The Problem of the Unseen.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

IN all generations of mankind, the material world has proved too narrow to constrain within its limits the aspirations of the human soul. Hence men in every nation, civilized and barbarous, have endeavoured, in one way or another, to pierce the veil which divides the visible from the invisible. To what conclusions have the researches of human speculation led? They show that the spirit of man feels its own immortal nature, but at the same time they show more conclusively the universal need of a divine revelation. Let us consider the uncertain state of knowledge attained by men who reached the pinnacle of philosophy.

The Emperor Cyrus, although well versed in the lore of the most illustrious Persian sages, said to his children before he died: "I cannot imagine that the soul lives only while it remains in this mortal body. *I am inclined to think* that when separated from the body it will possess more understanding and greater purity."

Socrates, the prince of Greek philosophers, when condemned to drink "the hemlock," could only say to his judges: "We are about to part; I am going to die, and you to live. Which of us goes the better way is known to God alone!"

All that Cicero, the polished Roman author, could say on this subject was: "I do not wish that what I am about to write of an existence beyond the present should be regarded as certain, like a divine oracle. Upon this subject I entertain no more than conjectures."

Shakespeare, the greatest of English poets, wrote: "The dread of something after death, the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns, puzzles the will, and makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

Nor have the worldly-wise in our

own day any better staff to lean on. An Ex-President of the Society for Psychical Research sums up his arguments by saying that "Psychical research deals only with the external in an unseen world, and reveals to us the inadequacy of the external, either here or hereafter, to satisfy the life of the soul." Hence those who refuse to take their stand on the certainty of God's revelation base their hopes on the shifting sands of speculation. Their belief in a future state is barren and comfortless, and death can only be regarded by them as a formidable foe.

But while wise men can show us nothing more as the fruit of their deep and laboured thought than a mere conjecture that there is *perhaps* a future state and an eternal existence of the soul, it is the privilege of the simplest Christian to exclaim in the greatest trial, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" "We know," said the Apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Moreover, if the believer is asked as to the basis of this knowledge, he can refer not to an empty creature of his own imagination, but to the Word of Him in whose mouth men and demons strove in vain to find deceit; who confirmed His words by deeds of power and majesty; who proved that death cannot retain its prey; who approached the tombs and called the dead to life by the word of His power; who rose again and ascended in the full view of His own into heaven.

What reassuring words are His: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Here, then, is the veil that screens off the other world from the eye of sense completely removed to the eye of faith. We have only to look and rejoice at the glorious prospect.

The expression "My Father's house" indicates family communion and inti-

mate fellowship in the presence of the Father. How invaluable is the possession of such sure intelligence relating to an eternal habitation! We know the One we have believed. Well might the Apostle conclude his pen-picture of the catching up of the dead and living saints (1 Thess. 4.) with the injunction: "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

Man dwelling in God, and God in Man. (WILLIAM H. WESTCOTT, INKONGO).

The simplicity of Scripture is a part of its greatness. Though we be Christians, years upon years of our lives may be deprived of pleasure and joy in God's things because we fail to take God's word as it stands.

THERE is, some say, one unique feature about the English language which makes it shine above all languages known on earth. It possesses the word "HOME." Nothing compares with it in any other tongue. All that it spells to us of affection and interest must be told out in other countries in explanations and circumlocutions galore. The one word is enough for an Anglo-Saxon.

The Epistle of John speaks again and again of our dwelling in God, and of God dwelling in us. In speaking of either of these great verities we have to confess how wonderful they are.

Romans 5. tells us about *boasting* in God (the *boast* in God, ver. 11, same word in vers. 2 and 3, see New Trans.). That was full of blessing when we first realized it.

But *dwelling* in God is the finding of a *home* in Him. It is not merely our discovery of and our delight in all that He is and has done *for us* in Christ.

But may we find *home* in God?

And may God find *home* in us?

We ask these questions. We are made, in the asking, to feel how stupendous they are. Is there any light

on their meaning? Is there any possibility of their realization?

First, as to their meaning, there can be no manner of doubt that their glorious realization is seen in Christ. Even in His life on earth God was in Him, and He in God.

All the history of Adam and his race proved that there was no correspondence and no compatibility between God and man. The divergence became more and more manifest as time rolled on, till it culminated in the rejection of God's Son, the disclosure of the state of fallen man's heart and nature. How, then, could God dwell in men, or they in Him?

In Christ, in incarnation, there was a new beginning. The mysterious birth of our Lord was required,* and was given, as a sign that God was setting aside the old and customary order, and was commencing a new order, in which everyone derived birth immediately from Him; not by the intermediate agency of man. Until Christ died and rose again He remained alone (John 12. 24); now others have come to be associated with Him, He is

* We guard, with all awe, the deep mystery of Christ's Eternal Being as the Son. But we speak above of His coming into the world as *Man*.

the Firstborn amongst many brethren, though, *be it noted, ever peerless in this new order*; for He inaugurated it in virtue of what He is in Himself, in His own Person and right. We come into what He inaugurated by the gift of grace alone, and by the power of God acting in grace.

But we are children of God, born of God; not born in successive generations from one another as in our natural life, but *each one* born immediately and directly of God.

Now in Christ there was perfect compatibility, absolute correspondence, between God and Man. God dwelt in Him; who can gainsay it? He dwelt in God; who can deny it? The ever-blessed God found in that Holy Person a Temple, a Residence, a Home, in which every part was absolutely congenial to His nature, and corresponded with His will. There was not a single element that could cause friction or produce disparity. The affections were all pure to God. The motives of His life, the "reins," the "inwards," were of a sweet savour to Him. His ways were ever pleasing in His sight. At no point was there ever the turning even of the eyes in another direction. The garden of Gethsemane, which showed how real were the sorrows He was facing, only brought out the sweetest and most holy correspondence with the Father's will. We say it reverently; God found His *home* there in Him.

But—He dwelt in God. Is this a little more difficult to understand? Do we not more readily comprehend what comes down to us (though all is wonderful), than what rises up to God?

How perfect was the Lord Jesus! Holy from His birth, intrinsically so, He had nothing in common with the pursuits of this sinful world. There was no *home* for Jesus here. His affections and all the activities of His

holy being were trained on what suited God. His meat was to do His will. As Man, He fixed His heart Godward, and found in God all that man could desire. In Him the devil was given the lie. The enemy of our race had subtly infused into the first man's mind that he could do better for himself if he shook off allegiance to the Deity, and acted contrary to God. In Jesus we see the new order of Man, the woman's Seed, destroying the works of the devil. His heart—with all its affections so infinitely pure; His mind—with all its powers so great; His will—all steadfast and true, found unceasing and unchanging delight in God. He reposed there, He retired there, His communion lay there, in God.

The storm raged around Him; earth and hell were all let loose upon Him; and the wrath of God against sin was borne by Him at Golgotha for our sakes; but when all was finished, this Holy One said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He retired even in the hour of dying into His dwelling-place with God. We say, and say rightly, that His body was laid in the grave, and that His spirit entered Hades; but in the language of our present theme He went "home;" He commended His spirit into the Father's hands. It is not His divesting Himself of humanity, and retiring into simple Deity (as some wrongly assert) at the time of His death—for He is servant for ever (see Exod. 21.)—but of the spot which He esteemed "home" when His work was done.

He is risen now. The Temple was raised again in three days, as He said. In heaven, seated and crowned, the heart of God reposes in Him, delights in Him, finds complacency in Him. For ever and for ever does all the fullness of the Godhead dwell in Him bodily. Moreover, as Man He is sufficient to fill out every wish of the heart of God. All of loveliness is there, all perfection, all grace, all faithfulness, all stability and

durability for God. In Him the nature of God finds its counterpart for complacency, as well as its display for blessing to the creature.

On His part, too, Jesus, the ever-blessed Man, lives unto God. His holy nature as Man finds its untold, unmeasured bliss in God. He knows God infinitely, perfectly, with all the powers of the One risen from the dead. He is in the condition and in the place where God has designed to put *man* in the closest relationship and privilege, and in the full light of all that God is. From that nearest and dearest place—may we not reverently say it—the heart of Jesus rises up in ever holy and happy delight in God. “Thou shalt make *Me* full of joy with Thy countenance” (Acts 2. 28). “In the midst of the church will *I* sing praise unto Thee” (Heb. 2. 12).

How unrestrained must be the intercourse of Jesus with God! How perfectly intelligent is our risen Lord in all the ways of God! He proved them in the depths when He went into death; He knows them in the heights where He is in glory. He knows all the nature of God, and all His attributes; and is there in the deepest enjoyment of them all. To every part of God's glory there is the response in the nature of the Man Christ Jesus; so that our blessed Lord, looking as Man Godward, finds everything in Him to yield complacency and delight, and the most intimate worship. We tremblingly touch a chord on this great Organ, and our hearts are thrilled by the heavenly harmony that springs out at the touch.

But now as to the realization of this ourselves. The Epistle of John presents God dwelling in us, and our dwelling in God, not as the attainment of a few, but as the ordinary (some people call it *normal*) state of the child of God.

We are born of God, and are God's children. We can approach God in the filial confidence and affection of those

whom grace has given the right to be in His presence. We have been given His Spirit also, who trains us, in obedience and love, and who conducts our souls in perfect liberty into the holy scenes where God is. By His power there is conferred upon us a capacity to understand God, even as in Christ we have a life which is able to enjoy Him. We are qualified in the way of nature, life, relationship, intelligence, to find our home in God.

Then, again, we are not left to speculate as to the Deity, according to all the surmises and reasonings of the human mind. God is fully revealed, and is in the light; that is, He has been so adequately displayed in Jesus that nothing remains concealed of His nature or of His attributes. At the same time, and in the very circumstances in which He was fully revealed, all my sins have been covered, never to rise against me any more; my sinful life has been ended under condemnation in the death of Jesus for me; and by God's gift and God's grace I live through Him. My guilty history is so dealt with—my state—my sins—that my coming into God's presence is not to be reminded of anything which could make me uneasy or ill at ease there. For ever no! The heart draws near to God in happy and holy freedom; we have access by one Spirit to the Father; and here are set at ease—made *at home* in God. All that the renewed heart sees in God makes it feel more and more at home. Holiness—my home. Righteousness—my home. Light—my home. All that *He* is—my home, my joy, my boast, my ecstasy. I dwell in God.

Do not ask me to exchange that home for another. Do not tell me I shall be better off if I make more of this present world. I have found in God my Treasure, my Fame, my Life, my Recreation, my Repose, my All. What a God He is!

Do not direct me to a crucifix. Do not assure me that the Pleasant Sunday

Afternoon, or Cinematograph Pictures are necessary to make religion palatable, or the faith of God effectual. Oh, tell me more of God—my God; already well-known in the love of Jesus.

But still there remains the other wonder. It does not require a great stretch of imagination to see that God must be the Fountain of true delight; and that the redeemed one is put where he may find his home in *Him*.

But is it not almost incredible, almost beyond belief, that God should speak of dwelling in us? It is not merely that He has saved us, and puts His power into us, transforming our lives, and that He then uses us in His service. But it is His feeling *at home* in us; finding nought to prevent it, but everything congenial to Him in the children He has begotten, in the saints He has saved and delivered and blessed. If we on our side can and do commit ourselves unreservedly to Him in the sense of being at home with the One we know, He on His side has qualified us through His Son to be subjects of His complacent delight. He is able to view our inbred sin as though it were not, through the death of Jesus; and our sins, though numberless, are all blotted out, gone, by the blood. Our life in Adam, in which God found no complacency, is judged and gone for faith in Christ's death; we are not what we once were, but are new creatures in Christ and by grace, children of God.

Our tastes are according to God; we love what He loves; we hate what He hates. Above all we have unbounded confidence in Jesus our Lord, and love to think of Him, speak of Him, worship Him, serve Him. The Holy Spirit finds it His congenial task to set more and more of His glories and love before us.

It is on this ground that God can dwell in us. He finds it good and sweet and "home-like"—reverently may we suggest it—to be in the hearts of His children who are all aglow with delight in Christ, and with their simple happy liberty in God. The joy is reciprocal—we dwell in God, and God dwells in us.

I have no doubt there would be greater results from this if it were uninterruptedly enjoyed. We should bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. We should love because He first loved us. We should meet our brother's need; we should not be misled by the many false prophets that are gone out into the world. We should have confidence toward God in praying, and should have the petitions which we ask of Him. Many results there would be; but it is the thing itself one would like to know more of.

The words of Scripture are simple. The privilege they set before us is most precious and profound. May we know more of dwelling in God, and of God dwelling in us.

Parley not with that in thy thoughts which thou meanest not to let into thy heart.

A temptation comes strong when the way to relief seems to lie through the sin that Satan suggests.

Thou temptest God to suffer thy locks to be cut when thou art so bold as to lay thy head in the lap of a temptation.

The Folly of Scepticism.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

A STORY is told of a person who, rather priding himself on his acuteness, and boasting that he was not easily deceived, was paying a visit to the Zoological Gardens in London.

Coming to the enclosure where the tall giraffes are kept, he stood for some moments staring hard at the strange-looking creatures, so different from anything he had ever seen. Presently, with a look of incredulity upon his face, and with the air of a man who is not to be imposed on, he declared :

“ *I don't believe that there is any such animal!* ”

You smile at the man's silliness. But I hope to show, in this article, that unbelief as to the Bible, and many things brought into ridicule by a shallow generation, is as senseless as the stupid incredulity of the man who would not believe the evidence of his own eyes.

Take the Bible first. It is considered “good form” nowadays, and a proof of critical discernment, to discredit and disbelieve the Scriptures. The objections to this, that and the other statement in the sacred volume have been answered again and again. Able writers have pointed out the clear evidence that exists—both circumstantial and direct—as to its divine authorship. But incredulity shuts its eyes, stops its ears, and refuses to either see or hear.

I shall adduce one proof here as to the divine origin and absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures, namely *the marvellous fulfilment of detailed prophecy.*

A Turkish officer, a Mahometan—and therefore beyond suspicion of being a prejudiced witness—was describing a visit paid by him to the site of the ancient city of Babylon.

“The ruins of Babylon,” said he, “abound in game, and wishing for a week's shooting, I engaged a Sheik with

his followers, and went there. At sundown the Arabs, to my amazement, began to strike their tents. I went to the Sheik and protested strongly, but nothing that I could say had any effect. ‘It is not safe,’ said the Sheik; ‘no mortal flesh dare to stay here after sunset. Ghosts and ghouls come out of the holes and caverns after dark, and whomsoever they catch becomes one of themselves. No Arab has ever seen the sun go down on Babylon.’ ”

The explorer Layard while excavating in a great mound amongst these ruins, found passages which were used by wild beasts as their dens. “The mound was full of large holes,” says one of the party (*Keppel*). “We entered some of them and found them strewed with the carcasses and skeletons of animals recently killed.” “Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulks through the furrows.”

Twenty-seven centuries ago, the proud city of Babylon, the metropolis of the world's civilization, was standing in all her glory. There was less likelihood of her becoming an utter desolation, an abode of unclean beasts, than that such a fate should overtake London or Washington to-day. Ancient historians have left on record the greatness, the grandeur, the magnificence of the imperial city of that race of conquerors.

But *twenty-seven centuries ago* there lived a servant of the most high God, named Isaiah. In the early part of the book which bears his name, (and the part which even the destructive critics allow to be genuine) he utters a prediction concerning this wonderful and glorious city.

“Babylon,” says he, “the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation:

"Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;

"And owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

This prophecy is taken from Isaiah's thirteenth chapter. Compare it with the words of the Arab Sheik to the Turkish officer, and those of the party of explorers.

Then remember the incredulous man at the Zoological Gardens, and tell me, do you mean to say:

"I don't believe there is any such thing as genuine prophecy or divine inspiration."

It is not as if the prophecy stood alone, so that its fulfilment might be a mere coincidence. The Old Testament is full of definite and connected predictions. A brief history of Egypt has been written from the prophecies. Those of Daniel concerning the four great monarchies, three of which were future at the time,

gave Rollin the plan of his well-known "Ancient History." The story of the life of Christ can be compiled from the writings of those who lived and died centuries before His advent.

The time of His coming, the family of which He would be born, the exact place of His birth, all are indicated. The details of His sufferings and death are given: His betrayal by a disciple for thirty silver coins; the piercing of His hands and feet; the parting of His garments amongst His enemies; the casting lots for His seamless robe; the scornful laughter; the vinegar offered Him, mingled with gall. These are no vague and equivocal predictions which mere chance might bring to pass. They were definitely fulfilled, for the most part, by the enemies of Him to whom they referred, so that none can suppose that events were manipulated to suit the prophecies.

There is but one rational explanation, namely, that "holy men of God spake . . . moved by the Holy Ghost." That is, inspiration is a fact. The Bible, stamped with its hall-mark of fulfilled prophecy is *the Word of God*.

On Winning Souls.

"HE that winneth souls is wise," because he has selected a wise object. I think it was Michael Angelo who once carved certain magnificent statues in snow. They are gone; the material readily compacted by the frost as readily melted with the heat. Far wiser was he when he fashioned the enduring marble, and produced works which will last all down the ages. But even marble itself is consumed and fretted by the tooth of time; and he is wise who selects for his raw material immortal souls, whose existence shall outlive the stars. If God shall bless us in the winning of souls, our work shall remain when the wood, and hay, and stubble of earth's art and science shall have gone to the dust from whence they sprang. In heaven itself the soul-winner blessed of God shall

have memorials of his work preserved for ever in the galleries of the skies. He has selected a wise object, for what can be wiser than to glorify God, and what, next to that, can be wiser than in the highest sense to bless our fellow-men; to snatch a soul from the gulf that yawns, to lift it up to the heaven that glorifies; to deliver an immortal from the thralldom of Satan, and to bring him into the liberty of Christ? What more excellent than this? I say that such an aim would commend itself to all right minds, and that angels themselves may envy us poor sons of men, that we are permitted to make this our life object—to win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ. Wisdom herself assents to the excellence of the design.

Unity.

(EDWARD CROSS).

NOTES FROM AN ADDRESS (REVISED).

John 17.; Rev. 21.

IT is a cheering sight to see so many young people present. It is well to see the older ones; but the young are like the springing grass. The grass that is full grown and come to maturity is fit for the scythe; but the growth of the springing grass is beautiful to behold. It is especially good to see young men and women, earnest young men, having life before them, and their whole Christian course, start fair, with their hearts devoted to the Lord, desiring to serve Him, and governed intelligently by the unchanging and unerring principles of the Word of God. This is the light to guide you through the world, so that you be not tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, listening to this man and the other, and having no divine direction. The ways of man are like footprints in the sand; there is no abidingness in them. We want the great divine principles of Scripture to govern us, so as to walk firmly, soberly, calmly, undisturbedly, through all the confusion with which we are surrounded. If you knew the road from Newcastle to London, you would not be turned aside by all the by-paths you met with between the two cities. There are many such in all directions, turning this way and that; but the man who knows his way is not diverted by them, be they ever so many. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen; the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." "It is the path of wisdom." "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? . . . and unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28.).

It is of all importance to start with the fear of God and Scripture, and to

submit our minds to the direction of His Word. It is to this the Apostle refers his son Timothy when he says, "Thou hast known from a child the sacred letters, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is divinely inspired and profitable . . . that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work."

Let us now turn to John 17. And first, take notice that the Gospel of John is, in a certain sense, the N.T. book of Genesis. The O.T. tells us that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1. 1), and there we see the unity of creation, as the work of His hands. Then, (ver. 2), there was some great cataclysm; and subsequently, out of the confusion that had arisen, God brings about the beauty and order of the world in which we live; and in Genesis 2. 1, He sums the whole up, saying, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Here, then, we see the unity that was stamped upon it all. The creation was one.

The Gospel of John rehearses this in a few words, and adds more besides. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He made it all. It was all one; and He held it all in the unity in which it existed as His work.

Then, chapter 3., the Lord speaks of the new birth, and the kingdom—earthly things, which Nicodemus should have understood; and from them He passes on to heavenly things. The heavenly things, as well as the earthly, were the component parts of one system,

which He held in His hand, in the unity of His design in respect of it. Though distinct in themselves, they form one whole, without clash or contradiction; and they severally and collectively subserve His purpose.

Then, chapter 10., He has His sheep; and of them He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." And then comes this significant expression, which is particularly to be noted, "I and the Father are one." Here at length we come to the centre and spring of unity, the point to which we must ever revert, in our ultimate thought of it, morally. In vain you look for it in the world. Self-interest renders it impossible. Here we have the essence and the expression of it. "I and the Father are one."

Now pass on to John 17. 11. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one." How? After what pattern,—what type? "That they may be one, as We are one." That is unity,—perfect, indissoluble, indestructible. He speaks here of those immediately around Him—apostolic unity; and so we find it expressed accordingly in their writings. There is the expression of it; here is its source and spring, and here its pattern.

Then, verses 16–19, He says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth. . . . And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by truth." He is now wholly apart from all that belongs to this world, morally. He came into it, and identified Himself with His people in it; He bore the judgment that belonged to them in it; and now, risen out of it, He has taken His place in heavenly glory, entirely clear of it; and there remains nothing to prevent the purpose of God

from being brought into effect in the coming glory. He is only waiting to work out his plans. He has His own time to do it; and He will not be forced, because His wisdom is perfect.

And now, verse 20, He prays, not for those only who then surrounded Him, "but also for those who believe on Me through their word; that they may be all one." How one? That is the great point. Three times over He turns to the same thought; and three times over He answers it in the same way. It was, so to speak, the natural bent of His mind; the place to which His thoughts ever turned, as indeed they sprang from there—the mind and will of God the Father. In Proverbs 8. we read, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight." To Him it was no trouble—there was no recalling of His thoughts from other channels, as it is with us—to turn to God the Father. To Him it was natural. He was governed by no other thought; and so He expresses Himself, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Thus He has them all before His eye, not indeed in their actual state or ways, for it has not been so fulfilled in the history of the church, but as they are before His mind, and according to His desires for them.

Verse 22: "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one." Again, how? and the same answer as before—"as We are one." This is the way, the only way, that is before His mind; and you will never get the idea of unity, or oneness, before your minds properly, unless you get it as it is in His mind. If you get it thus, you will get it rightly, and the effect of it in you will be marvellous. It will make you intelligent in the mind of God, and will keep you steadfast and unshaken in this great fact, as you

are passing through the confusion of this world. It will keep you in joy and peace, and nothing will disturb you. You must, in the spirit of your minds, get outside of the babel of tongues here, to where Christ is; and then you will be able to understand with Him what are His thoughts concerning this unity, about which we hear His prayer here.

Now turning to Ephesians 2. we get the idea of unity, or oneness, as regards the church, prominently set forth. Four times it is mentioned, in connection with four separate things:

Verse. 14: He has made both *one*, i.e., Jew and Gentile, having annulled the enmity in his flesh, the law of commandments in ordinances; that,

Verse 15: He might form the two in Himself into *one* new man; and,

Verse 16: might reconcile both in *one* body to God, by the cross;

Verse 18: for through Him we both have access by *one* Spirit to the Father.

This is "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4. 3-6), in which is formed the church, the body of Christ—ecclesiastical unity we might say; as the oneness of John 17. is the vital union, or oneness, of life and nature, in the Father and the Son. Now, as the Father and the Son are one in nature, life, thought and purpose, so also are Christ and the church one in fact—as we might say in structure—His body and His bride: and it is the present action of the Spirit to produce this oneness, called in Ephesians 4. 3 "the unity of the Spirit." The Spirit's unity is the unity of Christ, the Head and His members with Him; not the unity of a party or a sect; not even a "holiness party," or a sect standing as they think in testimony for the truth; for though the Spirit gathers in holiness, He does not gather to holiness or to orthodoxy, but to Christ; and where you see what is not that, it is not "the unity of the Spirit." Men boast in

their shame. "I of Paul," and "I of Apollos," with all the divisions of Christendom, is not unity, but division. We should rather be humbled before God, that we are so far fallen from what the will of God about us is; that we so little understand what is the oneness in life and nature, in the thought and desire of Jesus and the Father; and that we have so far lost the sense of the unity and fellowship of the Spirit in forming the body and the bride of Christ; and have substituted instead the sectional unity and fellowship of our respective shibboleths. The truth of God, as it comes down from above, abides, unaltered by all the divisions that have come in since the apostles' days. What was truth then is truth to-day, and will be to the end; and the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God remains the same for all time.

Now as to Revelation 21. When Israel is restored to God by and by, and blessed in their own land, and the promises to them are fulfilled, such as Leviticus 25, 18, 19; Numbers 23, 9; Deuteronomy 33, 28; Psalm 4, 8, and such like, then for the first time they will be of use in the world to accomplish their destiny, according to the purpose of God for them. Up till now they have been but a stumbling-block and a hindrance to progress. They have taught the world evil, and not good. Instead of being the messengers of life and righteousness, they have "smitten the Judge on the cheek" in the very court of justice (Micah 5. 1); they have crucified the Holy One and the Just, and have let loose a robber in His stead. How, then, could they teach righteousness to the nations? But they will do it. It is God's purpose for them; and it is beautiful to see the saved remnant, in the latter days, carrying the gospel of the glory of God to the ends of the earth (Isa. 66. 19). The light and glory of the people in the coming day are described in terms beyond our capacity of comprehension (cf. Isa. 30. 18-26). But through what

exercise of soul must they pass, before they are restored from their present state! Leviticus 26. 40-42 describes their repentance and the humbling confession of sins, through which they will at length have really bottomed their past history; and in this way they will be prepared to take their place finally as the servants of God, according to the original purpose of their redemption (cf. Exod. 3. 12) for the blessing of others (Gen. 12. 3; 22. 18), when Jerusalem will be the bridal city of the great King, the seat of His glory here on earth (Ps. 45.).

Analogous to this, and in her higher heavenly estate, is the bride, the Lamb's wife; Revelation 21. "And He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light, was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. . . . And the nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour to it. . . ." Behold her in her unity and her beauty! The days of the church's

divisions, and of her shame, are no more remembered; neither are they mentioned any more at all. She is now in fact what she ever was in purpose—the vessel of the glory of God; the complement of the joys of Jesus; the carrier of the water of life, and the fruits of the tree of life to the world; the angel of mercy to it, bringing healing for its woes. "And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the lamp of it."

May our eyes and hearts be fixed steadfastly and distinctly on the Lord Himself, in whom is all our hope; holding fast His Word, and waiting—waiting for His coming; to see it all, and share it all with Him, in the day when He will assuredly have His desires fulfilled; "that they all may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me; that they may be perfected into one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Amen.

A High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. (JAMES GREEN).

"Please explain who Melchizedek was, and give help on Hebrew 7."—H. H. H.

THE mystery that surrounds the history of Melchizedek has often aroused the question as to who he was. The statements made concerning him in Hebrews 7. 3 have even led some to suppose that he was none other than a divine person. That this thought has no foundation may be seen by considering the verse, for he is there said to be, not the Son of God, but like Him. That is, the Spirit of God has expressly chosen a man, the omissions in whose history made it possible to say these things of him: that he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;"

and this in order to set forth in type the glories of the priesthood exercised by the Lord Jesus Christ. The contrast is with the Aaronic priesthood, where every priest had to show, without any question, his genealogy; failing this he was excluded from his office (see Neh. 7. 64). His father and mother must be known, and he in turn would hand on his priestly rights to his descendants at the end of his days. But with Melchizedek, priest of the most high God, it was otherwise. We have no information in Scripture as to who his father and mother were; and as to whether he had children we know not; the day of his birth

and the day of his death are not told us: these omissions being the more remarkable as they occur in the Book of Genesis, where the birth, death, parentage and descendants of others are very expressly given. Melchizedek is without all these in his history, so that his priesthood might be the type of an heavenly order, which should never be succeeded by another. An order which, belonging to the Son of God risen from the dead, could have nothing to do with birth or descent, for these things belong to earth, and not to Him who is entirely heavenly, for whom every link with earth is broken, and who holds His high priestly office not by inheritance, but by the oath of God. And in this fact, that it has been constituted by the swearing of an oath, is shown the unchangeable character of the order, and its continuity in Him who has not the infirmity and liability to death which belonged to priests of the Aaronic order, but who bears the high dignity of "The Son, perfected for ever" (ver. 28). The greatness of Melchizedek was also seen, in that not only was he not from Levi (ver. 6), but the father of Levi paid tithes to him, and received blessing from him, and, without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. This also shows us the character of the priestly service that belongs to this order; it is occupied entirely with blessing and worship, while that of the sons of Aaron was connected with sacrifices which were never ended. It is in this respect that the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is seen to excel. Being of the tribe of Judah according to the flesh (ver. 14), He held no priestly office while on earth (chap. 8. 4); but having accomplished redemption and offered Himself, the sacrificial work was finished and the titles won, first of King of Righteousness and then of King of Peace. Consequent upon this He takes up His priesthood as the risen and glorified One in heaven, saluted there by God as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (chap. 5.

4-10). He has nothing further to do with offering for sin, He is occupied in blessing His redeemed with all the blessing His work has secured, and in leading their worship to His God and Father. The full display of the Melchizedek priesthood will be seen in the millennial day, when, after all enemies have been defeated (Ps. 110.) (the type of which is given in the slaughter of the kings by Abraham), the Lord shall sit as priest upon His throne; in Him shall heaven and earth be brought together; the children of Israel shall be blessed; the groan of creation shall be hushed; and the praise of all shall rise to God. Psalm 72. beautifully describes the results of the Melchizedek reign of Christ in that coming day. But there is a present aspect of this priesthood that is very blessed for the Christian; for the priest is an absolute necessity for all who in wilderness circumstances would know what it is to enter into the holiest and join in the worship which belongs to that sacred place. But no priest after an earthly order or ordinance of man will suit the high and holy calling of those who are associated with the Son. The High Priest suitable to such is One who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens; One who having settled the question of sin in the offering of Himself, can, in the present exercise of His priestly office, minister grace for all our needs. He sympathizes with our infirmities; lifts the heart above care and sorrow in the knowledge of His love; washes our feet from the soil of the way, and does this that we may have part with Him where He is, in the joy of the Father's love. Such is His service for His own, so that unhindered worship in Spirit and in truth may rejoice the Father who seeks such to worship Him. This is the true occupation of the house of God over which Christ is the great Priest. Happy the soul who, entering the holiest of all in company with Himself, knows the joys of that holy liberty of worship which belongs to the place where He is at home.

Three Men.

(J. T. MAWSON).

AN ADDRESS ON DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

"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."

DAVID, the son of Jesse, was chosen of God to be the saviour, shepherd and king of His ancient people Israel, and in these respects he foreshadowed our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Saviour of men, and the coming King. Being God's chosen man, it followed that all in Israel who were subject to God would think well of him and yield him obedience; indeed, he became the test in his day as to how far every man understood the thoughts and ways of God. There were three men—Saul, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth—who were brought into direct contact with him, and the way they treated David is illustrative of the way men are treating our Lord Jesus Christ in our day; and this is the subject of my address.

David was not the man whom Israel would have chosen, for he was but a shepherd-lad, without any pretension to greatness. They chose Saul because of his outward appearance, and even Samuel, the prophet of God, would have repeated their mistake, when sent to the house of Jesse, by pouring the anointing oil upon the head of Eliab, because of the beauty of his countenance and the height of his stature. But "the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart" (1 Sam. 16. 7).

To the natural eye there was "no beauty" in Jesus, and so "He was despised and rejected of men," but He was infinitely lovely and lovable in the eyes of God, for He loved the Lord His God with all His heart, and the heart is the mainspring of every action.

Yes, Jesus was the Man after God's

own heart, His Anointed, who fulfilled all His will.

Israel discovered in the day of their distress that God's chosen man was the only one who could deliver them. When the great Goliath threatened them, and Saul and Eliab trembled before him in their helplessness, they had need to look elsewhere for salvation. It was then that David appeared, and girded with the strength of the God of Israel he overthrew the giant and set the people free. Then they proved what was stated of the shepherd-lad at his anointing, that he was "goodly to look to."

The enthralling story of David's victory is recorded in 1 Samuel 17., and shows us, in figure, the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over our mighty foe, the Devil—a victory told in the words of Hebrews 2. 14, 15: "Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

How complete was David's victory, and how glorious; yet how surprising to both Philistine and Israelite, for Goliath was a man of war, invincible as he thought, and armed to the teeth, while David was a stripling, with no other weapons than five smooth stones and a simple sling. But by these was that huge mass of boasting flesh brought to the dust, and there, "by his own sword," was the giant spoiled of his head, so that even the most fearful and timid in Israel might join in the glad shouts that rang out

triumphantly from the heights of Paddammin. The Lord was crucified in weakness; He went out against the powers of darkness and the Devil on our behalf, and as He hung rejected and gibbeted upon a malefactor's cross it seemed as though He had met with utter and irretrievable defeat. But it was—

“By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown;
Trode all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.”

And by His death, death's dominion has been overthrown, and the Devil's power annulled, and this so completely that our risen Lord can say, “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 death” (Rev. I. 17, 18).

“Triumphant saints no honour claim,
The conquest was His own.”

SAUL

After the overthrow of the giant, David got a measure of recognition in Israel, for we are told in 1 Samuel 18. that “he was accepted in the sight of all the people” (ver. 5); the women sang his praises (ver. 7); all Israel loved him (ver. 16); and “his name was much set by” (ver. 30). But Saul stood out in base and brutal contrast to the rest of Israel; there sprung up in His heart a bitter and undying hatred towards the people's deliverer; he eyed David with jealous eye, and sought to destroy him (vers. 9, 10). Saul represents the unconverted man, the man in the flesh. We read a great deal about the flesh in the New Testament. It is that evil principle within the heart of men that shuts out God and Christ, and will always make SELF the supreme object of the life in opposition to Christ. The flesh will have religion, and meetings, and sometimes tolerate Christians, but it will not have Christ. When He came into the world it betrayed Him for the price of a slave; spat upon His sacred cheek; and nailed Him to a

cross. It has not changed in the course of the centuries, and the Christ of God is still rejected and hated by it. The unconverted man in this gathering is in the flesh; he has no love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and his position is terrible, for the Scripture saith, “If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema maranatha” (1 Cor. 16. 22).

Indifference to Christ and His rights may seem a small matter to some, and they may be surprised that it should call down the anathemas of almighty God upon them, nevertheless it does; and the justice of it will be evident to you, I believe, if you see its baseness illustrated in Saul's attitude towards David. Israel owed everything to David, for the Philistine threatened not only to seize their lands and wealth, but to make every one of them—men, women, and children—their absolute slaves. And Saul could not deliver them, nor Jonathan, nor Abner, and the people were at their wits' end. It was then that David appeared, and taking his life in his hand, he overthrew the great foe and delivered the people from his power. David was undoubtedly the one man in the realm whose right it was to reign, and Saul's conscience told him so, but in his selfish pride he refused to surrender to David. Saul was first in his own thoughts, and he hated David because he knew that David ought to be. Yet David did not suffer in the fight that he waged for Israel; protected by the mighty hand of Jehovah he came through it without a scar. How different it was with our Lord Jesus Christ when He came to deliver men; His visage was so marred more than any man's, and His form than the sons of men. His hands and feet were pierced and nailed to the tree; every sorrow found its centre in Him, and He drank to the dregs the bitterness of death. He has won an everlasting deliverance for sinful men at great cost to Himself—a deliverance from Satan's power, from the fear of death, and from eternal hell; and the preaching of the wonderful love that made Him do it should have pros-

trated the whole race at His feet. How base is that ingratitude that refuses to love Him ! How sinful that selfishness that will not yield homage to Him ! How terrible the pride that will not have the blessing through Christ crucified !

God has blessing, great and free, for all, through the death of Christ, but none shall have the blessing apart from surrender to Christ; and this is just and right. To refuse to yield to Christ and to love Him is rebellion against God, and this must bring down the righteous wrath of God upon the offender.

Alas ! " All of self, and none of Thee, " is the answer that thousands are giving to the claims of Christ.

JONATHAN.

Saul hated David, but Jonathan loved him as his own soul ; and no wonder, for he had watched the fight in the field of Elah, and as he saw David go forth against the enemy he could say, he has undertaken that conflict for me; and when the victory was completed, he could say, he has destroyed the foe for me. He had also beheld him in the tent of the king with the head of Goliath in his hand, and there David won his heart, so that he stripped himself and everything that distinguished him, and made a full surrender to him. David was victor in the battlefield ; he was also victor in the tent of the king; the trophy of his first victory was the head of Goliath; the trophy of the second was the heart of Jonathan. Have we known an epoch like that in our lives ? Has the Lord Jesus captivated us ? Do we love Him and have we made a full surrender to Him ? Four lines from Charlotte Elliot's sweet hymn express this surrender perfectly :

" Just as I am, Thy love I own
Has broken every barrier down ;
Now to be Thine, yea, THINE ALONE,
Oh Lamb of God, I come."

How beautiful was the devotion of Jonathan to David ! And we learn how greatly David prized it by his touching lament at Jonathan's death : " I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :

very pleasant hast thou been to me: thy love was wonderful, passing the love of women " (2 Sam. 1. 26). Yet Jonathan was slain in Saul's company by the hands of the Philistines, and he did not see the glorious kingdom of his well-loved friend. I have often wondered why this was ; why the one who shone like the rising of a brilliant star in his love to David at Elah should have set in darkness at Gilboa. I believe I have found the reason in 1 Samuel 23. 16-18.

We have a heart-moving scene there. David and Jonathan met in the wood, as they had met before in chapter 21. 41, 42., and there they bade each other a last farewell; and Jonathan, moved by love to his friend, and the knowledge that God was with him, renounced all claim to the throne in the words " THOU SHALT BE KING . . . AND I SHALL BE NEXT." It was there that the strength of Jonathan's devotion declared itself; it was there also that he betrayed its weakness. David first, but " I NEXT." Oh, why did he not put a full point after he had declared that the kingdom was David's, and been silent as to himself ! Why did he not leave the appointment of his place to his king ? for surely the king alone had the right to say who should be next unto him. It was the introduction of the capital " I "—his thought for himself—that was the undoing of Jonathan. This carried him back to his father's court, where his friend was hated, and where in former days he had been persecuted for his friend's sake. How different his history might have been if he had said : " David, thou shalt be king, and I will share thy rejection until thy rights are publicly owned; whither thou goest I will go. I am wholly thine, command me as thou wilt." It would have meant for the time being the cave, and the mountain-side, and the scorn of all time-servers instead of popularity and the palace of the king. But it would also have meant a place of honour in the kingdom of David instead of ignominy and death at the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines.

How solemn is the lesson that this

story teaches. It is possible to begin well and yet to fail in that full-hearted response to the Lord's love which alone is right and pleasing to God; it is possible for thought for self to come in and to make us careful for our own ease and safety, and, as we often falsely judge, our own present advantage.

The believer is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. 8. 9), but the flesh is still in the believer, and whenever it is consulted, or allowed to control us, it will find room for self, and in so far as it does this our lives are not wholly for Christ.

David in his rejection prefigured Christ in His rejection; and be it clearly understood that Christ is just as much rejected now as when men cried, "Away with Him." His rights are not acknowledged; the world does not put its crowns upon His brow; men do not want His interference in their affairs, and those who truly follow Him must heed the words of the One whom they follow: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My sayings they will keep yours also" (John 15. 19, 20).

This is our life, and the treasure we have found in His love should make us welcome it.

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands our soul, our life, our all."

And "if we suffer *with* Him, we shall also reign with Him."

But I must add here, that all who love the Lord will see His glory, and in the day when He reigns they shall be with Him, and He will remember every pulsation of love to Himself, and every act of faithfulness to Him, and this should constrain us, as well as His love to us, to live wholly for Him,

and to refuse all the clamouring of self and the flesh for a place.

MEPHIBOSHETH

The good start in devotion to David that Jonathian made was carried on and seen in perfection in his son Mephibosheth. He does not appear to have been a brilliant man, and, crippled as he was, he could be of no use in the field of battle to a warrior king, but he appreciated the kindness of David, and was devoted to his person. It is not necessary that we should be brilliant, or great, or learned; what our Lord looks for is the response of faithful love to Himself; this He will prize above all the service we may be able to render to Him. The love of Mephibosheth to David comes out beautifully at the time of David's exile from Jerusalem because of the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 19.). He would have gone with the king and shared the hardship and sorrow of that exile, but he could not. It was his lot to remain behind in a city that held high festival because the usurper was in power. But he would not join in the revelry of guilty Jerusalem; he held himself in strict separation from it all, and mourned for the absent king. He "neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace" (ver. 24).

Do we realize, O Christians! that the true King is rejected by this world, and that the Devil is the god and prince of it? This the Scriptures teach most plainly, and since this is true, must not our life be one of separation from it? If we are rightly devoted to the person of Christ, we shall feel that this is so, and there will be a great moral gulf between us and the world.

"Its grand fête days
And fashions and ways
Are all but perishing things."

But not only because of this, but because it is a world under the guidance of the arch-enemy of Christ, for its god

and prince is the Devil (see John 12. 31; 16. 11; 2 Cor. 4. 4.). We must, in consequence, go through it as Christian and Faithful went through Vanity Fair in John Bunyan's book, and hold ourselves in separation from it as Mephibosheth held himself in separation from the ways of Jerusalem. You may be sure that we shall not be miserable if we do so, for we have the Holy Ghost dwelling within, and He can lead our thoughts to where Christ is enthroned in highest glory, with the result that we shall rejoice in the Lord always, and again rejoice.

It is interesting to read what Mephibosheth said to David on the monarch's return to his throne. He did not claim any place for himself; instead, he tells the king that all his father's house "were dead men" before him; and a dead man has no place or standing whatever, he has no claims; and this, so it seems to me, is what this son of Jonathan meant. But if he could claim no place in the king's palace because of what he was, yet he could cast himself upon David's good favour, as he did when he said: "My lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes."

He could also boast in David's grace to him, for he says, though having no claim upon David's goodness: "yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table."

Here he struck the right note, and if we tune our boasting to the same key we shall do well. We had no claim upon the grace of God, for we were dead in trespasses and sins—all dead men before Him; but He has saved us, and set us among those that eat at His table, and we owe it all to Christ, our Lord and Saviour; we cannot boast in ourselves, but we may glory in the grace of God. "Him that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Moreover, Mephibosheth declined to put in a claim for any possession in the land, for when the question arose as to Ziba his servant sharing the land that formerly belonged to him, he

said, "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house."

It was as though he said: "I want nothing for myself: the king has come into his own, he has got his rights, and in this is my joy full." If our thoughts towards the Lord are of this sort, then are they pleasing to God; it was thus that John the Baptist thought towards Him when he said: "This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30).

We are looking for the time when He shall come into His rights, when the long years of His rejection shall cease; when, in the very land where He was crucified He shall be exalted; and when every knee shall bow before Him. It shall be true then, as we sing sometimes—

"The floods have lifted up their voice :
The King hath come to His own—His own!
The little hills and vales rejoice,
His right it is to take the crown.
Now Zion's hill, with glory crowned,
Uplifts her head with joy once more,
And Zion's King, once scorned, disowned,
Extends His rule from shore to shore.
Sing for the land her Lord regains !
Sing for the Son of David reigns !
And living streams o'erflow her plains
Thus shall it be when the King comes !"

Glorious and happy day will this be for all those who love Him.

But how stand we in this matter? Let us put the treatment that David received from these three men together and test ourselves as to our attitude to the Lord Himself.

SAUL—Saul everything, David nothing.

JONATHAN—David first, Jonathan second.

MEPHIBOSHETH—David everything Mephibosheth nothing.

In one of these classes we stand. Lord—

"Take Thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee ;
Thy willing servants, let us wear
The seal of love for ever there."

John in Patmos.—No. 1.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

SUFFERING and service are indissoluble; witness and martyr are interchangeable terms. Joseph with his feet laid in fetters, Jeremiah in a loathsome dungeon, Daniel cast into the den of lions, proclaim how these Old Testament worthies reaped bonds and imprisonment as the result of their faithful testimony. The New Testament carries on the same story: imperial Rome slew James the brother of John with the sword; crucified Peter; beheaded Paul. All these suffered for the testimony of Jesus; they sealed their witness with their blood; whilst a vast army were tested and tried, mocked and scourged, imprisoned and sawn asunder, wandered homeless and houseless, destitute and afflicted, in desert lands or on mountain tops, finding a precarious shelter in dens and caves. All their tribulation was the result of their faithful personal testimony or their association with God's witnesses (Heb. 10. 33, 34).

The disciple "whom Jesus loved" was no exception to this; he, like Paul, was in the school of sorrow, suffering for the sake of that Master upon whose bosom he had leaned, whose footsteps he had followed to the Holy Mount and Gethsemane's Garden.

Domitian—who then wielded the sceptre of the Cæsars—had banished John from all he held dear on earth; he had no longer the joy of speaking face to face with those "babes, young men, and fathers" whom he called his "friends," with whom his affections were bound up, among whom he had laboured long and faithfully.

Picture this beloved servant of Christ, banished as a criminal to a dreary isle in the Ægean Sea, about sixteen miles in circumference, with a jagged, rock-bound coast, and an interior dreary beyond description; its desolation relieved only by a solitary palm, a few cypresses, and, here and there, an

olive tree. But the love of Christ lifted him outside his surroundings; made him more than a conqueror; enabled him to forget distress, persecution, peril and sword. Like another servant of Christ who, with lacerated back and stock-bound feet, sang praises in a Philippian jail, John, in his ocean-girt and storm-swept prison, raised his song of triumph, and, like him also looked beyond the Emperor by whose decree he was exiled, and regarded himself as the "prisoner of the Lord;" he was there for the "testimony of Jesus and the Word of God."

He accepted all from God's hand—that God who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him—Domitian being merely the instrument to fulfil His purpose; for to His servant in his exile the Lord communicated this matchless unfolding of the future. He shows him the "world kingdom" of Christ, and the holy and heavenly city descend from heaven; but John's part was to wait in "patience" for that kingdom, as it is ours also; so he links up with himself the whole circle of suffering saints. He writes as a fellow-servant, a bondman in tribulation; owning every other saint who is passing through trial for Christ's sake, and patiently waiting, amidst sorrows and difficulties, for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, as his brother and companion.

Christians are not viewed in the Revelation as children of God, or as members of the body of Christ, but as bond-slaves, left to serve in a heartless, Christ-rejecting world, called to endure affliction, suffer persecution, pass through tribulation.

Tribulation is the rough road to the kingdom; weariness and suffering, in some form or other, are the portion of God's people. It is one of the promises "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16. 33). The word signifies to

press like grapes in a vat, and to thresh like a flail, but thereby the good wine flows, and the chaff is separated from the wheat. Thus does the love of God turn the hatred of the world against us to our good. We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom.

John gives us the key which turns a night of weeping to a morning of joy ; the lever to lift our souls outside our circumstances ; the note which raises the dirge into an anthem, the dead march to a doxology. He recalls "Jesus Christ" the "faithful witness ;" he dwells upon His unswerving pathway of perfect obedience, holy dependence, and unflinching testimony ; the perfect Servant, who both knew, and delighted to do, the will of Him that sent Him.

Good were it for our souls if we dwelt more fully, meditated more profoundly, traced more minutely, the pathway of Jesus, who began His testimony with being thrust out of Nazareth, and ended it with a good confession before Pontius Pilate, His entire course being marked by faithful witness to the truth (John 18. 37).

John then contemplates that same Jesus in resurrection, the mighty Victor over death and the grave, the "first-begotten of the dead," the One who ranks pre-eminent over all others. He stands before his gaze as the risen One ; proof that Satan is vanquished, death annulled, God glorified. On the cross He overcame the combined forces of evil ; grappled with the great problems of time and eternity, heaven and hell ; solved the question how mercy and truth can meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other ; showing how light and love can walk together in holy, happy concord.

He then dwells upon Jesus, the Christ, the faithful Witness, beheld as the First-begotten of the dead. He is not now asserting His rights, nor grasping that sceptre, under whose iron rule every subject power will be

subjugated ; but His rights and title to autocratic rule is settled, all power in heaven and on earth is already conferred upon Him. It is the seer's happy task to behold in vision the way and manner in which those rights will be vindicated, and the world kingdoms become those of our Lord and of His Christ. Imperial and universal power shall be His alone, and the pomp and pride of vain man who refuses submission to the "One and only Potentate," shall be crushed and for ever shattered.

What a Master ! Faithful amidst unfaithfulness, victorious in the hour of weakness, exalted to the pinnacle of power ! But what would all this have been to John, or to us, if he and we could not burst forth in an exultant song and celebrate His personal love to us ? "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1. 5, R.V.). This is the keynote to the doxology that follows. We have a deep interest, of an intensely personal character, in all this. The King has brought us into His banqueting-house. His banner over us is love. It is not only that He did love us, but He does love us, with a changeless and unsearchable love that is past telling or knowing. That love has been proved in a way that relieves our consciences and unburdens our hearts. The chain of our sins is snapped, we are "loosed" from them "by His blood." Once bond-slaves of sin and Satan, we are now relieved of our fetters, we are free to serve our Saviour who redeemed us at such a cost ; drawn by the cords of love, we become the willing servants of that adorable Master who has delivered us. It is our privilege to serve Him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, in the happy consciousness that we are objects of a love that passeth knowledge—a love that has linked us up with Himself as a King-Priest, and "made us a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father." "To Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever !"

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 5.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Church as a responsible Witness for Christ.

Chapter 4.

IF we are to be intelligent in the mind of God concerning the subject of the Lord's second coming, it is of importance that we should know something not only of the church in its heavenly character and privileges as the body and spouse of Christ, but also in its character as the responsible witness for Christ during the time of His rejection from the earth. If we do not apprehend the different ways in which the church is viewed in the various epistles addressed by those used by the Spirit of God to unfold His mind to His people, we shall find ourselves in great confusion through mixing up things which differ. We require to be able to rightly divide the word of truth, especially in days like the present when the confusion of tongues has reached to an extent hitherto unprecedented, and to which even Babel itself is no parallel.

In the previous chapter we have been occupied with the church as the body and the wife of the heavenly Adam; and though it is not necessary to know the truth of the church in this way to be assured of the *fact* of the rapture, and that that rapture must also be secret from the world—for the letter of Scripture makes that plain enough, as I think I have clearly pointed out—the knowledge of it is necessary in order to see that it is not in any way dependent for entrance into its heavenly position upon the appearing of Christ, for that position it has already. I speak of His *appearing* as His appearing to the *world*, when every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and when all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. But this has no reference to things in the *heavens*, where the church has her place in Him.

I may be met here with the statement, that then will be the dispensation of the fullness of times, and that then all things in heaven and earth will be gathered under His headship; and that, therefore, the appearing has as much to do with heaven as earth. But this would be a mistake, because in this place (Eph.

1. 10) to which reference is made, there is no mention of the appearing at all, though I do not doubt that that dispensation will be introduced by the appearing. Still the appearing is not the subject there. Nor is it the subject in John 14., where He says He will come and receive His disciples to Himself; for there He does not say He will be seen by anyone. His appearing has always reference to His assumption of His rights to the judgment of the world, and to the deliverance of His afflicted people, but not to their removal from this scene. It is the wicked who will be removed in that day, while His people, who have been up to that moment enduring persecution at the hands of the men of this world, will experience deliverance at His hand, and will inherit the kingdom, and eternal life upon earth. "One shall be taken, and the other left" (Matthew 24. refers to this: one taken in judgment, the other left for blessing upon the earth). To be removed from the earth in that day is to be removed in judgment; and this cannot be the portion of the church, for which He gave Himself. His appearing is His open manifestation to the world, when He shall be seen by every eye, and when He shall take to Himself His great power and shall reign; when He will ask, and He shall get the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

But for His church, which seeks for nothing on the earth, and whose ultimate blessedness does not depend upon His judgment of the world, nor upon the destruction of enemies, nor upon the establishment of His throne on the hill of Zion, nor, indeed, upon the effect of His appearing, one way or another, His manifestation can bring no deliverance. And whether it be but ten minutes or ten years before His appearing, her expectation is to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with Him.

But I come to speak of the church as a responsible witness for Christ upon

earth, during the time in which He is gathering out of the world those who are to compose His mystical body. This is the house of God; a "habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22). The body is never called the *body of God*, nor is the house ever spoken of as the *house of Christ*. It is the body of Christ, and the house of God. The Spirit dwells in each of the members of the body, uniting all together and to their living Head in heaven; but in the house, God dwells by His Spirit, as one might dwell in the house he has built for a habitation, or as God dwelt in the temple of old.

The house is not a new idea; a house existed in the past dispensation. The instant God has a redeemed people with Himself in the wilderness, He says to Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 24. 8). And in the land they had the temple. But such a thing as the body was never heard of until the present dispensation. Paul speaks of it as having been "kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest" (Rom. 16. 25); and, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;" and "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3.). It was the great secret of the Creator, and made known to none in the past dispensations, while the probation of man was running its course. It was hid in *God*; not in the Old Testament, not in the dark sayings of the prophets, not in symbolic language, not in the whole creation, not in any revelation made to man was there the slightest hint of it.

But there was the *house of God* in the past dispensation, for God dwelt among His redeemed people. And He has a dwelling-place to-day, in which He dwells, and where He is known according to the revelation made of Himself in Christ. It is called in 1 Timothy 3. 15, "the pillar and ground of the truth." It is that which maintains the truth in this world, and it is that upon which the truth is inscribed. The truth is to be set forth in the lives of those who compose the house.

It is also the sphere, the only sphere,

in which the blessings of Christianity are. They are not to be found to-day in Judaism, nor anywhere else than in the sphere which professes the name of Christ. It is in Christ that all the promises of God have their "yea and amen." Whatever promises God had made in the past, up till Christ came they were only promises; there was no realization of them by anyone. But now we have them deposited in Christ, in Him is the *Amen*; they are established there. But the testimony to this is "*amened*" by the believer; that is to say, he adds his "amen" to the testimony of God concerning His Son, and possesses the promises to the glory of God (2 Cor. 1. 19, 20). The promises, then, are in Christ, but the house of God is the sphere in which these promises are possessed. They are not *obtained* in the house, but in Christ; and it is to Christ the gospel directs the sinner; but when Christ is submitted to, the one who submits to Him is introduced into the profession of Christ upon earth by means of water baptism, and there, where God dwells by His Spirit, the blessings of Christianity are ministered to Him, and in that healthful atmosphere he is nourished by the good Word of God, and grows in the divine nature. Of course, in this I am speaking of what the house of God should be rather than that which it has become.

To this sphere of profession responsibility is attached, and account is taken of it by the Lord as to the way in which it represents Him *down here*, upon earth, during His absence. Therefore, we have the statement made very early in its history, that "the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4. 17). When God begins to judge He will begin at the circle nearest to Himself, for He is no respecter of persons. As it was in the days of Ezekiel, when they had defiled the house of Jehovah with their idolatries, and when the city of Jerusalem was to be smitten, those who were charged with the execution of the judgment of the Lord were told to begin at His sanctuary (Ezek. 9. 6); so when God begins to execute judgment upon the world He will begin at His own house. Then it will be without its august Tenant, for the true church, the body of Christ, will have been removed from this world, and

the Spirit with it; the false will have been spued out of the mouth of Christ (Rev. 3. 16), and its apostasy and acceptance of the Antichrist will be the consummation of its wickedness. Then the long-merited judgment will fall upon it mercilessly.

That there is this sphere of profession is a manifest fact, and that as originally set up by God it was composed of real believers Scripture leaves us without any doubt on our minds (Acts 2. 41, 42); but gradually the enemy found his way within its precincts, its builders did not always build with good material (1 Cor. 3. 11-17), evil men crept in (Jude 4.), grievous wolves made their appearance, and among those set in authority perverse men arose speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them (Acts 20. 30). We have its history forecast by the Spirit of God in Revelations 2. 3, from the moment in which it could be said to be "*fallen*" until it is utterly rejected by Christ as nauseous to Him. Its apostasy is foretold, and its doom in Babylon is vividly brought before us in Revelations 18. As the temple built by Solomon, in which God took up His abode, became in the hands of men corrupted, abandoned by Him, and finally destroyed, so in the hands of men has the house in the present dispensation been corrupted, will be suddenly left desolate of His presence, and will fall under His judgment in its apostate state.

Now, to the church as God's witness upon the earth the rapture has no application; nor can the rapture have any application to anything, or to anyone, viewed in responsibility. The appearing alone has to do with such. Hence, whether it be the house, the servant in it, or in any other department of service, it is always the appearing that is kept in view. The rapture is not connected with the thought of responsibility. Were it so, it seems to me, some would have to be left behind at His coming again; for as to people's practical ways, not so many are in a fit state to meet Him. To the angel of the church of Sardis He threatens to come as a thief—the way in which He comes to the world. And why? Just because "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3. 1). That which represented the church in the stage described

by Sardis was without divine life. Therefore, such must be treated as the world. But in Thyatira the *overcomer* gets the *Morning Star*, glory with Christ, before the moment of His appearing. And as to Philadelphia, they are kept out of the hour of trial that is to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell on the earth; they are with Christ before the day of trial comes.

Timothy is viewed by Paul as in the house of God, and the first Epistle is to give him to understand the conduct befitting such a holy place, and he is told to keep the commandment "without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6. 14). Now, does anyone imagine that Paul expected Timothy to be here until the appearing of Jesus Christ? I am sure no one will think he did. But the *servant* will be here, and the servant to whom the Lord has given a charge during His absence. The servants to whom the talents were given are the same that the Lord deals with at His return; also the servant to whom a charge is given in His household, who is found doing, or not doing, his Lord's will in the day when He takes up the kingdom. The angel in Revelations 22. 9 is John's fellow-servant.

The blessed Lord when leaving this world called His servants, and gave them their work to do; and all along the line He has His servants at His work—professedly at least—and He will find them when He returns; and so, whether Christian, Gentile, or Jew, whoever they may be, must do that which has been given them to do, in view of His appearing. But the church, as the body of Christ, He did not leave here when He went away, nor had it any actual existence until the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, nor will He find it here at His appearing. As the body it is not set here in responsibility, though when we know the truth of this we have a responsibility with relation to it.

But someone will say: This seems a little confusing. No doubt to some minds it may. Peter speaks of some things in the writings of Paul, which are hard to be understood (2 Peter 3. 16); but do not blame the Scriptures, but rather our own dullness of understanding. But why should it appear confusing?

Is there not such a place upon earth as that in which the Spirit dwells? Is the house of God not amenable to His judgment? Will it not apostatize from the faith? Surely the Scriptures are clear enough on these questions. But will any true Christian apostatize? Surely not. Then there is a sphere of privilege upon earth, in which there are many who are not true believers. Since the church was set up there have been many apostates, but "the apostasy" is that of the whole profession, and, therefore, before that can come to pass true believers must be gone from earth. Will this lifeless thing not be found here up to the hour of the appearing of the Lord? It will, indeed. What part could it have then in the rapture? None at all. The only thing to speak of to it is that which concerns the appearing. And it is just of this that Scripture does speak.

Again, may I not ask: Had He no servants to whom to give commandments before He left this world? He surely had. Were they of the body of Christ *at the time He gave them these commandments*? Some say they were, but I prefer to believe Paul, who says they were not. And has He not had servants all the time of His absence? And shall they not be here at His return? And shall not His instructions be useful for His servants in all times? Most certainly they will, even though some of them may have found, and may again find, themselves in circumstances in which neither the reader nor the writer shall ever be found. But it has been asked: Of what use would instructions be to men who will not believe in the One who gave them? This we will reserve to another part of our subject.

"Religion and The Crisis."

(A. J. POLLOCK).

THIS is the title of a new book by the well-known journalist and author, Mr. Harold Begbie.

Recent books of his, such as "Broken Earthenware" and "The Light of India" have had an enormous circulation, and will do much to give his latest book a wide circle of sympathetic and impressionable readers.

In reading "Broken Earthenware" one is struck by the phenomenon of an author describing spiritual experiences in others to which he is apparently a stranger himself; though his attitude towards the change of life induced by conversion is deeply sympathetic, and the language in which he describes it is vivid and picturesque and glowing in the extreme.

In the end Mr. Begbie interests us more deeply in the psychology of his own case than in the cases of those he describes, the *effect* of whose conversion he admires with such sympathy, whilst apparently remaining in complete ignorance of the *cause*.

"The Light of India"—a later book—we perused in the hope that it might

disclose some progress in Mr. Begbie's soul history. It seemed impossible for him to be alongside of such earnest, converted men as Commissioner Tucker, and not be affected. In India he was brought face to face with what is described in 1 Corinthians 10. as "the table of demons," and was powerfully affected by observing with deep and painful interest the working of demoniacal possession, and in that way "tasted . . . the powers of the world to come" in witnessing the triumphs of Christianity in such cases. But the perusal of the book, whilst it raised hopes, alas! failed to satisfy them.

In "Religion and the Crisis" Mr. Begbie no longer describes the work of others, but is giving out his own view of religion, and the way the present crisis should be met.

Jude was anxious to write to the believers on the glorious theme of "the common salvation," but found it needful to exhort them to "earnestly contend for the faith." And the need has not, alas! decreased since those primitive days.

The writer believes he, too, may be doing a humble service in pointing out that "Religion and the Crisis" is a book that can only help on the crisis feared by the author. Indeed, the very means whereby he would avert it are the very means to ensure it.

Mr. Begbie says :

"Life's at a crisis. Not only in England but all over the world there is a feeling of some dread and awful thing approaching, some huge and catastrophic event, which will shake our human existence to its foundations, and leave everything altered, everything different. It may be a gigantic war, shifting the balance of power as we now know it; a revolution, shattering the immemorial institutions of civilisation; or a collapse of the spiritual instinct, plunging nations into animalism."

Here he indicates in masterly phrases what is likely to take place in the near future. His forecast of such happenings we believe to be a true one, and further, we believe that not merely one of these things that he fears, but all of them together, will fall in overwhelming terror upon a disobedient world. But he has apparently no idea of the true cause of or the evil forces that lie behind these coming events, nor how they will be precipitated. We learn both from the Scriptures; as to the latter, the Lord Jesus will first rapture His church to glory, then will follow the uprising of Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the son of perdition, and all that that ominous event will mean. "The collapse of the spiritual instinct will come about by the removal of the church from the world, to be followed by the great apostasy which will sweep all before it—"the strong delusion" will be believed on every hand (see 2 Thess. 2.). Then will fall the judgment of God.

It is startling to read the accurate prophesying of what is imminent, and to feel that the writer gleans his knowledge from politics rather than from revelation.

Gathering our knowledge from revelations, it is possible to foretell the crisis when the sky is blue. But not holding the key of the situation in the hand, Mr. Begbie must see clouds well defined and ready to burst, if the consequences of their bursting can be so accurately

described. Mr. Begbie is, indeed, looking at no summer sky.

Now let us look at his remedy. He says :

"I think it would make a difference if the Church preached earnestly and with one voice the Scriptural doctrine of conditional immortality. I think men would be struck by the naturalness of its teaching, then interested in the subject, and then finally anxious to make sure of their eternal felicity.

"Instead of 'Hell,' then, I hold that the Church should preach destruction according to the Scriptures. . . . In a word, the doctrine of eternal life is not merely indefensible; it has passed from the mind of humanity. It has ceased. . . . These two evils are the consequences of sin: first, isolation, then annihilation. Such is the clear and emphatic teaching of Christ."

Along with this denial of eternal punishment and the existence of hell is the usual denial of the fall in the Scriptural sense of the word; the confounding of immortality and eternal life, as if they were one and the same thing; the making of salvation a matter of human effort; the weakening and obscuring, if not the complete denial, of the atonement in its Scriptural meaning. For instance, Mr. Begbie gently scoffs at the presentation of the truth of the atonement in a letter, he quotes, written by the late Sir Arthur Blackwood.

But seeing Mr. Begbie quotes Scripture as authoritative, it will help the reader if we place short extracts of his beliefs, and scriptures bearing on the point, in parallel columns.

DENIAL OF THE SCRIPTURAL PRESENTATION OF THE FALL.

"I believe that the healthy child of healthy parents, living in circumstances which make it possible for humanity to love the world, and be satisfied with life, is by nature good."

"There is none that doeth good, not one" (Rom. 3. 12).

"Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51. 5).

"Every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6. 5).

* * * *

* * * *

“ God has ordained that man shall use his reason, and develop his understanding . . . by using the reason we become souls worthy of eternal life.”

“ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ” (1 Cor. 1. 21).

“ We preach Christ crucified . . . unto the Greek foolishness ” (ver. 23).

“ The carnal mind is enmity against God ” (Rom. 8. 7).

“ 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 foolishness of God is wiser than men.” How true it is that what commends itself to the natural man is not of God, but of Satan. Such an attempt to popularize the gospel will only popularize a movement with the gospel left out. It is in reality, in the hands of Satan, an insidious effort to strangle it.

THE CONFOUNDING OF IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE.

“ To those who have won immortality the King says: ‘ I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat,’ etc.

“ To those who have lost immortality, who have isolated themselves by lovelessness and egoism from the source of life, He says, ‘ I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat ’.”

“ These [same two classes described in the opposite column] shall go into everlasting destruction ; but the righteous into life eternal (Matt. 25. 46).

Our space forbids long and numerous quotations. But Mr. Begbie does not see that immortality is unending existence, and that eternal life is life lived for ever in the favour of God. Immortality is not conditional. Eternal life is conditional on believing in the Son of God.

God chose to confer upon man immortality ; that is, soul-existence for ever. “ God . . . breathed into his [man’s] nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul ” (Gen. 2. 7).

Scripture has in view man’s blessing. Judgment is God’s strange work. Blessing is essential ; judgment, incidental. God willingly and of His own accord sits on a throne of mercy. Man forces Him on to the judgment-seat. We are therefore prepared to find references in Scripture to immortality largely, if not altogether, connected with those who are blessed—“ children of the resurrection.”

But that does not weaken in the slightest that the wicked are immortal, i.e. they have an unending existence, as well as the just. Immortality has no converse. Eternal life has. Its converse to perish. But destruction is not annihilation. “ Destruction AND misery are in their ways ” (Rom. 3. 16) could not be rendered, “ annihilation and misery are in their ways.” You might have misery antecedent to annihilation—it would be impossible after. To experience misery along with destruction is to prove sentient existence capable of such experience, and therefore cannot mean annihilation. How careful is the wording of Scripture !

As to annihilation, a product of the conditional immortality theory, we learn from Revelation 19. 20 that two men—the beast (the head of the revived Roman Empire, and the false prophet (Antichrist)—are seen as “ cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone ; ” whilst in Revelation 20. 10, more than a thousand years later, the devil is “ cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet ARE.” Here are two men ALIVE in hell after a thousand years of torment, and no hint dropped as to any change in their circumstances. Thus is shown up at one breath the false doctrine of annihilationism, and the denial of the existence of hell.

SALVATION A MATTER OF HUMAN EFFORT.

“ Here was opportunity for Christ to preach a new doctrine. Here was

“ Without shedding of blood is no remission ” (Heb. 9. 22).

opportunity for a disquisition on sacrificial religion, on vicarious atonement, on justification by faith, on baptism, on the displeasing and sinful doctrine of good works done without faith. But Christ said to His questioner, 'Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.' "

* * * *

"The whole teaching of Christ from first to last is a teaching of action, a teaching of service, a teaching of 'This do, and thou shalt live.' "

Mr. Begbie stops at, "*This do, and thou shalt live,*" and does not even allude to the wonderful teaching contained in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Surely his own case and that of every other sinner is illustrated by the man fallen among thieves, whilst the Saviour is presented as at hand to meet his sad and evil case under the figure of the Samaritan succourer. Now obviously the main point of Luke 10. is the presentation of grace in the Good Samaritan! How blind is the natural man, who fails to see its true meaning, and whose carnal mind would spurn grace and place in its stead effort that must fail and doom him to eternal despair!

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL DENIED.

"I believe that any wild and unreasoning attempt to revive the mediæval idea of hell is doomed to failure."

* * * *

"The uttermost limits of isolation from God are destruction and death."

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2. 8, 9).

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4. 5).

"In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16. 23).

Mr. Begbie winds up one statement in his book by saying: "Such is the clear and emphatic teaching of Christ." Will he bow to the equally clear and emphatic teaching as to the existence and torments of hell falling from the same lips?

Moreover, all Scripture is equally inspired and of equal authority. The difference between the words of Christ Himself and the inspired writings of Paul, Peter, John, etc. is the difference between a man's words and his writings—a difference in form, not in essence, authority and value. For Paul, Peter and John were but the inspired pens by whom God wrote down His words. If Mr. Begbie will bow to the Scriptures, they will revolutionize his ideas completely.

As it stands, "*Religion and the Crisis*" is a book that will only help on the present trend of things; an attempt to humanize the Bible by stripping it of all its spiritual force and meaning; an effort to popularize the gospel and to avoid the scandal of the cross by preaching *the Fatherhood of God*, which is Unitarianism, and *the brotherhood of man*, which is Socialism, as the panacea for all evils and the sure precursor of the millennium.

How utterly mistaken such ideas must be has been already proved by the first fruits of the harvest already gathered. The world is getting worse. Men's hearts are failing them for very fear. They are husbanding their breath for the last plunge. The crisis is upon us—immense, portentous, gloomy, awful, beyond description.

The very title of the book, "*Religion and the Crisis,*" proves our statement.

The remedy in this crisis is not—

"RELIGION," but
CHRIST.

OUR HOPE LIES IN HIM NOT IN THE DEMOCRACY.

Salvation in every sense is found alone in Christ Jesus (Acts 4. 12).

"Danger of hell-fire" (Matt. 5. 22).

"Cast into hell" (ver. 29).

"Having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9. 43).

"Thrust down to hell" (Luke 10. 15).

"Power to cast into hell" (Luke 12. 5).

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 16.

(H. J. VINE).

Section 2. Chapters 49. to 57.

THE second section of Isaiah (2) embraces chapters 49. to 57. These nine chapters form the central portion of the last division of the Book of Isaiah, and the central chapter of this section is the wonderful chapter 53., the chapter of the atoningsufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also the central chapter of Isaiah (2) as a whole; and the wide reaches of indescribable glories which result from those sufferings find their centre in the Servant of God who is spoken of there: "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (53. 10). It is said, "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin"; but also, "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." So high, indeed, that God has told us in the New Testament that not only the earthly glories, but also the heavenly, are to find their centre in Him; "to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in Him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance." None ever went so low as this suffering Servant of God, when He atoned for our sins; none can ever go so high; He is Head over all things.

The Wisdom of God.

The mere religionist looks for *a sign*, whilst the desire of the rationalist is for *wisdom*. The Sign which God gives is also His Wisdom. The Sign of Isaiah (1) is the Servant of Isaiah (2), and He is the wise Servant: "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently" (52. 13). Christ is God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1. 24); and to us also, who are in Christ Jesus, He "has been made wisdom from God." He is that hidden wisdom which God had predetermined for our glory; but the princes of this age crucified the Lord of glory; for they did not know Him; and they showed their own folly by killing Him. The secret depths which eye had not seen, connected with God's wisdom, are now revealed to us by His Spirit (Isa. 64. 4, and 1 Cor. 2. 10). "The Jews [*religionists*] require *a sign*, and the Greeks [*rationalists*] seek after *wisdom*. . . . But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1. 22, 24).

The suffering Servant in chapter 53., bearing sin and its punishment *from the hand of God*, subjects Himself in chapter 50. (before the seven trumpet-calls in the intervening verses) to shame and spitting *from man*; and there we learn that He who stooped so low to allow Himself to be thus treated was none less than the Creator, God Himself, in the presence of His own creatures! *What a sight! What a sign!*

In section (1), Christ is the personal Servant: Israel the national servant. In section (2) Christ is the Servant: instructed individuals become "servants." In section (3) the "servants" only are mentioned as such.

In section (1) Christ is seen as the *faithful* Servant; trustworthy and successful. In section (2) He is the *righteous* Servant; suffering and satisfied. In section (3) the *anointed* One; Preacher and Avenger.

The Prince: the true Vine: God's Son.

The Isles are first called upon to listen to the voice of God's Servant (49. 1). The peoples from afar are also told to hearken. These "peoples" are doubtless outside the ordered nations. But who are the "isles?" Surely not simply those confined in the Mediterranean Sea. Whoever they are, God favours them, and distinguishes them in a remarkable way. "Keep silence before Me, *O islands*; and let the peoples renew their strength; let them come near," He says to them in chapter 41. 1. Again, "*The isles* shall wait for His law" (42. 4). And again, "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein: *the isles* and the inhabitants thereof" (52. 10). "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in *the islands*" (ver. 12). When His greatness is described in such marvellous majesty in chapter 40., it is said, "Behold He taketh up *the isles* as an atom" (ver. 15.). But, as elsewhere, failure and sin against God invade their coasts, and we finally

read: "To the islands He will repay recompence, and they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun" (59. 18, 19). Here in our chapter (49. 1), the Servant of God, the true Israel—"Prince of God"—says to them; "Listen, O isles, unto Me!"

It is to Him, to this same Servant, God says in verse 3: "Thou art My Servant, *Israel*, in whom I will glorify Myself." This is the only place in our section where God's Servant is called "Israel." The name, as we know, means "*Prince of God*." To the believing heart Christ is easily seen in this verse; but the rationalistic critics would shut Him out (notwithstanding the verses before and after); they would make the Servant the nation of Israel here; and all through. If this be true, then it is the nation in verse 5 that restores Jacob, and in chapter 53. makes atonement. Such absurdities as these, destructive criticism perpetrates in the name of scholarship!

Israel, as we know, was brought up out of Egypt by the Lord, and planted as a *Vine* to bear fruit in service, for His glory. They failed in this respect as in others; but must God's purpose fail because of this? That could not be! The Son of God has come into Israel's place before God, and He said, "I AM THE TRUE VINE" (John 15. 1). God's purpose, therefore, is maintained and made effectual in the personal Israel, the personal *Vine*; and when the repentant remnant are brought to Him, they will become the fruitful nation *in Him*, for God's glory; even as He said to His disciples before Pentecost, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15. 4). He is the True Vine.

Another scripture confirms this way of explaining verse 3. In Hosea 11. 1, speaking of "*Israel*," He saith, "*I loved Him, and called My Son out of Egypt*." Again we are reminded that though national sonship is theirs—to them "pertaineth the adoption [sonship]" (Rom. 9. 4), according to God's purpose; yet, in responsibility, they failed utterly; and have become degraded instead of maintaining the dignity of God's national Son. Once more we ask: Must then God's purpose fail? Impossible! God's

beloved Son steps into Israel's place! And of him we read, "He took the young Child and His mother . . . into Egypt . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: *Out of Egypt have I called MY SON*" (Matt. 2. 14, 15).

Israel is the national vine and the national son, according to God's purpose; but only in Christ of the seed of Abraham, of the seed of David, raised from among the dead is this secured to them. HE IS THE TRUE VINE; HE IS GOD'S SON. It is the same with Israel as the national servant; in Christ alone is God's purpose in this regard sure for them also. HE IS THE PERSONAL ISRAEL, THE PRINCE OF GOD.

Jacob wrestled with the unnamed One, till daybreak in "Peniel" (before "the face of God"), and there secured this name "Israel" (a "Prince of God"), there in his wrestling. Weakened, yet he prevailed; and "the sun rose upon him, a prince of God." In Jacob's night of wrestling there was prefigured the nation's history. Sometimes Isaiah calls them Jacob; sometimes Israel. Like Jacob, they will come out of their long night of wrestling, and the sun will rise upon them. Their Messiah, Christ, will give them light. He will arise as the Sun of Righteousness, gladdening them with His healing and health-giving beams. It will be the dawning of the morning of world-wide blessing; but Israel (Jacob) will catch the shining rays from Him first, and reflect them over the earth; which shall then be filled with the knowledge and glory of God, as the waters cover the sea. Already the true believer is taken out of darkness and called into His marvellous light; and before the time of Jacob's trouble he will be caught up to meet the Lord; for he is not of the night, so he sings—

"The Sun which smiling lights us,
Is Jesus Christ alone;
And what to song incites us,
Is heaven on earth begun."

Having been caught up when Christ comes to the air *for him*, the believer will afterwards come *with Him*. Israel will then own Him. The One to whom they gave the cross of shame; they will, when repentant, welcome as their Messiah—the *True Prince of God; the True Vine; the well-beloved Son of God*.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels. (J. ALFRED TRENCH).

LUKE XIV.—XVI.

IN grace the Lord enters into the Pharisee's house, and makes manifest once more, in the healing of the man with the dropsy on the sabbath day, the contrast of the principles of grace with their legal selfishness. Nor was there anything in the rivalry of the guests for the chief places at the table to answer to Him who had come from the highest to take the lowest, any more than in the principle of worldly society that entertains those from whom the like may be expected. Love would think of the poor and needy, and the Lord brings in the light of another world upon the poor passing scene of this one; recompense would be found at the resurrection of the just. One of the guests seems to recognize that it must be in the kingdom of God that such principles obtain. But the parable of the great supper of grace brings out the result when God, as a present thing, spreads His table and sends out the testimony, "Come, for all things are ready." No one would accept the invitation of God: the very mercies ministered to man in his natural condition are used to shut out God, and if He would fill His house, it must be with the poor and afflicted of His people and, when yet there was room, by the mighty compulsion of His grace going out to the Gentile, while the bidden Jew was rejected. Outside great multitudes are attracted, but they must be tested by the character of the disciple's path in a world that had rejected his Lord. If all nature ranged itself in opposition it must be broken within its tenderest ties—yea, life itself be hated, to take up his cross and follow Christ. He would have the cost counted, the hostile forces properly estimated, that the path may be deliberately taken. Salt, the preserving principle of true testimony, lay in the holy energy of faith that counted all loss for Him, and would not be deterred by any opposition; without this, the mere profession was worthless, only fit to be cast out: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The contrast of chapter 15. will be felt by all. There is a reserve upon the

Lord in the Pharisee's house: He has gone through it and come out of it, and found nothing for His heart. In the company of tax-gatherers and sinners all reserve is thrown off; and the grace of God that, by its own working rather than by the formal revelation of dispensational change as in Matthew was bringing Judaism to an end, comes out in all its fullness, with what that grace would introduce, in souls brought to God as a present reality. The murmuring of religious leaders only served as the dark background to bring out the revelation in bold relief.

The parable is one ("He spake this parable unto them") as of the heart of God that finds its most blessed joy in receiving sinners to Himself. But the two first parts of it emphasize the seeking that there must be—that there may be—anyone to be received: the invitation of God by itself had proved (chap. 14.) of no avail. And we have the heart of Christ going out after the lost sheep, and the Holy Ghost (under the symbol of the woman), whose province it is to bring in the light that manifests the silverpiece amid the rubbish, diligently seeking till it is found, with all heaven a scene of joy over one sinner that repents. For there must be a moral work wrought in the one that is sought and found, now to find expression in the last part of the parable; where also we have the character of the Father's reception and provision of all that made the prodigal perfectly at home in His presence, amid the music and dancing of all hearts in fellowship with the Father's. "Let us eat and be merry" is a feast begun now that will never end, and reveals whose the joy is that gives the keynote of heaven's; the self-righteous Jew being outside it all.

In what follows in chapter 16. we have the light of this new world of grace and of God, that is opened to us in LUKE, cast upon possessions here, now that man's stewardship has been taken away. They are the Master's goods that lie over in his hands, and may be freely

dispensed instead of being hoarded here, in view of the everlasting habitations where the true riches are found, and will be the portion of those proved "faithful in that which is least." The choice lies between God and mammon, however covetous Pharisee may deride. It was not a question of the law and prophets since John's time, but of doing violence to every principle of the flesh, now that the kingdom of God was preached,

though no tittle of the law should fail however men might seek to reduce its claims. For the rich who received their portion in this life while the poor were despised the veil is lifted from the unseen to reveal the solemn issues, in a hades of torment for the one, and Abraham's bosom for the other. The unbelief that would not hear Moses and the prophets would not be persuaded though Christ rose from the dead.

ERRATA.—Page 149, 2nd col. line 13 from bottom, should be "that if peace;" also delete 2nd hyphen. Page 150, last line but one of *Studies*, insert "is" before *according*.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 6.

(C. E. H. WARREN)

Psalm XVI.—XVII.

PSALMS 16.—24. We come now to a cluster of nine Psalms of the deepest interest, Christ personally being more the subject than in any other series of the whole collection. They naturally fall into three divisions, each division containing three. The third of each triplet reaches a sort of climax of glory, the eighteenth unfolding the glory of Christ's kingdom; the twenty-first His personal glory as we know it in the heavens; the twenty-fourth His return into renewed association with His people, corresponding to what is foretold in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. In fact, the series tells out, in a way only found in the Psalms, the relations of Christ with His saints. As we read them with the added light of the New Testament revelation they are "for our instruction" indeed.

PSALM 16. Although this is the beginning of a new series, it affords a clear answer to the question in the preceding Psalm: "Who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" The answer is indicated at Jordan's bank in the Father's voice and the descent of the Holy Spirit. One, and only One is found to meet fully the requirements of divine holiness; this One the Psalm presents to us. The closing verses are quoted by Peter (Acts 2. 25-28) to show that David was speaking not of himself, but prophetically of the resurrection of Messiah. The divine life, seen in its perfection in Him, is the great subject of the

Psalm. It has been well said that "it touches on no circumstances, though it supposes them. It is divine life with God, and it knows and lives in the present consciousness of only Him. We find there must have been death, hades and the grave, but they are only mentioned as the occasion of the power and faithfulness of Jehovah." How this suits the Lord's own statement "as the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me" is plain, and should encourage us to seek by prayer and meditation a growing acquaintance with Him, that He may become truly food for our souls.

Without entering into much detail, it seems important to notice the first step in this pathway of life, and the only petition the Psalm contains: "Preserve Me, O God." This is not said when, having done everything to preserve ourselves, we come "to our wits' end" (Ps. 107. 27), and finally cry to Jehovah as our last resource; that was Adam; this is Jesus, and was characteristic of His whole life, in which no circumstance raised a careful thought. Rather He kept the Father's commandments and abode in His love. That home of His spirit He has by grace made ours. The next verse changes the title to "Jehovah"—the covenant God—who is taken as Lord or Master. Difficulty is often felt as to the application of the next sentence "my goodness not to Thee," but a consideration of "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" as set forth

in Philippians 2. seems to help in the understanding of it. The Son who, as in the Godhead, is absolute, or free from all limitations, is revealed in incarnation as taking a place in relation to God and living in a servant's form or status (it will be readily understood that this refers to the manner of living not to any outward appearance). The late Mr. Darby in his "Practical Reflections on the Psalms" has this sentence: "He had taken a PLACE, while never ceasing to be God, and of which Godhead alone could fulfil the conditions of, outside Godhead." It was this "taken a place" which the adversary in the first temptation sought to entice Him to leave. The answer comes short and clear: "*Man* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." So here in the maintenance of this place taken in reference to Jehovah, He says "My goodness not to Thee." [The translators of the R.V. seem to have missed the meaning.] This is the true emptying, or *kenosis*, of which such evil use has been made by theologians of various schools. The Psalm continues (the words "thou hast said" being understood) "to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, 'in them is all my delight.'" How the language of prophecy in the Psalms is illuminated by the history in the Gospels and the teaching of the Epistles, is thus plain, and surely the Spirit would lead us with "increasing fresh delight" to feed on Him who in grace associated Himself with the repentant remnant of His people who were confessing their sins under the stirring ministry of the Baptist.

The application of this to ourselves might well operate in two ways, to encourage us in confession and humiliation, for when this is genuine we shall have the Lord with us, and, secondly, to associate with those whom we may find in this exercise.

What follows shows us the true separation of the divine life and then its joys, for joy there always is when God is the undivided portion of the heart. The New Testament, which adds the revelation of the Father to what is found in the Psalm, shows how the joys of the Son were in the Father's love, and it becomes us to value the precious grace of Christ who did not leave this world without telling the Father, in the presence of the disciples, that He

desired to bequeath to them the joy He had Himself known with Him (John 17. 1-13). The close of the Psalm is, as we have seen, strictly prophetic of Christ and shows us His pathway passing through death and the grave, Himself untouched by corruption, to Jehovah's presence, where is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. It is this joy which is referred to in Hebrews 12. 2, where a similar connection with the pathway of faith is stated.

PSALM 17. This is not so strictly prophetic of Christ personally as the preceding Psalm; yet, if we may so speak, the music is written in such a key that only one man can take the notes (see ver. 3). It is the Spirit of Christ who speaks in David but of One far different to the Hebrew King. When he speaks of himself he has to say "enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143. 2). In this Psalm, on the contrary, the keenest scrutiny is welcomed. The profit to us of this high standard is found in the joy we have in the contemplation of what is perfect; this, when grace is really known, works in us a true correspondence to that which we delight in. Otherwise we are discouraged at the discrepancy found in ourselves and power is lacking to produce what we admire. The mention of another point may help in the understanding of what is before us: that the truth is expressed in terms suited to the time when God will take up the Jew again and make His ways with that nation the lesson book of the nations (Ps. 67. 1, 2). Analogous circumstances existed when the Prophet wrote, when Messiah was present on earth, and will happen again when the godly in Israel will suffer in that time of tribulation of which the Lord said: "such has not been from the beginning of the world, nor ever will be." What a sight for heaven! A man girt with truth (4) and armed with righteousness (3) holding up the shield of faith and standing unmoved against the attacks of the great adversary, and this power for conflict is combined with entire dependence on Jehovah, who is appealed to in verse 1. The consciousness of being specially cared for, we should say loved, is another accompaniment of a state formed by the Spirit of God "keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of

Thy wings." As to the enemies who threaten the righteous, they are left for God to deal with, and while deliverance is sought no prayer for vengeance is expressed. Faith regards the wicked as the sword,* or hand of Jehovah, unable to do anything to frustrate the fulfilment of His purpose (vers. 13, 14). If we compare the three Psalms before us we find three different features in the hope of the believer. Psalm 16. 11 speaks of being with Him. Psalm 17. 11 teaches us to hope for likeness to Him.

PSALM 18 adds the glorious prospect of sharing the inheritance with Him. Psalm 18. has been divided into fifteen sections with three verses in each, as far as verse 45. The last five verses are the praise of David to the God who had done so much for him. The second triplet (vers. 4-6), is descriptive of the death and resurrection which Messiah passed through, and this becomes the pattern of God's way with His saints in all ages (see 2 Cor. 1. and 4.). There is little finer in the Psalms than this description

* The insertion of the preposition "by" before "sword" and "hand" in the revised version seems to lack any justification.

of the way in which God answers the one who cries to Him, while under the oppression of death and Sheol, by the exercise of a power so supreme and invincible that heaven and earth are set in motion to effect his deliverance. Reference is made to the incidents at the passage of the Red Sea in illustration of such actings, and faith constantly reverts to that time for assurance of God's present grace and power (Ps. 77. 11; 78., etc.). But along with this mighty energy put forth for them there is a work carried on in them, so that, to use the language of Hebrews 12., the believer becomes so truly a partaker of God's holiness, that not only is He for him in grace, but even governmental righteousness demands his blessing (verse 21, etc.). In verses 32, 33, the King is fitted for His position, and in what follows He is viewed in the exercise of victorious power which no foe can resist. In verse 43 it is evident three classes of subject people are referred to, the first being the Jew (see 2 Sam. 22. 44). But it is from "among the heathen" that praise rises to Jehovah (ver. 49) (cf. Col. 1. 27). Blessed witness of the triumph of grace.

Answers to Correspondents.

Saul's History Omitted from the Chronicles.

DARLINGTON.—The Books of Samuel and the Kings give the history of Israel's ways and God's longsuffering with them in all their wilfulness. Chronicles, covering the same period, gives the history of the fulfilment of God's gracious purposes towards Israel as far as those purposes could then be fulfilled, and more particularly in connection with the house of David. Saul's history formed no part of God's purposes for Israel, though He allowed them to make him king that they might learn in their own experience that His thoughts for them were better than their own.

The history of Saul, therefore, has no place in the Chronicles, it was only necessary there to give the downfall of the king of the people's choice that room might be made for the man after God's own heart.

But in this we have a foreshadowing of events still to come, when David's Lord and Son shall come to His throne and overthrow every hostile power; when

He shall honour and reward those who have been faithful to Him during the time of His rejection and establish the house of God and worship to Him in Zion (see Solomon's reign). And in this coming glorious Kingdom there shall be no failure. Thank God!

David: was he the eighth son of Jesse?

INQUIRER.—1 Samuel 16. 10, 11 states that David was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, while 1 Chronicles 2. 13-15 speaks of him as the seventh. How can these two passages be reconciled? We give the following quotation from "The Christian Armoury": "Manasseh Ben Israel declares, it may be that although Jesse had eight sons in 1 Samuel 16. . . . one died without having performed anything of note, or previous to David attaining royal dignity." This is probably the solution of the difficulty, though no doubt the numbers "eight" and "seven" each in its place is right and in keeping with the way David is present in each Book; but into this space will not permit us to enter.

Hallelujah.

(JAMES BOVD).

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Rev. 1. 5, 6.

HARK to the song from courts celestial ringing!
 Voices seraphic songs immortal raise!
 Come, let us blend our sonance with their singing!
 Let our enraptured souls dissolve in praise!
 Let us draw near! O let us kneel before Him!
 Pour out our hearts in everlasting song!
 O let us worship Him! Let us adore Him!
 Him let us crown amid the heavenly throng!

Glory and might and majesty and splendour
 Be to the Lamb, who hath redemption won!
 Lift up the voice! O let us gladly render,
 As to the Father, honour to the Son!

Hark, as the hierarchs attribute glory,
 Glory to Him who bore the cross and shame!
 Far thro' the universe His wondrous story
 Voices innumerable glad proclaim.

Worship eternal out of fountains o'erflowing
 Falls on the ear like ocean's mighty sound;
 Faces with happiness immortal glowing
 Speak of a blessedness that knows no bound.

O He is worthy of our veneration!
 O let the Blessor of our souls be blest!
 O let us bring to Him a great oblation!
 O let us offer to the Lord our best!

Into the presence of the King eternal
 Full of thanksgiving let us gladly come!
 Shall they extol Him in the heights supernal,
 And shall His ransomed on the earth be dumb?

Till we the courts of the Redeemer enter,
 How shall we curb the passion of our praise?
 O let us crowd around the sacred Centre!
 O let us revel in those holy lays!

Pass thro' the veil, for He would have us near Him!
 Come, let us bring our sacrifices sweet!
 O let us tell Him how our souls revere Him!
 O let us haste that we may kiss His feet!
 Let us draw near! O let us kneel before Him!
 Pour out our hearts in everlasting song!
 O let us worship Him! Let us adore Him!
 Him let us crown amid the heavenly throng!

(Tune 301, S.S. and S. Old.)

God's Present Ministry.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

IT seems to me that, in a gracious superiority to all the petty conflicts and jarring voices of the day, the Spirit of God continues to unfold the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ to the hearts of His blood-bought people everywhere. For this is ever His ministry. "He shall take of Mine" (said our Lord in John 16.), "and shall show it unto you." This ministry proceeds throughout the centuries, be they dark or bright; and, in thus bearing witness to our rejected Master, the Spirit of God works continuously. He will not be hindered by the power of sin or Satan. He is God. Now this is full of encouragement, and happy it is, in days admittedly dark and difficult, to trace His working, and to discover that the enemy is far from having things all his own way.

We are too prone, alas, to regard the triumph of evil and get under its power. This is depressing. It is not faith in God, but the result of looking at things seen and temporal with consequent feebleness.

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5.), and God would have us "regard the work of His hand," and in so doing be strengthened. Now there is no question in the minds of those who have taken the trouble to appraise events, that during late years there has been an unprecedented ministry of Christ, both as to the value of His death and resurrection, and also of His personal glories, whether as Son of God or Son of Man. He has been the theme and subject-matter, as never since apostolic times, of His more intelligent servants everywhere. Christ has been preached with a fullness unknown for long, and this, it is needless to say, is the direct and blessed work of the Spirit of God.

That He was loved and cherished and followed by many a faithful heart through ages dark and cruel we can easily trace. The page of history

sparkles with the devoted lives and martyr-deaths of hosts to whom Christ was more precious than all things here. Of these the world was not worthy. They paved the way amid the darkness of their surroundings for the light which shines on us to-day—a light so little appreciated!

The glorious Reformation (so called) was that work of God which drew universal attention to the work of Christ, and of our justification by faith thereby. This poured a perfect flood of light over the face of Christendom, and made the Word of God a new Book to countless numbers. It was the dawn of a holy liberty, and a death-blow to the corruptions of Rome. But what need to hold fast that which we have! What need to stand fast in that liberty and to hold to the Word of God! But then, is our liberty everything? Can we feed on our own personal emancipation alone? Does the knowledge of justification (however precious) suffice for the soul? Has God no further revelation?

He has! What is redemption without the Redeemer, or salvation without the Saviour? What is the servant without his Lord; or the church without its Head?

Nay, what is Christianity without that Christ who, on ascending to the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Ghost to baptize into one body all who believed the gospel, and to be the power of life and testimony in the saints till Christ shall take all hence to be for ever with Himself in the Father's House?

Absolutely nothing! As well have the solar system without the great and all-essential orb of day. This were impossible. "A pleasant thing it is to behold the sun," and a far greater pleasure it is for the saints of God to hear of the deep, boundless glories of His eternal Son!

I am bold to say that these glories

have been and are the specific testimony of the Spirit of God during the last and undoubtedly closing years of this dispensation. The best wine comes last although contained in the original "firkin." The Word of God has His Son for its highest theme.

Nor do I doubt that this ministry is having the present effect of reuniting at least the hearts of great numbers of saints who see in it something beyond traditions and mere ecclesiasticism, something that will eventually bind their hearts and minds and tongues together in common and eternal adoration in heaven.

Pity, a thousand times over, that such adoration should be broken up into fragments to-day by the unhappy "shibboleths" and warring factions into which the church is now divided!

But, thank God, to-day will quickly pass, and then and for ever one all-commanding Object will fill our gaze, and bring about that concentration on Himself, who is the One Shepherd of the one flock and the Head of the one body, which in our every heart we so ardently desire, and which, amid other things, He died to accomplish.

He "died for our sins" indeed, but, notice, He also "died to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad"; and the fulfilment of this is certain. That unity is bound to be brought about; only may each of us seek, in his prayers, and ways and associations, to give personal effect to it now.

How cheering, how stimulating the truth! This is, most assuredly, part—and a very great part—of the ministry of the Spirit of God to-day.

"Couple Heaven with it."

(A. J. POLLOCK).

ON a hot summer day an aged Christian laid his heavy burden on the top of a low stone wall by the wayside to rest awhile. A very costly, well-equipped carriage, drawn by two magnificent horses, passed by; its occupant, a well-fed, red-faced gentleman, with arms folded, lay back in luxurious ease.

A friend stepped up to the aged Christian and said: "You know that grand carriage and its occupant. He is an ungodly man, yet 'he is not plagued as other men;' while you, believing that all the silver and the gold belong to the Lord, trusting Him and serving Him, are toiling in your old age for a bare living. How can you reconcile this with the love and righteousness of God? What do you think of God?"

The old man looked at his questioner with amazement, and the fiery dart was quenched on the shield of faith. With the greatest earnestness he replied, "Are you trying me, sir? Are you trying me? *Couple heaven with it!* COUPLE HEAVEN WITH IT!"

What a splendid answer! Down here the Christian is often tried. Sorrow, pain, pressure, bereavement, difficulties in making ends meet, persecution, etc. etc., often are present in his path. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12. 6).

How comforting to "couple heaven" with these things! How immeasurably richer the old Christian was than the ungodly landowner rolling by in his luxurious carriage. The aged Christian had the true riches.

Scripture knowledge is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work.

Eternal Life and Eternal Relationship. (H. J. VINE).

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A MEETING FOR INTERCESSION.

IT is an inestimable privilege to be before God in the conscious enjoyment of eternal life, and of the eternal relationship connected with that life. No failure on the part of men need hinder those who belong to the Son of God from having the abiding blessedness of this. That this is so is evident from the fact that the Holy Spirit of God has disclosed these incorruptible blessings to us, that our "joy may be full," in John's writings (John 15. 11; 16. 24; 17. 13; 1 John 1. 4; 2 John 12), and these were given of God after ecclesiastical failure had come in.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood *has eternal life*;" and in resurrection He made known the new relationship into which such are introduced, when He said, "Go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to *My Father and your Father*, and to My God and your God" (John 20). To speak of this as exceedingly blessed, holy and divine, heavenly and eternal, is indeed true; but such expressions only partially indicate the infinite plenitude of this life, and the immeasurable richness of this relationship, established in the risen Son of God, and enjoyed in living energies which are not subject to death.

In worship or intercession the Spirit would enable us to be intelligently in the intimacy and joy of all this, which is the proper privilege of every one of us. We often take lower ground however, and step down from the honoured position in which grace has set us in Christ. This is to our own loss, and that of others also. How much more effectual our prayers would be, how much more elevating and edifying also, compared with the petitions usually presented, if we addressed our God and Father in the consciousness of the nearness into

which we are brought through redemption.

Truly edification is not the immediate purpose of public prayer; yet that is one of its most important effects (1 Cor. 14. 17). What could be more edifying than John 17.? The prayers of the New Testament, and of the Old likewise, would richly repay our careful consideration of them. To a wise man it would be a great privilege to hearken to one who stood in high favour and honour with a mighty monarch, presenting a petition to his majesty. To mark his becoming bearing; to heed his dignified address; to listen to his lofty argument and appeal, would be highly instructive. How much more so to follow one who intercedes with God in the consciousness of the nearness and favour of which we have spoken.

Generally speaking, Christendom has sunk to a very low level, and many sincere souls remain at a distance from God; and though it may be with reverent awe, yet they rarely rise above addressing Him as "ALMIGHTY." The true grace of God and acceptance in the Beloved are unknown to them. But, sad to say, many who do know these things allow coldness and distance upon their spirits. This keeps them from enjoying the holy intimacy which is their proper portion; and if prayer in nearness affects others, so also does prayer at a distance; so much so, that coldness and formality often settle upon a gathering until they become characteristic of it. This should not be; and it is not always the case, thank God!

Quite recently the writer was privileged to be at meetings for waiting upon God. Prayer flowed on for several days in sustained power, and mostly in the holy elevation of which we have spoken. Hour after hour passed, and

still those present waited upon God. The Holy Spirit maintained them before Him in grace and confidence, in divine energy and holy boldness, from morning till evening, often without a break to partake of a meal. To say that the souls of those present in this case were greatly helped and edified is unnecessary. But what shall the answer be? Supernatural power maintained them in their prayers; supernatural power will work out the answer—the surpassing greatness of the power that is towards us who believe, which has already raised Christ from among the dead.

Those who lead in public prayer should seek to do so in the right spirit, and with the loftiness of sentiment which is consistent with the favour in which we stand before our blessed God and Father. The relationship which is ours now will not be more ours when we are in heaven. But in saying this, it should be added, whatever the believer's experience is, high or low, he ought *always* to pray and not to faint.

All outside this life and relationship are in moral death. They are alienated from the life of God. It is said, "Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man and drunk His blood, ye have no life in yourselves" (John 6. 53, N.T.). Such are dead; they do not live in the life of Christ. But, thank God! those who appropriate His death have life. "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life eternal." The plenitude of that life, the richness of it, and the relationship connected therewith are theirs to enter upon. Oh, to know this better! All outside is in death, as we have said. Let it be called by the name of "Christian," "church," "religion," or anything else. The only way of life is through Christ's death. We see this made known in the Scriptures of Truth. God grant us to possess in power that which is made known. May the shepherd-teachers, given by the ascended Head of the assembly, have grace and power to lead the beloved

flock of God into the plenitude of this living pasture, where they may dwell in gladness of heart; where, beside flowing streams and in green pastures, protected by the Father and the Son, they may enjoy life abundantly.

His death has severed Him from this world. It is the way for His own into life, and into the intimacies of that life; as He said, "He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, *dwells in Me and I in him.*" His words are spirit and life. We must not think of these things materially. The flesh profiteth nothing. Through faith and by the Spirit they are made good to us.

The only begotten Son makes known the Father to us. He has declared Him. His name and His love are revealed to our rejoicing hearts. We are His children. It is the love of relationship. Not as in Romans 5. 8. There it is the love of GOD commended to us, in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Great rest and peace are ours when that is known. But the Son makes the FATHER and the Father's love known to us. We are in relationship in this way. Ecclesiasticism has not and cannot preserve from the world. It has itself sunk into it. The Father's name known to the heart is the great preservative (see John 17. 11-17). More than that, it produces true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and truth. His love fills their hearts to overflowing. It is the love that the Son Himself knows so well, as He said, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. RIGHTEOUS FATHER, the world has not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known to them Thy name, and will make it known; that THE LOVE WITH WHICH THOU HAST LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM AND I IN THEM." The Father's love in us! The Son in us! Both known to us now, in life and relationship. What will it be to dwell in THE HOME of that love and life and relationship for ever!

The Skipped Chapter.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

A COMPANY of Christians were assembled for their weekly Bible Reading. They had been studying that most instructive and important Epistle, Paul's first to the Corinthians. For several evenings they had considered chapter 12., and had conversed together on the subjects of the one Body and its members, the diverse operations of the Holy Spirit, and the various kinds of gifts.

The end of chapter 12. had now been reached, and on this particular evening they opened their Bibles expecting to hear something of the "more excellent way," which forms the subject of the following chapter. Imagine, then, their surprise when one who was prominent amongst them, having read chapter 13., observed: "This chapter seems to speak for itself. We need hardly spend an evening over it. Shall we not go on to chapter 14.?"

No one offering a counter-suggestion, chapter 14. was accordingly read, and the meeting proceeded to consider questions of speaking with "tongues," taking part in the assembly, the place of women in the church; these subjects having three or four of the weekly studies devoted to them.

And what of *the skipped chapter*? If it speaks for itself, is that a reason why

we should not speak together, and speak often, about it? Is there not something *awfully* significant in the fact that such a chapter can be tacitly passed over? Does it not suggest the possibility that some of us may be passing over the wholesome and searching teaching that it contains? That we are failing to mould our thoughts, our lives, our relations with one another, on the lines which it lays down?

Does any one say that we have grown too familiar with the words, and that they have therefore lost a measure of their power over our souls? Nay; we are not, we can never be, *too* familiar with these words of divine wisdom. If they do not exert their proper authority and influence over us, the reason must be sought elsewhere.

But sometimes the familiar thoughts clothe themselves with freshness and power when expressed in somewhat different terms. Hence the value of the various translations of the Scriptures into modern English. Several of these translations lie around me as I write, and I should like to share with the reader the pleasure of reading the first part of "the skipped chapter" in at least three of them. To facilitate comparison I place them in parallel columns, with their respective annotations.

*"New Translation" of
J. N. Darby.*

1. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2. And if I have prophecy, and know^h all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

*Weymouth's "New Testa-
ment in Modern Speech."*

1. If I can speak all the languages of men and of angels, but am destitute of Love, I have but become a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal.

2. If I possess the gift of prophecy and am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge, and have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but am destitute of Love, I am nothing.

*"Twentieth Century
New Testament."*

1. Though I speak in the 'tongues' of men, or even of angels, yet have not Love, I have become mere echoing brass or a clanging cymbal!

2. Even though I have the gift of preaching, and fathom all hidden truths, and all the depths of knowledge; even though I have such faith as might move mountains, yet have not Love, I am nothing!

3. And if I shall dole^l out all my goods in food, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned,^k but have not love, I profit nothing.

4. Love has long patience, is kind; love is not emulous [of others]; love is not insolent and rash,^l is not puffed up,

5 does not behave in an unseemly manner, does not seek what is its own, is not quickly provoked, does not impute evil,

6 does not rejoice at iniquity, but rejoices with the truth,

7. bears all things,^m believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8. Love never fails . . .

13. And now abide faith, hope, love; these three things; and the greater of these [is] love.

14. I. Follow after love . . .

3. And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of Love, it profits me nothing.

4. Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited.

5. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs.

6. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth.

7. She knows how to be silent; she is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.

8. Love never fails . . .

13. And so there remain Faith, Hope, Love—these three; and of these the greatest is Love.

14. I. Be eager in your pursuit of this Love . . .

3. Even though I dole out my substance to the poor, even though I sacrifice my body that I may boast, yet have not Love, it avails me nothing.

4. Love is long-suffering and kind; Love is never envious, never boastful, never conceited,

5. never behaves unbecomingly; Love is never self-seeking, never provoked, never reckons up her wrongs;

6. Love never rejoices at evil, but rejoices in the triumph of Truth;

7. Love bears with all things, ever trustful, ever hopeful, ever patient.

8. Love never fails . . .

13. Meanwhile Faith, Hope and Love endure—these three, but the greatest of these is Love.

14. I. Seek this Love earnestly . . .

h "know inwardly in my mind," "am acquainted with."

i Revised Text reads "if I dole."

k Some read "that I may boast,"

l Or "vain-glorious."

m Or "covers."

Ver. 3. *Distribute . . . give up:* The tense implies the doing of these things once for all. *To be burned:* Alternative reading: "that I may make a boast of it."

Ver. 4. *Love is not forward.* Alternative reading omits this third "Love."

No Annotations.

To these may be added, for those who wish to have the judgment of another ripe scholar as to the true force of the words employed, the following notes from Dr. Young's "Concise Comments."

Ver. 1. *lit.:* "the men . . . the angels . . . I have become . . . brass (or copper)."

Ver. 2. *lit.:* "see all the mysteries (or secrets), and all the knowledge, . . . all the faith so as to remove (or overthrow) mountains."

Ver. 3. *lit.:* "may make all my goods morsels . . . may give over my body that it may be burned."

Ver. 4. *lit.:* "the love . . . is not jealous; the love is not vaunting."

Ver. 5. *lit.:* "act unseemly; seeketh not her own things; is not soon sharpened; reckoneth not that which is bad."

Ver. 6. *lit.:* "leapeth not for joy over the unrighteousness; but leapeth with joy along with the truth."

Ver. 7. *lit.:* "covereth" (for "beareth").

Ver. 8. *lit.:* "the love at no time falleth off."

Having carefully gone over these eight verses, comparing the different renderings, and being struck, no doubt, by some of the vivid statements, let us briefly consider them.

I may be an accomplished linguist. By plodding toil I may have acquired the mastery of a dozen languages that I may use them for the preaching of the gospel. My tongue may possess angelic eloquence, so that men may call me, as they called Chrysostom, "the golden-

mouthed." But unless that love which is the very nature of God be the motive-spring of my actions, what am I? A mere noise—discordant, harsh, useless.

Gifted I may be beyond all my fellows. Deep may be my knowledge of the prophetic Word. I may be able to expound to wondering audiences the "mysteries" of Christianity. Moreover, my faith may enable me to achieve marvellous results. But with all this, if I am lacking in that which surpasses all—*love*—what am I? A cipher, a man that counts for nothing, a mere weed in God's garden.

My charity may be open-handed. I may send my goods to an auction sale and distribute the proceeds among the poor. So zealous for correct doctrine I may be, that I am prepared to let men tie me to the stake, kindle the faggots, and burn me to a cinder rather than deny it. What does all this avail me if it is not the outcome of a heart burning with *love*? Nothing!

How is this great, this essential, this divine quality to be recognized? Are there sure marks by which its presence or absence, in ourselves or in others, may be noted? There are. Love is never in a hurry to judge others; it is kind and forbearing. *Hatred* shows itself by vexation at the greater prosperity of others, by jealousy when they do better than ourselves. Not so with love. Love delights to keep in the background that others may be prominent, and is never found boasting in what *I* have done, *my* success, and what people say of *me*.

Evil may be discovered in others. But Love never greets the discovery with a triumphant "I told you so!" never congratulates herself in being

right because others are wrong. I may be injured, but Love would not leave me to brood over the injury, nor to plan a reprisal. When truth flourishes she rejoices, whoever may be the instrument which the divine hand has used for the purpose.

Suffering may come. Love does not resent it, but bears it silently. She will not allow confidence in one's brethren to be easily shaken. There may appear to be good ground for suspicion, but love is trustful and hopeful, never lending an ear to slanderous gossip, or tales that vilify others and tend to exalt ourselves.

Emergencies come. Difficulties arise. A crisis is reached. Hirelings flee. But love is ready. *Love never fails*. Love stands by the sheep, and declines to act in self-interest.

Faith is a great and blessed thing. So is *Hope*. Hope—the hope of the Lord's return—has been revived in the hearts of numberless Christians. This is good. Let us cherish this hope increasingly. But greater than either faith or hope is LOVE. Write it in capital letters. It is divine. It shall last through the ages—"When faith and hope shall cease." And, meanwhile, what fogs, what black clouds, what unwholesome vapours would be dispersed if the sunshine of LOVE were to always illumine our souls! What jealousies would be put aside! What misunderstandings would be cleared up! What injuries would be gladly and freely forgiven! What divisions among Christians would be healed! What barriers would vanish! What services would be rendered! What joy would be ours! What glory would be won for the Name of our God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Heaven or Earth.

HAST thou heaven *in hope*? It is more than if thou hadst the whole world *in hand*. The greatest monarch on earth would be glad, at a dying hour, to change his crown for thy helmet, which is "the hope of salvation." His crown will not procure him thy helmet; but thy helmet will procure thee a "crown of glory that fadeth not away."

God Manifested.

(EDWARD CROSS).

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life. And we have believed and known that Thou art the Holy One of God."—John 6. 67-69.

HERE is the food of the soul unto eternal life. This is the bread on which it is nourished, so that it should grow in the true knowledge of God. God is a giving God—this fact permeates the whole Gospel of John—and He will make Himself known through a Man—"the Word become flesh," in that which He is morally in His essential being. Three times in this chapter Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man (vers. 27, 53, 62). That is the title in which man is regarded according to the highest purposes of God in respect of him (Ps. 8.; 1 Cor. 15. 27): and the highest conceptions of human glory are bound up with that title.—Son of God coming forth from the Father, in the unmixed purity of the divine nature; Son of Man, the archetype of divine purpose in the creation and glory of man.—God would set Himself forth to us in Him "in whom all the fullness was pleased to dwell," and set forth His good pleasure in man through Him in whom that fullness dwells bodily.

Creation is the work of God. "The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." But God did not declare Himself thereby. "Power belongeth unto God," but God is more than power. Neither could the law reveal Him. It was a glorious institution to outline a system of governmental order in which, as a climax, God Himself would be King (*cf.* Deut. 33. 5; Ps. 145. 1); but "it had no glory at all, by reason of the glory that excelleth." God Himself in His inner self, and man in his true self according to his real destiny, remained

still unknown. But all is shown out in full, clear light in Jesus.

Blessed Lord! what glories shine in Thy blest Name!
Revealer of the Father, the one true—the only God:
Thy Father and our Father—Thy God and ours:
Thou Glorious Man, raised high above all heavens,
Creation could not crown Thee, who art above it all;
Thou, who descendedst into death, obedient unto God;
Thou gavest Thyself for us, that we through Thee might live;
And by Thy death Thou hast revealed the Father,
And made us His dear sons, as one in life with Thee.
And as He was Thy life, so Thou our life must be.
And this our glory too, that we should like Thee be—
Who gavest Thy flesh and blood—our heavenly destiny.
This is the bread of life: this is our soul's great joy:
This is the bread of God, from heaven above come down.
Lord, teach us what it means, and light with knowledge crown.

This is the way in which God manifests Himself—the divine nature revealed in a Man; this is the way in which He teaches us what is the end and purpose of our being, even eternal life in His Son. "This is the bread come down from heaven, that a man should eat thereof and not die." Death does not attach to it. It is eternal life; and through death, and by that means, it shows itself that it is so.

May these words be ours in the true and intelligent meaning of them: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Amen.

He that hath God's heart cannot want His arm. God's love sets all His other attributes at work.

The Bread of God.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

“For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

John 6. 38, 51, 62, 63.

JOHN 6. 43-69.—There are three positions in which the blessed Lord is presented in the doctrinal portion of this chapter: first, as come down out of heaven to fulfil the will of the Father that sent Him; then, as giving His flesh for the life of the world; and lastly, as ascending up where He was before. In the first He is the bread of God. Not merely the bread He gives, but that which He feeds upon Himself. Now, for the first time, man's path was found opening out in Christ in all its perfection before the Father, whose eye and heart only could enter into it. What perfect dependence, obedience, devoted love to the Father were there! A life governed only by His Father's will in every detail of word and action, with the absolute refusal of every other object but His Father's glory. No wonder the heavens opened to Him and the Father's voice declared His perfect delight in Him. Thus He was the bread, or food, of God's own joy. But how wonderful to know that it was not to be for Himself alone: “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” In His infinite grace the Father would have others enter into His estimation of the Son whom He loved. He was the bread of life; and he that cometh to Him by faith should never hunger or thirst.

This leads us to the second position that the Lord took: that He who was the bread of God might be the bread of life to us.

The more perfection shone out in Him amongst men, the more the state of every other man came out in His presence. The light shone in darkness: we saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him. “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother

we know?” was the answer of the Jews (ver. 42) to the gracious revelation that it was the will of Him who sent Him that He should lose nothing of those given Him, and that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him should have eternal life, and be raised up into the proper sphere of that life when the end of the present age had come. This moral incompetency to enter into all that made Him the sealed One (ver. 27) of the Father's delight was the last and conclusive proof that there was nothing in us for God, and of the absolute necessity of the early sentence of God upon man, “The end of all flesh is come before Me.” So that in order that any should eat of the bread come down out of heaven, and not die, but live for ever, we read, “The bread that I will give is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world” (ver. 51); and the essential condition of our having life in Him is that we eat His flesh and drink His blood (ver. 53).

Up to this in the Gospel there had been the objective presentation of the life in Him, but now it is the question of our subjective entering into it. This depends upon our having been brought to bow to the judgment of God, not only of our sins, but of all that we are according to the flesh in His death. It is surely by faith, but having eaten His flesh and drunk His blood [the verbs in ver. 53 are of one definitive act] expresses more than this. It is that we have solemnly identified ourselves with Him in the death He endured for us, and which ended before God and for faith all we were as children of Adam. We have, as in the type of the sin-offering, laid our hands upon the victim's head, and owned His death to be ours. It is a definite point to which we have to be

brought in the soul's history, never to be gone back from: deliverance from the dominion of sin is found in it. But the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood is not simply a thing of the past—that we have done with; for now begins the necessity of the habitual feeding upon the death of the Son of Man that we may possess eternal life in all its reality as a life of communion with the Father and the Son. As His death is thus before our souls, we are extricated and practically delivered from all that is of the flesh in us, and of man and his world, that the Lord Jesus had to carry down to death under the judgment of God. How could we, in the presence of the infinite sufferings of Gethsemane and the cross, tolerate anything in ourselves of what involved those sufferings for Him who, in such unfathomable love, gave Himself for us? With His death thus applied to our souls continually there will be nothing to hinder our enjoyment of that life of divine and heavenly relationship which is "eternal" (ver. 54). So also is it with abiding in Him, so essential as we know it is to us every moment, from chapter 15. By the Holy Ghost indwelling we know that we are in Him, as He said we should be (chap. 14. 20). But dwelling or abiding in Him, as the continuous realization of our being in Him, depends also upon our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which is true meat and drink. And now verse 57 brings us into what verse 33 had pre-

sented to us: "he that eateth Me." It is no longer simply His death, but He Himself personally known as the food and joy of our souls who is the Bread of God. We could only have part in that wonderful Bread by identification with Him in His *death*, but it is He Himself upon whom now we can feed. "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by, or on account of the Father: so he that eateth ME shall live on account of ME." He *lived* for nothing else but the Father: the Father was the whole reason of His existence here, the absorbing object of His life. And so, as He rises before our souls in all His perfection, more and more entered into as we feed upon Him, He will become the absorbing object of our life: we shall live but for Him.

At the close the Lord intimates that He would ascend up where He was before. Of what immense moment for us! For it is thus that all the precious truth has become available for us. The light of the glory in which He is has been shed back on all He was in the lowly, perfect path of His humiliation, and upon the cross in which God has been infinitely glorified and man's history closed in judgment, so that nothing but Christ should remain before our souls in this blessed communion of divine joy and satisfaction.

May we each know increasingly what it is to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and feed upon Him personally who is the Bread of God.

God's Work.

A very learned "higher critic" was raising a cheap laugh by ridiculing the Bible account of the creation of man. He spoke scornfully and blasphemously about God taking "a piece of mud in hand, breathing on it, and changing it into a man." There sat one in his audience who knew the saving grace of God; he had the opportunity of replying to the critic of God's Word, and said,

"I will not discuss the creation of man with you, but I will tell you this: God stooped down to our town and picked up the dirtiest bit of mud in it. He breathed upon it by His Spirit, it was new created: changed from a wicked wretch into a man of God, into a man who hated his former sins, and loved the God who had saved him. I was that bit of mud."

The Victories of the Lord Jesus.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

1. "Until He bring forth judgment unto VICTORY" (Matt. 12. 20).
2. "But when the stronger than he, coming upon him, gains the VICTORY over him" (Luke 11. 22).
3. "I have gained the VICTORY over the world" (John 16. 33).
4. "Death is swallowed up in VICTORY" (1 Cor. 15. 54).
5. "Even as I also gained the VICTORY" (Rev. 3. 21).
6. "Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has gained the VICTORY, to open the book and its seven seals" (Rev. 5. 5).
7. "The Lamb shall gain the VICTORY over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17. 14).

SLIGHT changes from the authorized version have been made in the quotations given above in order to indicate that the same word, under the different forms of noun *νίκος*, and verb *νικάω*, is used in each case for *victory*. These seven scriptures are the only ones in which this word is used in connection with the Lord Jesus, and seven is the well-known numerical symbol of "completeness." As we consider our Saviour in this sevenfold victory, I trust each reader will receive a fresh stimulus to follow Him more closely.

1. "Until He bring forth judgment unto VICTORY" (Matt. 12. 20).

This is part of a quotation from the early verses of Isaiah 42., not quite exact to either the Hebrew or Septuagint, but giving the sense of the original perfectly. Isaiah had written, "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Matthew's paraphrase is, "He shall bring forth judgment unto victory." The whole passage evidently foretells the two comings of the Lord: first in humiliation and then in power. What we know as the "church period" is not noticed at all. Matthew cites it, in connection with the first coming, in which the Lord sought only the recognition of faith (12. 16), but does not omit to include the prophetic testimony to His victory at the second coming. In that day the mystery of God will be finished (Rev. 10. 7) and iniquity removed by judgment from the sphere of His rule. He will reign as the Victor over all the forces of evil that have been arrayed against Him, and share the kingdom and glory with His bride. Till then let our hearts accept the pathway of suffering with Him (2 Tim. 2. 12).

2. "But when a stronger than he, coming upon him, gains the VICTORY over him" (Luke 11. 22).

The victory we have already briefly considered is the climax and consequence of all that had gone before. The present and two following have reference to our special enemies. Here it is the arch-enemy himself, who is shown as "a strong man armed" holding his palace; therefore his goods are in peace. To gain the victory over him is the *necessary* prelude to our Lord's life of service, for into this conflict He was led by the Spirit (Luke 4. 1). Victory was achieved by maintaining the place of dependence and obedience He had taken as Man. This place Satan sought to ensnare Him to leave, by acting for Himself. But Jesus overcame, and as a result, when He meets the foe again, no longer in the wilderness, but in the Synagogue, as a murderer (Luke 4. 28), and then as an oppressor (ver. 33), it is manifested that his power has been broken.

The practical lesson for us to learn is that if we are to be deliverers of others, it is necessary to have first met the foe in secret, and taken from him his armour; then the spoil may be divided. The omission to follow this plan of campaign is the explanation of many a sad display of weakness.

3. "Be of good cheer, I have gained the VICTORY over the world" (John 16. 33).

In this connection the Lord and His servants are viewed with the world in opposition to them. It is not the world in its alluring form—that had no attraction for Him. He tells them, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Here the victory is not by the dependence

and obedience which sufficed to vanquish Satan in the wilderness, though surely not without them. The divine nature itself—love strong as death—seems needed to encounter man's hatred and hostility, and alone is adequate to rise above the opposition by virtue of its quenchless power. In our case, in this same conflict, we are exhorted to put on "the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5. 8).

4. "Death is swallowed up in VICTORY" (1 Cor. 15. 54).

The conflict here is with the last enemy, death; and the victory is obtained by power. The words are taken from Isaiah 25. 8, where they are used in connection with the deliverance of Israel, and the blessing, through them, of the nations. Paul speaks of this very thing as "life from the dead" (Rom. 11. 15), indicating that resurrection power is needed to effect this result. The same writer applies this to the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15.), the glorious witness of the triumph of that power over Satan and the sin which introduced the ruin.

In connection with this victory the Spirit teaches us to say: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and hence to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

5. "Even as I also gained the VICTORY" (Rev. 3. 21).

Christ is here speaking to the angel of the church in Laodicea as "the faithful and true Witness." He speaks from His place on the Father's throne; at the same time, in a spiritual way, He walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. He is encouraging the victorious saint with the promise of association with Himself on His throne. His victory, spoken of here, evidently refers to His earthly pathway, in which He proved Himself—God's Witness, faithful and true. The church is shown in this respect to be an appalling failure, and is rejected with disgust. But there are conquerors, and Jesus, in a better way than Gideon of old, would link

them with Himself, and bid them "look on Me and do likewise" (Judges 7. 17).

6. "Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has obtained the VICTORY, so as to open the book and its seven seals" (Rev. 5. 5):

We must refer to verse 9 to appreciate how the victory here referred to is obtained.

"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open its seven seals, for Thou wast slain"—and His death is here regarded as the purchase-price paid, not only for the saints, but for the earth, now defiled by sin, over which they will reign with Him. Hence He has the right—and He only—to deal with the horrible tangle made by sin and Satan here on earth. This He begins to do as each seal is opened; and from the details we may learn how exactly and precisely affairs on earth are controlled from heaven. The very price of wheat and barley in the markets of this world is announced by a voice in the midst of the Cherubim, where He is. What an encouragement to keep the word of His patience!

7. "The Lamb shall gain the VICTORY over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17. 14).

The previous scripture shows us the Lamb in the commencement of His actings in connection with the hostile world below. Here we see Him in one of His final dealings against the evil confederacy, gathered by devilish influences (16. 13, 14) to oppose Him. This confederacy has taken various forms at various times (Ps. 2. 1-3; John 11. 47, etc.; Acts 4. 25, etc.; Rev. 2. 9; 3. 9). In this scripture it is seen in its last desperate effort to break the bands of God and His anointed and cast their cords off. Jesus, the Lamb, gains the victory because He is in His own right and according to divine counsels Lord of lords and King of kings. If He is to shepherd the nations with the firmness of the iron rod, He also breaks them in pieces like a potter's vessel. He who testifies these things says, "Surely, I am coming quickly." May each reader respond from his heart, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

The Death of Christ.

THE death of Christ has such a value in God's sight as to constitute, so to speak, a new claim on the affections of His Father. Thus He who, as the only begotten Son of the Father, was all His delight before the world was, could say, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again." His devotedness to the glory of His Father was in this act seen to be absolute.

All that belonged to the moral development of that glory was therein accomplished at the cost of Him who suffered. All that mysterious evil, by means of which Satan had sway in this world, and by which misery, death, and condemnation came in, was turned to the manifestation of the glory of God. The righteousness, majesty, and love of God, irreconcilable in the midst of sin, were, through the intervention of Him who consented to be "made sin for us," thrown out in relief by sin itself. On the other hand, if we consider the personal perfection of Christ, His devotedness to the will of His Father, His love, obedience, submission, sacrifice of all even to life

itself, in order that the Father might be glorified, and that those whom He loved might be saved, His perfect patience, His confidence in God, which never failed even when He was forsaken, all found united in the cross; and then to think who He was, and that it was for us He died and suffered all—what a value ought His death to have in our sight! Add to all this the power of Satan overcome; death destroyed—made even a gain for us; the veil removed from before the presence of God; a perfection beyond the possibility of a taint introduced into the whole wide universe, which it fills with peace and light, and of which it has made us the heirs; and, more than all, the perfect enjoyment of the love of God! What moral worth, then, has that cross, by which all is consummated, however feeble may be our ability to proclaim it, however feeble our hearts may be, as vessels, to contain the sentiment it inspires! Our *adoration* necessarily links itself with the cross. *There* the God whom we adore was glorified; without it His glory could not be fully displayed. *There* it is that we have learnt what God is.

J. N. Darby.

"Looking unto Jesus" describes accurately the attitude of the soul that is abiding in Christ. The moon keeps looking to the sun for every gleam of her reflected radiance; the branch keeps looking to the vine for every whit of its life and fruitage; the drinking fountain keeps looking to the supplying reservoir for every drop of water it is to pour out to its thirsting visitors; the arc light keeps looking to the great dynamo for every ray of the stream of light with which it floods the midnight darkness. So every child of God should be always and constantly "Looking unto Jesus."

We see divine love in Christ, as He poured out His life in unwearied ministry for the souls and bodies of men; as His heart agonized in compassion for the multitudes, like sheep without a shepherd; as He endured with majestic patience the taunts and jibes at the judgment scene; as He bowed in agony under the bloody blows of the scourge; as, at the last, in His own body bearing our sins on the tree; and as with His latest breath He tenderly prayed for His murderers.

If you would advance in all grace, study Christ much.

It is not by our good *words*, but by our good *works*, that our faith is to be shown.

Woman: Her Place in Scripture.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

THESE are days of great unrest and lawlessness. The Suffragette Movement is most gravely ominous in this respect. This question and others do not concern the Christian, however, from a *political* standpoint. If he conforms to Scripture he has nothing to do with politics. His politics are heavenly. "Our conversation ["citizenship," N.T. "*politics*"] is in heaven" (Phil. 3. 20). "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight" (John 18. 36).

We are naturally affected by what surrounds us. Lawlessness in the world is apt to be reflected by lawlessness in the church. This being so, it appears to be a timely moment for the examination of this deeply interesting subject: *Woman: her place in Scripture.*

The materials to hand in the Scriptures on the subject are simply enormous. In a brief article we can only most rapidly gather a leading principle or two, enough, we trust, to lead the reader to examine the subject more fully for himself or herself at first hand in the Word of God.

* * * *

To begin with, we cannot urge too strongly absolute loyalty to the Scriptures. There is too much loose talk about the times having changed, and that the scriptures on the point are not binding *now*. The Scriptures are *for all time*. God is wiser than we. Besides which, such a view is in reality the removal of the central stone in the arch of inspiration. Make one part of non-effect and the whole structure collapses. To weaken Scripture in one point is to weaken it in all. The point is vital. Its importance cannot be exaggerated.

At first the subject seemed to divide itself under two heads:

- (1) *Woman: her place in nature.*
- (2) *Woman: her place in grace.*

It is, however, impossible to separate

the two. Woman's place in nature illustrates her place in grace, or rather in the government of grace. In grace pure and simple, in new creation, "there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3. 28).

This is brought out by the very way woman was created. The manner of it was unique—in sharp contrast to every other being. It is typical, symbolical, illustrative.

Adam is thrown into a deep sleep—type of the death of Christ. From his side a rib is taken, a woman builded therefrom, and presented to him as helpmeet. This is a type of the church—the result of the death of Christ which will be presented to Him as His bride.

"Doth not even nature teach you" (1 Cor. 11. 14) is capable of a wide application. God has in His wisdom put great differences in the physical, mental, and emotional make-up of man and woman. He has most evidently marked them to be distinct, yet complementary.

Man's superior height, strength, reasoning equipment stand in happy contrast to woman's natural grace, gentleness, mental nimbleness.

Man is made up of angles—woman of curves.

Their instincts are different—man's, for adventure, strenuousness, subduing the field, building, bridge-making, sea-voyaging; woman's for love of children, aptitude for nursing, cooking, sewing. Woman is the complement of man.

The very fact that woman was "taken out of man" proves her equality. She is not an inferior, not a slave, nor a menial, but an equal, a helpmeet. Between man and man there is similarity, identity—between man and woman there is equality but also diversity.

But the very fact that woman was "taken out of man" proclaims the headship God has given man, as, also, her privilege to accord man this place.

Man and woman are equal *morally*, but he is the head *positionally*.

Scripture distinctly states: "The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. . . . Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is *OF* the man, even so is the man also *BY* the woman; but all things of God" (1 Cor. II. 8, 9, 11, 12). How exquisitely guarded and balanced a presentation of the truth is this! If you quarrel with it, you quarrel with truth and with God.

This is all designed to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church. In Ephesians 5. the relationship between husband and wife is unfolded. Is the wife to submit to the husband? It is on the ground that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (ver. 23). Are the husbands to love their wives? It is even to be "as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (ver. 25). Is the man told to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife as one flesh? We are at once reminded: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (ver. 32).

From the very first the reader will see woman's place in nature is typical of her place in grace, and typical, as it widens out, of the church's relation to Christ. How wonderful!

EVE.

We are told, "Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2. 13, 14). Here we get the first and most powerful

warning against woman taking the lead. A lurid beacon at the very start of man's journey across the ocean of time.

Instead of repelling the serpent's advances, and seeking the help and protection of her God-given head, she acted in independence. There is no need to labour the seriousness of the act, nor the unutterable sadness of its results. And instead of Adam maintaining his headship and submitting only to God, he allowed the woman to lead him into the same awful position into which her sin had carried her.

SARAH.

The first woman in the Bible after Eve to receive more than a passing notice is Sarah. As Abraham stands as a type of faith for all time, so Sarah stands as an example of subjection to headship.

Evidently she was a woman of vigorous personality. She was no weak plaything, without mind or will of her own. On the contrary, we should gather she was a masterful woman.

But she stands as the example of "the holy women . . . who trusted in God, being in subjection unto their own husbands," for we read, "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well" (1 Peter 3. 5, 6).

This clearly gives us the position of woman in relation to man, and the practice followed out by godly women of old.

DEBORAH.

Deborah occupies a very unique place in Scripture. She was a prophetess—a married woman, too, and judged Israel.

She was an exception to the rule, but the exception proves the rule.

Scripture does not speak against the place she took, nor does it approve. It simply states the fact.

Yet there is sufficient out of Deborah's *own* mouth to see what she thought of it—to, at any rate, condemn the backwardness of the men, even if we go no further.

She summoned Barak to go against Sisera. As a prophetess she told him that the Lord would deliver the enemy into his hand.

But Barak in his unmanliness would not go except Deborah accompanied him. She promptly acceded to his request, but informed him that the journey should not be for his honour. Sisera should be sold into the hand of a *woman*.

Surely Deborah's reply implied that if it were a matter of shame for Barak that a *woman* should slay Sisera, it was not less a matter of shame that a *woman* should judge Israel.

NEW TESTAMENT WOMEN.

When we come to the New Testament, we find the position of godly women honourable and beautiful in the highest degree.

The Virgin Mary—"highly favoured"—"blessed among women;" her cousin Elizabeth; Anna, the aged widow of fourscore and four years intent on God's service, are most beautiful characters in connection with the birth of Christ.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at the Lord's feet, and heard His word. She it was who anointed Him for His burial, which act is never to lose its fragrance—"Wheresoever this gospel shall be told in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (Matt. 26. 13). She earned praise than which none can be higher, "She hath done what she could" (Mark 14. 8). To Mary Magdalene was accorded the high honour of carrying the wondrous message of association with a risen Christ to His disciples, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20. 17).

Think of the women "who ministered unto Him [the blessed Lord] of their substance." What honour!

And when we come to Christ ascended, and the Holy Ghost given, we are reminded of the "honourable women which were Greeks," who believed. Of Paul's commendation of "those women which laboured with me in the gospel." Of Priscilla, who, under the headship of her husband, had the privilege of instructing the eloquent Apollos in "the way of God more perfectly."

What a lovely and honoured place is thus outlined for Christian women!

WOMAN'S PLACE IN MINISTRY.

Her place is emphatically not one of *public* testimony. There are sixty-six books in the Bible, and all their authors were men. Not one was a woman. They were distinctly chosen of God.

There were twelve apostles. They were all men. Not one was a woman.

There were seventy sent out—in addition to the apostles—by the Lord. We are not told that there was one woman amongst them. The supposition that they were all men is so strong, taken in conjunction with the general teaching of Scripture on the point, that it amounts to proof.

There were "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," chosen in Acts 6. to "serve tables." Not one woman was chosen.

There were many witnesses cited in 1 Corinthians 15. to prove the resurrection of the Lord. Individual men are mentioned as witnesses, but there is no mention of a single woman. This is strikingly significant, as Mary was the *first* individual to see Christ risen, and was entrusted by Him with a wonderful message to the disciples. Her exclusion from the list of witnesses is the strongest possible proof that Scripture does not give women a place of public testimony.

There were bishops appointed in the early church. They were all men. No woman was among the number.

Deacons and elders were also appointed in the early church and described in 1 Tim., and in Titus. They were all men.

There are two witnesses in Revelation 11. They are prophets—not prophetesses or a prophet and prophetess, but prophets—*men*.

WOMAN OUT OF HER PLACE.

When women get out of their place, they appear to be the special prey of the devil.

It is a woman in the parable who introduced the leaven into the three measures of meal—type of the introduction of corrupting principles which have permeated the Christian profession.

It was a woman—Eve—who was “in the transgression.”

They are “silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,” who are led captive by evil men in the perilous times of the last days. It is a woman—Jezebel—who stands historically in the Old Testament page as an example of all that is disgusting and wicked; who stands figuratively in Revelation as the example of ecclesiastical corruption and religious depravity of the worst type.

In the present day the great majority of spiritist mediums are women; modern spiritism began with women.

It is an hysterical woman—Mrs. White—who by her blasphemous pretensions has for long been the leader, and largely the inventor, of that wicked system—Seventh-day Adventism.

Christian Science—which is neither Christian nor scientific—and Theosophy, also, owe their origin to women.

DECISIVE SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTION.

We read in 1 Corinthians 14. 34, 35:
“Let your women keep silence in the

churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

This is plain. For a woman to take part publicly in the church is in defiance of Scripture.

But we are told the word “speak” really means “chatter.” We are told that the men sat on one side and the women on the other in the Christian assemblies, as is the custom in Jewish synagogues to this day. We are told the women brought scandal upon the public service by *chattering*.

But the word “speak” does not mean “chatter.” It is the ordinary word for “speak,” and used in reference to God Himself.

This argument only recoils on the heads of those who use it, and proclaims on the housetops the poverty of their arguments and the weakness of their case.

Others urge this has only reference to *married* women. But it seems too absurd to suppose that a woman should be able to speak the day before she is married, and be unable to do so the day after.

The fact is Scripture supposes women in a very general way being married, hence they were to ask their husbands at home. Clearly an unmarried woman might happily ask some married brother her questions and be well within the spirit of the divine instructions.

Will any Christian woman refuse to bow loyally and happily to the instructions of Scripture? Will any Christian man support her in her refusal? How withering is the apostolic rebuke:

“If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are **THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD**

“But if any man be ignorant, let him be **IGNORANT**” (1 Cor. 14. 37, 38).

Further, 1 Timothy 2. 8 is very plain:

“I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.”

Here “men” means *men* in contradistinction to *women*. The Greek word employed here excludes women.

The next verse speaks of women in contradistinction to men, exhorting them to modesty and simplicity in dress and ornament.

Then the Apostle adds:

“Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2. 11, 12).

This carries the question further than 1 Corinthians 14., where conduct in the assembly is in view. Here it is conduct as between man and woman, and would include any public testimony, where both sexes were present.

Two reasons are given:

(1) *“For Adam was first formed, then Eve”* (ver. 13).

Evidently the strongest reason as showing the order of creation, the illustration, too, of Christ and the church.

Then:

(2) *“Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”* (ver. 14).

Here governmental consequences are seen consequent on the first woman not being subject to God’s order.

It is remarkable that there are no definite instructions to mothers in the New Testament. The instructions are to fathers.

Moreover, woman stepping out of her place is the destruction of the type as to man and woman illustrating Christ and the church. We read:

“The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11. 3).

But the reader may point out that there is provision made in Scripture for women praying and prophesying (see 1 Cor. 11.); that Philip’s daughters prophesied (it never says they prophesied before Paul, as many state); that women laboured with Paul in the gospel, and inquire if this does not prove their right to public ministry.

It leaves room for very happy, blessed service. Would there were more of it! But it clearly does not include ministry in the assembly, or public testimony before a mixed audience of men and women. If it did, Scripture would contradict itself. If the Holy Ghost led women to such service, He would lead them to violate Scripture given by the same Holy Ghost, which would be unthinkable.

It may be urged women evangelists have been much owned of God. Yes, that is true, but it is no proof that they were right, and in all probability they would have been owned still more if their service had been kept within lawful bounds. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

Ample room is left for the ministry of women among women and children, mothers’ meetings, Sunday-school work, etc., besides the helping of the Lord’s servants in a similar way to which the women laboured with Paul.

There is one special field indicated as the sphere of women’s ministry; a sphere where holy living and discreet speech have their place, see Titus 2. 4, 5.

The comfort and encouragement an active, godly, Christian woman—moved by love to Christ and souls, and yet governed by Scripture—can render is incalculable. When we meet such we profoundly respect them.

Mary anointed the Lord for His burial. Martha served the Lord right well. Phoebe was a servant of the church, and a succourer of many. Lydia entertained the Apostle Paul in her house. Priscilla, subject to the headship and leadership of her husband, helped Apollos to understand the way

of God more perfectly. Women laboured with Paul in the gospel. Would that the descendants of these godly women were found in every city and village in the world! Happy, blessed service! There is no room for women to repine at the divine restrictions set on their service. There is more work for them to do than they can ever overtake.

To deliberately set aside the instructions of Scripture in *one* particular is very serious. It weakens the whole question of inspiration. It impairs its authority as to instruction in other matters.

For instance, the Quakers and the Salvation Army are notorious as to women stepping out of their place as to public ministry. The Quakers are quietists—the Salvationists fiery propagandists. One would never suspect them of being bedfellows. Yet, uniting, as they do, in the practice of women's public ministry, they both agree in ignoring the rite of Christian baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The present revolt seems to be an overturning of Genesis 3. Four things came in as the result of sin.

(1) Death—"In the day that thou eatest thereof [tree of knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 17).

(2) Toil for man—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. 3. 19).

(3) Subjection for woman—"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3. 16).

(4) Childbearing, *attended by sorrow and danger* (Gen. 3. 16).

Witness the revolt. That fashionable freak-religion, Christian Science, exalts woman, scoffs at marriage and child-bearing, and declares that death is mere imagination, and need never

be. And this evil religion is spreading like wild-fire over the world.

Witness the revolt. The Suffragette Movement is to put woman on a political equality with man, and on the part of extremists among them scoffs at the marriage contract and childbearing.

Witness the revolt. Strikes are in the air. Men are seeking to avoid "the sweat of the face." Deeply-laid, colossal, business-wrecking, trade-destroying strikes. Unions are amalgamating, workmen in other countries joining in; a world-wide solidarity of workers is aimed at—workers not in one kind of work, but workers as workers. Lightning strikes are the order of the day. Down tools—down everything: the beginning of the incline upon which the cry will be, "Down with property." "Down with the throne." "Down with religion." "Down with God."

Out of black night, red riot, and chaos, will evolve Antichrist, who will allow no one to buy or sell save those who are in the greatest union the world will ever see—those who bear the mark or the name of the beast.

* * * *

Let Christian women rise from their study of Scripture determined, by God's grace, to carry out its instructions as to their relation to man; to illustrate by their conduct the wonderful truth of Christ and the church; to be individually a protest against the lawless spirit of the age; to glory in the wonderful and unique place which is theirs. Then will God be glorified. Then will their true usefulness be available to the full. Then will Christian men profoundly respect them, and be helped and influenced by them, and find out what that truly wonderful word, HELPMEE— which alone belongs to women—means.

What *we are* is of far more consequence than anything we have *done*.

Christians are the Lord's property—dearly bought, lawfully acquired, and carefully preserved.

Gleanings from the Past.—No. 4.

Extracts from the Ministry of William Gurney (1617-1679).

MEDITATION is the handmaid of prayer, to wait on it both before and after the performance. It is as the *plough* before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer, and as the *harrow* to cover the seed when it is sown.

He that prays and does not follow it with watching, is like him that sows his field with precious seed, but leaves the gate open for swine to come and root it up. . . . To pray and expect no answer is to shoot and not look where the arrow falls.

As a necessary ingredient in all our prayers, "let your requests be made known with thanksgiving." . . . He that prays for a mercy he wants, and is not thankful for mercies received, may, indeed, seem mindful of himself, but he is forgetful of God, and so takes the right course to shut his prayers out of doors. God will not put His mercies into a rent purse, and such is an unthankful heart.

Pride kills the spirit of praise; when thou shouldst be praising God, thou art praising thyself.

"Be careful for nothing," is God's word; as if He had said, "Leave Me to take care of you." When the males of Israel went to Jerusalem to worship, that they might not carry distracted minds with them, God promises to take special care of their families in their absence; as if He had said, "Let Me take care of your work, and mind you do Mine" (Exod. 34. 24).

He that wisheth well to himself alone, may be reckoned amongst the most degenerate of mankind. One well compares such a self-lover to the hedgehog,

that confines himself within his own soft down, and turns out bristles to all besides.

Satan disturbs thee *in* praying that he may make thee weary *of* praying; nor is he likely to miss his mark if thou lettest the vermin of vain thoughts go on breeding in thy heart; for these will rob thee of the sweetness of the duty, and when the *marrow* is once out, thou wilt easily be persuaded to throw away the *bone*. He is in danger to forsake his meat who hath lost his relish for it. Prayer is a tedious work to him who hath no pleasure in it; and weariness *in* it stands next door to weariness *of* it.

Walk in the company of vain thoughts all the day, and thou wilt hardly shut the door upon them when thou goest into thy closet. Thou hast taught them to be bold; and now they will plead acquaintance with thee, and crowd in after thee, like little children, who, if you play with them, will cry after you when you would be rid of their company.

The soul can no more live in two places together than the body. If we would prevent wandering thoughts, we should seek warm affections. Flies will not so readily light on a boiling pot on the fire as when it stands cold in the window. Nor will vain thoughts so easily light on thy sacrifice when burning on the altar of a fervent heart, as when offered up with a cold dull spirit.

Many confess their sins as beggars sometimes show their sores, which they are not willing to have cured. He that melts not in the confession of sin, will freeze in the prayers he puts up against it; if his tears be false his desires cannot be true.—*Selected by Hamilton Smith.*

Kingdom Glories.

(T. R. WESTON).

“And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”—2 Sam. 23. 4.

WE have been meditating upon the glories of the millennial kingdom. What a bright ending to the world's long, dark night of sorrow—a morning without a cloud—not a dark speck upon the horizon, but heaven and earth bathed in the glory—glory of the King (2 Sam. 20.). But the church must ascend to meet the Lord in the air (Thess. 4.) before the break of this day for the earth; she will be introduced to the Father's house (John 14.), and the marriage of the Lamb will then take place (Rev. 19.). Of this, which takes place in heaven, the world will know nothing, for the curtains of heaven veil these things from the gaze of men. While men in their disobedience on earth are growing ripe for wrath, the church will enjoy the delightful presence of the Lamb. There is an appropriateness in the privacy of these scenes, the familiarity of the Father with His family, and the Bridegroom with His bride. After all these joys have been tasted, the armies of heaven must be marshalled for battle, or rather for victory, for corresponding action will have been taking place on the earth. The hosts of earth will be gathered under Satan's operations, saying, “Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us” (Ps. 2.). Everything will then be ripe for the judgment of God, and the heavens will open and reveal the mighty Victor as the Leader of the hosts of God, and the armies of heaven and earth shall be front to front (Rev. 19.). Man's impotent fury will avail nothing. This Avenger of all the insults and dishonour which God has endured with great longsuffering will dash them to pieces with His iron sceptre. Jesus never lost a victory yet, and He will then add glory to His

great renown, for He will prove His right to the many crowns that shine upon His brow (Rev. 19.). The thunders and lightnings having discharged their dread terrors, and the usurper's power being broken, the tempest of judgment will give place to the soft sunshine that shall break through the clouds. The thrones will be set up and the church will sit upon them, having fellowship with the Lamb in the exercise of government (Rev. 20.). The blessed Man with the wounded hands and side will be the wearer of many diadems. The hosts of heaven will bow the knee before Him as they do now, but the earth will also praise His name; for in that day of victory He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth (Ps. 72.). The mystery of God's will is to head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth (Eph. 1. 10). What a day of brightness! a day of glory! Is it not for this creation waits? When Psalm 72. closes, David says his prayers are ended. To what point had he come? To this, “And let the whole earth be filled with His glory!” Then shall the minstrels of heaven and the songsters of the land of glory have full occupation. The golden city—the bride—the Lamb's wife, will come down from God out of heaven in the sight of all. How bright it will shine—God's glory will fill it, for it is God's paradise, it is the throne of God and the Lamb—the tree of life and the crystal river, the wall of jasper, the golden pavement and the pearly gates. Well may the nations walk in the glory of it, and bring their tribute to its gates, for the Lamb is the light and glory of it, and nothing will be admitted within its gates that would tarnish its brightness or soil its purity (Rev. 21. 27).

The Living God.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

THE God with whom we have to do is the living God. There are many in the present day who, because they live "without God in the world," think of Him as a Being who, having set in motion innumerable worlds, now contemplates their movements without concern or interference. They assign to Heaven, to Nature, to Fate, and to Providence their imaginary spheres of influence. How comfortless are such ideas! How infinitely more cheering is the steady light reflected from Holy Writ, which directs us to a God of life!

"The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. . . . Thou openest Thine hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness" (Ps. 104. 27, 28). God created the sun and stars and their satellites. Natural philosophers tell us that so great is the kinetic energy stored up in the moving mass of the earth, that it only requires to be stopped by some agency for its whole substance to flash into vapour. But the Apostle Peter forestalled the modern physicist when he gave us the information that in the day of the Lord, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Only one touch of the all-powerful hand is required, and all the "stable" things which appeal so much to our senses will disappear.

The Scriptures teach that the government of God is real, and if He were to withdraw His care, all things would return to their once void confusion and the lamp of life would go out in darkness. He controls every power. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17. 25, 28). Without His secret influence bread would cease to nourish and water to refresh. He maintains the life that He has given of every living thing, not less so

of the worm in the soil than the seraph before His throne.

"A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps" (Prov. 16. 9). "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21. 1). Over the movements of the inmost mind He presides, and there is nothing that is not under His control. Laban, when panting for the life of Jacob, was, in a moment, disarmed of his rage. He was constrained not to speak to Jacob otherwise than kindly. Esau, burning with anger, laid wait for his brother, but when they met, he ran and fell on his brother's neck and kissed him. Balaam was resolved on cursing Israel, but when he opened his mouth, lo! he was forced to bless them. Saul, when at length he found David, instead of showing the fierceness of revengeful jealousy which had prompted him to pursue a mortal enemy, exhibited dove-like gentleness. "Is this thy voice, my son David?" (1 Sam. 24. 16).

It is no comfort to God's enemies to be told that they are dependent on the power of offended Majesty, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10. 31). None but His children can rejoice that He is the living God; but what blessing is not included in the fact for them? From the shadow of His protecting wings they can never for a moment remove. He is their shield and exceeding great reward. The voice that breaks the cedars and divides the flames of fire is also that of the Comforter at the fitting moment, mingling every trial with the comfort of salvation—the unwearied Friend ruling the present, anticipating the future, skilfully administering correction, watching over His people with a tenderness infinitely surpassing all human love.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 7.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalm XIX.—XXI.

IT might seem out of harmony with the subject-matter of the nine Psalms 16.—24., so full of Christ Himself, to introduce among them reference to the wonders of creation; but it is just this that affords the key to the understanding of the three we are now considering. "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament is showing the work of His hands." All man's ability, remarkable enough in its way, is helpless in such a task. The creator is God, and His work testifies to the eternal power and divinity of its Maker (Rom. 1. 20).

The subject, then, of these Psalms is God's witness to man, and the great point of the first witness is its universality, as we learn from the citation in Romans 10. 18 (Paul quotes verbatim from LXX., which, instead of "line" has φθόγγος—voice or sound). It is thus plainly declared in Jewish Scriptures that God has never excluded the Gentile from blessing, through the knowledge of Himself as the great Originator of all things. We should notice, however, that in this testimony the Spirit directs us to that part of the universe which has never been defiled by man's sin, and where the evil of our fallen race cannot reach. In this world the creature is under the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8.), and adequate testimony fails till the kingdom come in power.

In verses 8–12 we find a second witness, a revelation given by God, in a more restricted sphere, but which applies itself much more closely to our moral state. It deals with the motives of the soul, the mental faculties, the affections of the heart, the object before the eye; all these are brought under the cleansing and quickening power of the Word. "The law of Jehovah is perfect,* the testimony of Jehovah is sure," and the Incarnate Son of God adds His "Amen" to this witness when He says, "Till heaven and earth

pass, one iota [the smallest letter in the alphabet] or one tittle [the little stroke that distinguishes one letter from another] shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5. 18). Man's boasted wisdom is as much at fault in the sphere of revelation as his power fails in the work of creation. In our own day one of the most sorrowful features of the prevailing unbelief is its propagation from the pulpits of Christendom under the guise of wisdom; in Paul's day the opposition was found among the heathen; now, alas! it is among so-called Christians. How faith in God's testimony really operates is beautifully seen in this Psalm in the deepening appreciation of its value. It is more precious than the purest gold, and sweeter than the overflowings of the full honeycomb. Finally, the soul is turned to the divine Author with the earnest desire to be suitable to Him. "Cleanse Thou me," he says, "from secret faults, for who can discern his own errors?" What a contrast to the self-complacency of the formalist! In the last verse the true sanctifying power of the Word is seen in the desire that the meditation of the heart should be acceptable to Him who is known as "My Rock and My Redeemer." Well has it been said "this is the true test of a godly life, when God is sought inwardly, when only in God's sight."

PSALMS 20, 21 present another and more searching testimony from God. Christ is seen in Psalm 20. in the day of trouble, as in 21., in the day of His present glory, and then of His future judgment (vers. 8–12). Each presentation of Him has its special testimony to us. The unfortunate tendency to regard everything from the side of our benefit greatly hinders our understanding the real meaning of such a witness as Psalm 20. indicates, yet with what a power are consciences addressed, in the fact that God has visited this world in the

* This must be understood in the sense of perfect for the use for which it is given. In the very chapter (Rom. 7.) in which Paul shows the need of deliverance from the law as from the first husband (ver. 2) he declares it holy and just and good (ver. 12). It is because of what man is that the law could bring nothing to perfection, and is

therefore annulled as weak and unprofitable *in its result* (Heb. 7. 18). Hence it is also said, "If that first were faultless, place had not been sought for a second, for finding fault He says to them," etc. (Heb. 8. 7, 8). The fault is not in what was given, but in that it failed to bring blessing to man; neither was God fully revealed.

person of His Son, and that the creature has seized the opportunity of His humiliation to spit in His face and crucify Him as a malefactor. Could anything expose our state more thoroughly? This Psalm, on the other hand, shows how the godly should be affected in the time of that crisis. The little remnant led by the Spirit, and furnished with suited words, associate themselves in heart and desire with Him in response to the grace revealed in His coming to them (Ps. 16. 3). If we are right in supposing no such position as this is revealed without some to fulfil it, we should doubtless find its realization in the Bethany household (John 12.) before the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2. Hence these two Psalms have been said to traverse the whole history of Christ, in a Jewish point of view, from His entering into the trouble of Jacob (which they have in the latter day) until they know the Lord alone exalted in that day. It should touch our hearts as we think of Mary at His feet, anointing Him for burial, breathing out to God the words of this Psalm from her heart.

Verse 6 shows how the believer is taught to count on a continuance of testimony, in spite of all outward appearance of defeat, "In the name of our God, we will set up our banners" (*cf.* Ps. 60. 4). I think it will be found as a principle of the divine government that where, as in this Psalm, heart-association with Christ is known, there God will maintain His testimony (see Mary Magdalene, in John 20.). The verse closes, "Jehovah fulfil [or shall fulfil] all thy petitions." The petitions for the saints of the present period are recorded in the familiar words of John 17. Do we all from our hearts add these last five words of verse 6 to that prayer of Jesus? Surely the love that inspired such a prayer still looks for a corresponding desire in our hearts now.

PSALM 21. Most blessedly do we see a full answer in this Psalm to the petitions of the faithful in the preceding one, as well as a further testimony to man in the glorified Christ. This testimony is now rendered by the presence of the Spirit on earth (see John 15. 26, and 16. 8-11). The first is in grace, the second involves the judgment announced in the end of the Psalm (*cf.* Acts 17. 31). We may find its historical fulfilment in the state of

the disciples of Luke 24. 52, 53. Their understanding had been opened to understand the Scriptures, and their hearts were full of the unselfish joy that their Master, if dishonoured and refused by His people on earth, was honoured and accepted in heaven; but they still looked for earthly blessing, and the return of Messiah to deal in judgment with His foes. For such anticipations they had full Scripture warrant, and later the word of angelic testimony (Acts 1. 11). The Christian knows that these events are deferred while the co-heirs are being gathered, who shall not only share as His bride His throne and kingdom, but even now are privileged to know present union with Him by the surpassing greatness of the power of God (Eph. 1. 11, 19, 20). Accordingly, when *we* read, "The King shall joy in Thy power, O Jehovah; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice," the Spirit now indwelling us seeks to link us consciously in life with the exalted King that we may know the joy that is His to be ours. Similarly we may read verse 2 in the light of John 17. 1, 2; verse 3 with Hebrews 2. 9; verse 4 with Hebrews 5. 7; verse 5 with 1 Peter 3. 22, and Ephesians 1. 20, 21. Verse 6, which, literally translated, reads "Thou hast made Him to be blessings for ever," is illuminated to us in the wondrous statement that all spiritual blessings are ours in Christ, and the exceeding gladness of the end of the verse is the joy set before Him in His blessed pathway of faith (Heb. 12. 2).

Verse 7 seems to be the view of the remnant of His whole course now known to them by the Spirit. The terms employed are not appropriate to the heavenly position in which He is seen in the earlier part of the Psalm.

Following on this is the needed witness of judgment, for in no other way can the wicked be removed from the place of testimony, therefore at the right moment the judgment already revealed (Rom. 1. 18) comes into operation as the only way in which the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. 23. 9, 10). The retributive element in this is often exhibited in the Psalms, as here in verses 11, 12, in which the plots of the wicked are turned to their own confusion (*cf.* Ps. 7. 15). Thus is Jehovah exalted, and those who waited on Him sing and praise His power (ver. 13; *cf.* Rev. 19. 1-3).

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 6.

(JAMES BOYD).

“The Hour of Temptation.”

WE must now take up the question regarding the church's place during the time of tribulation through which the world will be called to pass before the public manifestation of Christ from heaven. There seem to be three classes of people which shall be specially tested by the trials which shall usher in the day of the Lord: the Jews, the nations, and them that dwell on the earth. These last seem to be a special class who have taken up the earth as their home and have all their interests there. Possibly those who had been professing Christians, and were, as far as profession goes, partakers of the heavenly calling, but who now definitely took up their dwelling in the earth. The hour of trial which is about to come upon all the habitable world, is in a special way to try these (Rev. 3. 10). They are responsible for the blood of those martyred for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held, whose souls are said to be under the altar, their lives poured out as a sacrifice for the truth (Rev. 6.). They rejoice when the beast, who comes up out of the abyss, overcomes and kills the two witnesses (Rev. 11) because by these they were tormented. They worship the beast, make an image to it, and are deceived by it (Rev. 13.). I cannot think that “*they that dwell on the earth*” refers to the whole population of the world, for I suppose the influence of the *beast* will not extend beyond the Roman Empire. They seem to me to be a class that in some way were supposed to have links with heaven. Apostate Christendom, I am persuaded, is that which is referred to. These, as we see, are in a very special way linked up with the fortunes of the beast—the revived Roman Empire, and its blasphemous head. Such have had the blessings of the gospel administered to them, but they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and therefore do they fall under the influence of the false prophet—the pseudo-Messiah—whose devilish subtlety and infernal wisdom are placed at the service of the Roman emperor. Under the influence of his power, signs, and wonders of

falsehood, apostate Christians and apostate Jews fall down together. To the Jews the Lord has said, “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). And of lifeless professors of Christianity we read, “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2.).

The Jews who are in the land of Palestine after the church has been removed from this world come under the wrath of God for their transgressions, and in a special way on account of their rejection of Christ. On this people the Lord tells His disciples there shall be great wrath (Luke 21. 23). This wrath will come upon them *as a nation*. When the storm is over He will be able to say to them, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (Isa. 54. 7-10). The nations also shall come under His wrath for their sins, and for their persecutions of God's earthly people, as we read in Isaiah 17.: “The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters, but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eventime trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them

that rob us." The climax of these judgments shall be at the appearing of Christ, when the beast and the false prophet shall be cast alive into the lake of fire, their followers slain (Rev. 19. 20, 21), and all nations which have gathered together to fight against Jerusalem shall fall down slain on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39. ; Zech. 14.). Then, He says, "I will set My glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against Me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword." The result of all the judgments shall be that both Israel and the spared nations shall be brought to know the Lord, shall submit themselves to Christ, and sit down at the feet of the Jew to be taught by him the right ways of the Lord (Ezek. 39. ; Isa. 66. 19).

But where is the church during the time of these governmental judgments? We need not search for it in the Old Testament, for it has no place there. Neither is it in any of the four Gospels as an existing institution. Neither can it be found in the Revelation from the beginning of chapter 4. till the end of chapter 18. In the past dispensation the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles, but in the present we have Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God (1 Cor. 10. 32). After the church period is over there will again be nothing but Jews and Gentiles. The church was formed at Pentecost, and previous to that had no actual existence. The disciple who followed the Lord in His pathway upon earth became afterwards incorporated into it, but that was not until the Lord was glorified and the Holy Spirit given. Some think they find it in Matthew 24. ; but it cannot be found before it existed. Such complain that, "Whatever has been felt to be a difficulty has been set aside by saying it is Jewish." But in this case there is no difficulty at all. Any one can see at a glance that the whole character of the chapter is Jewish,

and the teaching that which was needful for Jews in the circumstances described. The locality spoken of is Judea, the subjects are the temple, its desecration by the abomination of desolation being set up in the holy place, the coming of the Messiah according to Jewish expectations, the hindrance that the observance of the Sabbath might offer to flight, the gospel of the kingdom as it was then preached, and the cutting short of those distressful days, in order that any *flesh* might be saved for entrance into the earthly kingdom. A man must be blind indeed not to see that the whole teaching of the chapter has to do with a Jewish order of things only.

But we are told that "the persons who will use the warnings, and who will expect the manifest appearing of Christ, as here spoken of, must be believers in His divine mission, and thus their profession must simply be that of believers in His name; in other words, they must be part of the church of the first-born, to which all belong who accept the Lord Jesus as He is set forth by God." That they must be in some measure believers in Him as having come, and as having been rejected by the nation, I will not question; but it is another thing to say they must be part of the church of the first-born. I rather think people make a mistake regarding the intelligence of the remnant of the Jews who will be taken up by God after the church has been removed from this world. It seems to be taken for granted by some that they will have no other faith in a Messiah than the saints in past dispensations had, who looked for Him as yet to be born into the world. Therefore it is concluded by them that the New Testament will have no value for that remnant, because they shall not believe on Him as having come. I think such are greatly mistaken. As to the full extent of their knowledge I am without light, but I believe it to be a huge blunder to imagine they shall know *nothing* of what has taken place in the present dispensation. We read in Daniel 11. that "they that understand among the people shall instruct many;" and in chapter 12. 10, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." What understanding can it be that is referred to, if it be not the understanding of the Scrip-

tures? And there is enough in the Old Testament to put them in possession of the facts of the coming of Christ and His rejection by the nation. It will not be a very difficult thing, when they see this, to believe these things have had their fulfilment in Jesus. The leaders of the people were blamed for not understanding the voices of the prophets (Acts 13. 27), and their terrible blindness with respect to this is fully brought to light in Acts 28., when Paul set before them the truth concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets.

I am well aware that the disciples of our Lord had to have their understanding opened to understand the Scriptures; and this, I have no doubt, was by the gift of the Spirit of life (Luke 24. 45; John 20. 22); and we know that before the day of the Lord comes the Spirit of God will be poured out upon all flesh, and the young men shall see visions, and the old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2.). Therefore I conclude there will be a great deal more knowledge given to the remnant of Israel than people generally imagine. And I have very little doubt that a good deal of the New Testament will be of great service to them in their sorrows.

Of course, when they see Him it will be a very different matter. They will understand to the full then the enormity of the guilt of the nation; and their repentance will be greatly deepened, but it will have begun before that day. We get an illustration of the Lord's dealings with them in Joseph's ways with his brethren. When he spoke roughly to them, charged them with being spies, and bound Simeon to hold him as a hostage against their coming again with their youngest brother, they are greatly troubled, and their guilt in putting Joseph out of the way rises up before them, and they say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." This comes upon their consciences, and in all that happens to them they feel that God is dealing with them about their wickedness in this matter. But when he made himself known to them, we are left to conjecture what their feelings must have been. What shame and confusion of face must theirs have been, augmented surely by the grace shown to them by the one whom they had so cruelly wronged!

Such will it be with the remnant of Israel in the day in which God begins to deal with them concerning their rejection of Christ. But His appearing, though it will deepen their repentance, will heal their woes.

But the rise of Antichrist is also adduced as a proof that the church must go through the sorrows that will be brought to pass by his wickedness. We are asked, "Will any one with the Scripture before him say that he there learns that the rise of Antichrist shall not precede the coming of Christ? Will he say that the warnings of the inspired Apostle have no application?" All who believe the Holy Scriptures will admit that when the Lord appears to deal with the condition of things that shall be found on the earth at that day, Antichrist will have arisen, and will have climbed to the height of his infernal ambition. But that is not the question at all. The question is, "Shall Antichrist have arisen before the first stage of that coming has been reached, when the Lord comes into the air, and we rise to meet Him before we appear with Him?" But there are really no warnings given to the church regarding *the* Antichrist. Christians are informed of his coming, as they are of all other events, whatever they may be. In 2 Thessalonians 2. we are told that the *day of the Lord* cannot come until the apostasy takes place, and the man of sin is revealed. But as to the fact which above all others should give them assurance that that day had not yet dawned upon the world, he reminds them that we must be gathered to Him in the air before He can appear. But the warnings of Scripture regarding Antichrist do not relate to the personal Antichrist, but to the spirit of Antichrist, and to the many antichrists which are signs that we have reached the last time (1 John 2. 18-26; 4. 3; 2 John 7). Regarding the personal Antichrist there are no warnings addressed to the church. It will not be on earth in his day.

A favourite scripture with those who contend that the church goes through the great tribulation is Revelation 7. 9-17. But if we examine this scripture, we shall not find that it gives the least support to such a doctrine. Almost everything said of this company connects it with earth. They came out

of the great tribulation. The writer of the pamphlet to which I have referred in these papers says they "are set forth as those who have passed through great tribulation." This would imply that they had an existence as saints before the great tribulation began. Then, to make any opposition to this ridiculous, he says in a footnote, "Some who saw that the company of the redeemed in Revelation 7. are indeed the church, and who yet would not admit that the church can be in the special tribulation, rashly cut the knot by asserting that this company were not in the tribulation at all; 'they came *out* of great tribulation' . . . they came *away from it*, so as not to have been in it." With this school of thought there is a very special deftness by which those who do not think with them are made as ridiculous as possible. The fact is, his own statement regarding the passage to which reference is made, conveys just as unscriptural a thought to the mind as does that of his opponent. Now Scripture does not say these came *through* the great tribulation, but *out* of it. I think that way of putting it carries the thought to the mind that these had their origin in the tribulation. "In wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3. 2) is the prayer of the Prophet; and this shall be well answered, for in the midst of the outpouring of the wrath that shall in those days threaten to make an end of the human race altogether, it shall come to pass "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2. 21). And this white-robed multitude, I take it, are the fruit of the grace and mercy of God in the midst of the great tribulation. Had they had a previous existence as saints of God, I feel confident they would have been spoken of as having come *through*, not *out of*, the great tribulation.

Then again, they are "*before* the throne," not *around* it, as those in heaven are said to be. *Before* the throne gives the idea of blamelessness and acceptance (Eph. 1. 4; Col. 1. 22; Jude 24). I do not think "washed their robes" refers to redemption, but rather that the blood of the Lamb was the power of their separation from the evil of the world. Their "*robes*" refers to their practical ways. And the fact

of its being said of them that they shall neither hunger, nor thirst, nor suffer from the heat of the sun nor from anything else that would scorch them, and that the Lamb would shepherd them, and lead them to living fountains of waters, surely gives to the mind the impression of an earthly scene. He who sits on the throne is said to spread His tabernacle over them, putting one in mind of God's care of Israel in the wilderness, leading the thought to an earthly people under the shepherd care of a Saviour-God. Certainly, without doing violence to the text, the church cannot be found here. Nor shall it be on earth in the day of these woes, for the Lord says, "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 that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3. 10).

Both Old Testament and New present Jerusalem, Judæa, and the Jew as the centre of all the thoughts of God, and of all His dealings with the earth in those last days. The church is nowhere visible. This habitation of God through the Spirit is altogether ignored. Could this possibly be, if it were in this scene at all? I do not for a moment believe it could. Indeed, I am sure it would have a very large recognition. The "body of Christ" and the "house of God" could not surely be so utterly ignored.

But the truth is, there is no reason why the church should go through these terrible days; days in which the spirit of lawlessness and opposition to God advance with lightning speed, and in which all forces arrayed against the Lord and His Anointed manifest themselves, and gather themselves together that they may receive at the hand of Christ the judgment they so richly merit, and which has been so long delayed. And this in order that He may take the kingdom, and cause the meek to inherit the earth. But the church, being heavenly, and never having to do with the government of the earth, neither stands in the way of the Lord's taking the kingdom, nor does it wait the removal of the wicked from the earth, that it may have its portion. It is heavenly, and has its portion in heaven; and though it will

rejoice to see the Lord take the throne which rightly belongs to Him, and though it will reign with Him, it has with Him a still more glorious inheritance, for God has given Him to be Head over ALL THINGS to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1. 22, 23).

Thank God, we have found a Deliverer from the coming wrath. We have already been justified by His blood, and by Him we shall also be saved from wrath. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for us, in order that ere the wrath comes, whether we are amongst the living or amongst the dead, we shall live together with Him. He will deliver us from the wrath by removing us from the scene upon which His wrath shall be visited, before that wrath begins to burn, so that when it is being poured out upon the earth we shall be on high, living

together with Him. He will take us out of the world, as He did Enoch, before the judgment falls upon it, while the Jew will be left to go through it, and to feel something of the fear of it also. But he will be saved through it, and be able to say at the close of it, "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHIOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, make known His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He has done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12.).

Answers to Correspondents.

The Claims of God's Throne.

H. H. H.—The expression "Christ fully satisfied every claim of God's throne by His death," and similar ones to which you refer, have in view the justice of God. There are many passages in Scripture which tell of God's love to men, but we shall find that they are invariably connected with the gift of His Son and His death for us (see John 3. 16; Rom. 5. 8; 1 John 4. 9, 10). But why could not this wonderful love have been manifested to us in some other way? Because of our sin and God's justice. He must be just, and sin is a challenge to His justice; His throne is assailed by it, it is rebellion against His supremacy in the universe, and God would cease to be God if He took no account of it. The holiness of His nature, the righteousness of His character, and the justice of His throne alike demand that judgment shall be executed against sin; and not only so, but the good of the multitudes of His creatures who fill the various spheres of His universe makes it essential that the Supreme Ruler should be just.

Justice must be maintained in a land like this, and so the police, the magistrates, the judges are employed and

ordained for the maintenance of the King's authority and the peace of His Majesty's lieges. If a man breaks any law of the land its penalty must be inflicted, and until this is done its claims are not satisfied. The governments of this world would often err from justice and turn the blind eye to law-breaking and corruption, but God cannot fail. He is righteous in all His dealings with men. Now all have sinned and in consequence have become subject to the judgment of God; but if God had executed that judgment upon men He must have banished them from His presence for ever; they could never have known the love He bears towards them, and His thoughts of blessing towards them must have perished. If, on the other hand, He had sacrificed His justice and passed over their sin, His throne would have fallen and evil would have triumphed for ever. The great question was: How could God save men righteously? By what way shall His love bless them and yet be consistent with the holy claims of the throne? The cross of Christ is the triumphant answer to the question. There the infinitely holy Son of God was made sin for us, and upon Him, who is the propitiation for our sins,

the judgment fell without mitigation. None other than He could have taken this place.

“No victim of inferior worth
Could ward the stroke that justice aimed;
For none but He in heaven or earth
Could offer that which justice claimed.”

He, because He was God, knew to the uttermost limit the just claims of the eternal throne of God, He alone, a Man, holy and without sin, could meet those claims as our substitute. He met those claims by the sacrifice of Himself, enduring the wrath of God for us until justice was satisfied. He gave up His life, and His precious blood was shed. This is our redemption price, and through this God has been manifested in the fullness of His love and can righteously justify the believer in Jesus. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is God's seal upon His sacrifice, the proof that justice of God has been fully maintained, while grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

The Original Scriptures.

J. S. R.—Your friend is quite right when he says that none of the original MSS. of the New Testament Scriptures now exist as far as is known. There are translations, either from these original writings or copies of them, into other languages, the oldest of these being the Syriac, which dates back to the end of the first or beginning of the second century. The Greek manuscript copies are of a later date, the oldest belonging to the fourth century.

This has no need to alarm any one. God could have preserved the originals through all the vicissitudes through which His church has passed if it had so pleased Him. In His wisdom He has not done so. Who could have held them? And since, through their carnality, Christians early divided in sects and factions, what conflicts would have been waged for the possession of them; and as idolatry raised its corrupt head in the midst of the church they would probably have been made objects of worship. On the other hand, copies were made of them and scattered all over the world where Christians then were. These copies were re-copied, and it is from the comparing of these, of which there are hundreds, and the various ancient translations, that our modern versions have been made.

“It is a good providence and a great blessing that so many manuscripts of the New Testament are still amongst us; some procured from Egypt, others from Asia, others from the Western churches. For the very distance of places as well as numbers of the books demonstrate that there could be no collusion, no altering, nor interpolating one copy by another, nor all by any of them.

“There are variations in these copies, but it is important to see that these variations do not affect any of the great doctrines of Christianity. The divinity [deity] of Christ, His spotless life, His atoning death, His resurrection and ascension, all remain untouched. The fall of man, the glad tidings of salvation, the eternal security of the believer, and the eternal punishment of the unbeliever, all remain intact. The descent of the Holy Ghost, and the second advent of our Lord, all remain unshaken.”

If you wish to pursue the subject there is a very interesting and easily read volume, from which the above quotation is made, entitled “Our Father's Will. A Short History of the Text of the New Testament,” published by Morrish, 20 Paternoster Square, London, price 1s. 6d.

The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt. 25. 31-46).

G. McK.—*Will the nations here spoken of be judged each nation as a nation collectively or will each individual in each nation be judged individually?*

We judge from the wording of the passage that it will be primarily a national judgment, though being a final judgment for those who come into it, there must be individual scrutiny also; but what will be in manifestation will be what is national. The sheep who go into eternal life are evidently born of God, and this must be an individual work, we believe; and those who are condemned to everlasting punishment, while doubtless condemned for national indifference to the brethren of the King, must each one individually have been party to this indifference.

If at the judgment of the nations, which takes place at the commencement of the millennium, all the wicked are eliminated, where do the multitudes who are deceived of Satan and fight against God (Rev. 20.) come from?

We must not conclude that the whole population of the earth will come up for judgment at this time, but those who have come into contact with the Lord's messengers. There will be those who will only yield a feigned obedience to His authority (Ps. 18. 44, margin). Then vast numbers will be born during the millennium, in whose hearts there will be no work of grace, and these will be Satan's willing and eager dupes when he is loosed for a season from the bottomless pit.

Does the "kingdom" in verse 34 refer to the millennial kingdom? If so, what does verse 46 mean by "these shall go into life eternal"? Must we conclude that "eternal life" and the thousand years of Christ's reign are synonymous?

Yes, the kingdom there spoken of is the earthly kingdom of the Lord. Eternal life in its earthly aspect is connected with this kingdom, it will be known and enjoyed there; but while the kingdom will cease eternal life cannot; and those who enter it here will not pass out of it at the close of the millennium; they will have a place, we judge, in the new earth (Rev. 21.). But as to this, Scripture is silent.

If the sheep are blest and the goats condemned because of the way they have treated the brethren of the King, does it not seem as though they were saved or judged by works and not by faith?

It is characteristic of Matthew that you are known by your fruits; the good tree brings forth good fruit, and the evil tree evil fruit. James 2. is on the same line. We learn from other scriptures how the tree is made good. Faith lies behind every good work, yet it remains true that eternal life will be given to those who seek glory, honour, and incorruptibility in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men (Romans 2.). The wicked shall all be judged according to their works. The goats will characteristically be wicked both nationally and individually, though even out of these nations there will be found some who have done the works of faith and so will be blessed accordingly.

John 5. 28, 29.

J. M., N.-on-T.—The Lord is speaking here of His authority to judge men, and

that not the living only, but also the dead. Their judgment, who have to come into it, will take place at their resurrection, and His voice of power will bring this about. There is no ground in this passage for the doctrine of "soul sleeping." Those who have died in Christ are consciously in their spirits with Him (Phil. 1. 21, 23), and those who die in their sins are consciously in torment (Luke 16. 24).

Our Capacity in Heaven.

SURREY.—We know nothing of heaven except what is revealed to us in the Scriptures, and we know of no scripture which would lead us to suppose that our *capacity* for the enjoyment of heaven will be *limited* according to the measure in which we have made progress in the truth in this life. We speak of heaven here as it has been opened up to us as *the Father's house*. There we shall know as we are known; we shall bear the image of the Son; and, as sons before the Father, our *capacity* will be commensurate with the glory given to us, that capacity will be formed by the Holy Ghost. Our place there is the fruit of the eternal purpose and exceeding grace of God, and our capacity for the enjoyment of it will be, we believe, according to that same grace.

There are certainly degrees of apprehension of the truth here; all know in part, though some being spiritual have advanced more than others in the truth, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (1 Cor. 13. 10). The lack of progress in believers is not because of lack of capacity, but because of carnality.

Our *kingdom position*, we believe, whether on the heavenly side or the earthly, will be affected by our lives here, will be given to us according to our faithfulness and service, and these must in their turn be very greatly affected by our progress in or indifference to the truth, and rewards have to do with the kingdom. This is made plain by many scriptures. Further than this we do not care to go, but if those who have made the statement of which you write can bring forth their scripture in proof of it we shall be glad to see it.

The Meat that Endureth.

(J. T. MAWSON)

TO feed five thousand men, having appetites sharpened by long fasting and the keen mountain air, was a problem beyond the powers of the disciples; for even if in that desert place they could have commanded the silver wherewith to buy the bread, where could the bakery be found that could produce enough for each to have a little? But it was a simple matter to Jesus, for He was the Creator, and He had fed the multitudes of men that had lived since time began, and He feeds the multitudes still, for in Him we live, move, and have our being, so that five loaves and two small fishes sufficed, and when all were filled twelve baskets of fragments remained. That satisfying meal appealed to the people, and they sought the Lord the next day also, because they "*did eat of the loaves and were filled.*" Beyond that they had no thought. They laboured for the meat that perishes, regardless of that which endures unto eternal life. How terribly, how pathetically sad it is that this should be characteristic of the whole human race; that they should be governed alone by what is seen and felt and tasted; that food and clothing should be appreciated, but the God who gives these things ignored. That the body and its needs and appetites should be supreme, and the spirit, endowed with an endless existence, should receive neither thought nor care. How blind, how utterly insensible, how dead, men have become under the power of sin to what is good and true and eternal! So blind, so insensible, so dead, that when EMMANUEL came amongst them they followed Him, but only for the bread that perishes.

This is the universal snare, and the vast majority of Christians—yes, even Christians—have fallen into it. What we shall eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed is the ab-

sorbing pursuit, the overwhelming and soul-destroying question; and the BREAD OF GOD, the meat that endureth, is neglected and ignored. It is the infirmity of our flesh, but it often becomes the sin of our souls, for it drags us down in our living to the level of the nations of the world that know not God, making us distrustful of His lovingkindness towards us. To meet our infirmity and encourage our faith the Lord has said, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. . . . your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Luke 4. 29, 30). These words of His were spoken to relieve us of all anxious care as to temporal things, so that we might turn our thoughts to Himself who came from heaven as the bread of life that men might come to Him and never hunger, and believe on Him and never thirst.

But what a world it was into which He came! It had neither use nor room for Jesus. At His birth it awarded Him a place amongst the beasts in a stable, and at His death it numbered Him with transgressors upon a Roman gibbet. It gave Him no home while He lived, and it would have cast His scarred yet sacred body into a dishonoured grave when He died but for the intervention of God. He visited the world, moved by the infinite compassion of His heart towards it, but it did not know Him. It did not, it would not appreciate Him. His labours of love in the midst of it neither softened towards Him, nor won its heart for God. It hated Him with an inveterate and unconquerable hatred, and the night stars witnessed His sorrow thereat upon the hills of Judea.

Men saw no beauty in Him; they had neither desire nor taste for the Bread of God. He was despised and rejected by them, and when at last

the reins were thrown upon their necks, and they were permitted to do their will without restraint, they rose up as one man to be rid of Him. They accused Him falsely, spat in His face, scourged Him, and made His apparent weakness their jest. They said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be OURS." So they crucified Him, the Lord of glory, and so they advertised to the universe their determined rebellion against God and His Christ.

What a world! and what men! How incurably bad, how utterly blind, how alienated from God they have proved themselves to be when tested by the supreme test of EMMANUEL.

But what a background was this gross darkness for the manifestation of the living grace of God come down to men in Christ! How brightly shone the light of life in Him, as He went about doing good, undeterred by the world's ingratitude, and unruffled by the hatred of men! No earthly smile cheered His lonely pathway, but no frown gathered upon His gracious brow because of this, though His eyes often poured out their sorrow for men—the sorrow of unrequited love. Yet unresentful and unresisting, and with unwearied patience He revealed the Father's heart and name. He spake words such as no prophet in ancient times had spoken, for "never man spake like this Man." His words were spirit and life, they were words of living grace, going in at the ears and down in quickening power into the depths of the soul of every man who would listen, for He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5. 24). And those who heard and believed said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6. 68, 69).

His words abide for us, those wonderful words of life, the revelation of God. But if they were to be rightly appropriated by our souls, if we were to feed upon them, and upon Him who spoke them, as *the Meat that endureth unto eternal life*, He must die. Yes, Jesus must die! This He knew, and declared, when He said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6. 51). So He passed on to death that we might eat His flesh and drink His blood, for "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (ver. 53).

At His death sinful man, unfettered and unafraid, consummated his rebellion against his Creator; evil rose up, as though omnipotent, to triumph over the goodness of God; and Satan appeared in all his power to crush into everlasting and disgraceful oblivion the Heir of all things. It was needful that God should triumph over these marshalled forces of evil, and He did triumph in the person of that lonely Sufferer about whom the fierce conflict raged—triumphed so completely that His majesty is maintained, His eternal justice declared, and His love, and grace, and mercy brought into full manifestation. How absolute must that justice be that could not spare the beloved Son when He stood in the sinners' stead; how inconceivable is that love which gave Him even to the shedding of His blood for sinners; how great is that might that annulled for ever the power of Satan; how precious that grace, the grace of the tender-hearted Jesus, declarer of the heart of God, which moved Him to cry out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." There are wonders in the death of Jesus that eternity will not exhaust; in it every force that could have been a challenge to God in His nature, or in any one of His attributes, has

been met and silenced, and the full glory of what He is has shone out in a glorious shining. How great is Jesus who has accomplished these things by His dying! How great the grace that has made Him so precious to us that our chief delight is to consider Him! Incomparably lovely and matchless Saviour! Glorious Son of the living God, we worship Thee.

The death of Jesus is life-giving and life-sustaining. As in faith we turn to it as our one and only hope we find that by it we are delivered from the death and everlasting chaos that Satan intended should overwhelm the whole race of men; we find that by it we are saved from the condemnation of God which our sins had made us deserve; as we identify ourselves with it, and appropriate it to ourselves, we find that it has

separated us from the world that knew not the Son of God, and from that sinful and shameful race of man that reviled and despised Him, a race to which we were bound in origin, life, nature, and practice. What a relief it is to know that the death of Christ has made an everlasting breach between the believer and that world and that race of man. We are dead by the death of Christ, yet we live because He lives. He is our life, and we feed upon Him, upon the soul-satisfying and enduring Bread of life. It is thus that God is known by us and we live and are nourished as we feed upon what He is, revealed in Christ His sent One. Our hearts are charmed and won, and Christ becomes the Object of our living, and we worship Him, and witness for Him in the power of this new life—in spirit and in truth.

The Folly of Scepticism.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

SCIENCE is often thrust into the witness-box by the enemies of Christianity, and cross-examined on the assumption that she is a hostile witness. *True Science*, however, never uttered a word that is inimical to Christianity. But her place in the witness-box is sometimes usurped by Pseudo-Science, whose utterances have, times without number, been proved false, who has had to eat her own words again and again, but who continues unabashed to offer her prejudiced and untrustworthy evidence.

Under her baneful guidance men exclude *God* from their theories of the origin and development of the universe. They rack their brains and invent their hypotheses to account for the existence of things in some other way than by the creation and providence of God.

I have lying before me a cutting—I know not from whence taken—aptly portraying the foolish and futile efforts of pseudo-science to explain

existing conditions without reference to God.

“Suppose,” says the writer, “some beings who have power to visit the earth, and see what is going on here, but are absolutely unable to see, hear, or touch any animal (or person), living or dead, though with a perfect perception of all plants and inanimate matter.

“Such beings would everywhere see matter in motion, but no apparent cause for the motion. They would see dead trees on the ground, and living trees being eaten away near the base by axes or saws which would appear to move spontaneously. They would see those trees gradually become logs by the loss of all their limbs, then move about, travel along roads, float down rivers, come to curious machines by which they are split up into various shapes; then move away to where some great structure seems to be growing up, where not only wood, but brick, and stone and iron and glass in an infinite

variety of shapes, also move about, and ultimately fix themselves in certain positions.

“Special students among these observers would then devote themselves to follow back each of these materials to their separate sources, and, after years thus spent, would ultimately arrive at the great generalization that all came primarily out of the earth. They would make themselves acquainted with all the physical and chemical forces and would endeavour to explain all they saw by recondite actions of these forces. They would argue that what they saw was due to the forces they had traced, in building up and modifying the crust of the earth. To those who pointed to all this ‘motion of matter’ as positive evidence of design, of directive power, of an unseen and unknown mind or minds, they would exclaim: ‘You are wholly unscientific; we know the physical and chemical forces at work in this curious world, and if we study it long enough we shall find that known forces will explain it all.’

“If we suppose that all the smaller objects can only be seen by microscopes, and that with improved instruments various things like knives, forks, dishes, glasses, etc., and even our watches, and our needles and pins, become perceptible, as well as the food and drinks which are seen also to move about and disappear; and when all this is observed to recur at definite intervals every day, there would be great jubilation over the discovery,

and it would be loudly proclaimed that with still better microscopes all would be explained in terms of matter and motion.”

Does not the above supposition set forth the attitude of those who in the name of science ignore or deny God? If they do not in positive terms deny His existence, they refuse all recognition of His active control in the ordering of the universe. True science finds everywhere the evidence of God’s handiwork and power; the heavenly bodies in the mathematical exactitude of their movements; the lowest organisms, as well as the highest, in their structure and manifest design, all bear testimony to the wisdom and power of a Creator. But the philosophers of the day attribute all this to the operation of physical and chemical laws, forgetting that those very laws afford proof of design, and therefore of a Designer.

Surely there has never lived an individual to whom the epithet of “fool” more rightly belongs than to him who shuts his eyes to evidence of the most convincing kind, and persists in his disbelief, denying God in His Word and in His works.

How true is the saying of the prophet, that on the one hand, He “turneth the ‘wise men’ backward, and maketh their ‘knowledge’ foolish,” and on the other hand, “confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers” (Isa. 44. 25, 26).

The child of God does not look backward to gain fresh energy. His energy is the energy of hope, and not of retrospection. Pride looks back, and is satisfied with the past, and wraps

itself in a garment of smug complacency. It keeps watch over conquered treasures. But the energy of hope and faith reaches out and presses on to the final goal.

“Why are ye fearful, oh ye of little faith?” You see the leak at which the water came in to sink their spirits—it was “little faith.” It is not what God is in Himself that pacifies or disquiets a soul in straits, but our apprehensions of what He is. If a man fears that the house will fall on his head in a storm, though it be as immovable as a rock, yet that will not ease his mind till he thinks so.

The Knowledge of the Father.

JAMES BOYD.

FATHER! Most High! Most Holy! Most Supreme!
 Revealed in Jesus, by whose mighty hand
 Thou sentest forth, from death us to redeem,
 That we in light before Thy face should stand
 A multitude of sons, a blameless band,
 Within Thy house, where deathless glories gleam,
 Where myriads celestial stand before Thee,
 For ever and for ever to adore Thee.

Our voices rise to Thee in ceaseless song,
 Thy wonders we declare, we worship Thee;
 Glory and greatness unto Thee belong!
 Low at Thy footstool glad we bow the knee—
 Free in Thy presence, by Thy favour free!—
 And tell Thee what our ransomed spirits long
 To tell Thee, and shall tell Thee, gracious Father,
 When in Thy house with gladness great we gather.

Thou art our Father, and we know Thy name,
 That name by Jesus unto us declared;
 He who to earth in Thy compassions came,
 And in the sorrows of Thy chosen shared,
 And caused Thy voice life-giving to be heard
 Within their souls, and gave them right to claim
 Relationship with Thee in spheres supernal,
 And in the blessedness of life eternal.

In Thee is our delight, for we are Thine,
 Thy children tho' we wander in this waste;
 Born of Thy Spirit, by Thy life divine
 Quickened, and in Thy Well-Beloved graced.
 Onward and upward to the goal we haste,
 There in His beauty with Himself to shine;
 There where Thy counsels—creature thought confounding—
 Crowned are with glory and with grace abounding.

Filled with Thy favour great our hearts o'erflow!
 Speak we our praises in Thy holy ear.
 How hast Thou given us in grace to know
 Love that has banished from our bosoms fear!
 Dear to Thy heart are we as Christ is dear,
 Loved with the love which dwelt on Him below;
 Love giving everything, and nought demanding!
 Love that surpasses all our understanding!

O the delight, the bliss, of knowing Thee,
 The satisfaction of the human heart!
 O the deep blessedness of being free
 To have with Jesus everlasting part!
 Thou the true source of every blessing art,
 The fount of infinite felicity,
 And love, and life, and goodness, grace, and glory!
 Radiant in Jesus and His wondrous story!

One Like Unto the Son of Man.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 2.

“Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”—(Rev. 1. 7, 8).

“SILENT lay the little Island before me in the morning twilight. Here and there an olive breaks the monotony of the dreary waste. The sea was still as the grave. Patmos reposed in it like a dead saint.” Thus wrote Tischendorf when he visited the scene of John’s banishment. In that lonely rock-bound isle in the Ægean Sea the exile celebrated the glories of the Prince of the kings of the earth, whose precious blood had emancipated him from the thralldom of his sins; but now the adoring worship of the priest is exchanged for the solemn warning of the prophet. The anthem ceased, the doxology closed with a solemn “Amen,” and the singer enters on his office as a seer. He does not now speak as the beloved apostle calling upon us to “Behold” the love which has set us in the children’s place, but as the herald who calls upon us to “Behold” the One to whom glory and dominion belong, coming to claim His rights, clothed with imperial dignity, enthroned in clouds.

The Book of the Revelation is written to show to Christ’s *servants* things which must shortly come to pass. It is, from first to last, instruction to “bondmen,” through a fellow-bondman. Except verses 4 to 6 of chapter 1. and 16 to 21 of chapter 22., our privileges as saints, and our relationships as sons are not alluded to. It is John carrying out his service as a *steward* of the mysteries entrusted to him connected with government—not grace.

Son and servant, saint and steward, are not interchangeable terms. We are saints by Divine call, children by Divine birth. Every saint should

serve, every child obey, but neither service nor obedience can possibly affect the grace displayed in our calling, nor the love which has brought us into the relationship of children. These privileges are not dependent on our conduct as servants, or our faithfulness as stewards. They are the fruit of Divine purpose, the expression of sovereign grace, and as surely as the call has reached us, we shall certainly find ourselves conformed to the image of God’s Son in glory, for “whom He called, them He also justified: whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom. 8. 30). Nothing on our part formed these links; they are the expression of God’s great love towards us. We may fail in the practical enjoyment of our privileges as saints, or in the realization of the Father’s love to us as children, but this in no way changes our sonship or saintship.

This is not so when we are viewed in responsibility as servants, or in faithfulness as stewards. If a servant neglects his work, or a steward wastes his master’s goods, he may be discharged, and the relationship is at an end. On the other hand, if obedience marks the servant, and diligence in caring for his master’s interests the steward, recompense will follow. Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. We cannot too strongly emphasize the difference in the relationship of son and servant. The first can neither be renewed nor terminated. The second may be terminated at any time and renewed again and again.

If we bear this in mind we shall understand the different standpoints from

which John addresses us in the fourth Gospel and the Revelation respectively. In the Gospel it is the grace which has given us the privilege of sonship (John 1. 12); in the Revelation the responsibility of servants. There he inscribes himself, John the "servant" five times, whereas in the Gospel he five times speaks of himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." There we see him reposing on the bosom of that gracious Saviour who had brought him into His banqueting-house and spread over him His banner of love. The themes which occupy his pen, and fill his soul with delight from start to finish, are the glories of the Word become flesh, the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth; traversing a pathway of rejection, and illuminating it with the unfolding of the life He had come to impart to man; and the love of which He was the full and perfect expression.

There we are viewed as the gift of the Father to the Son, the possessors of a life we can never lose, as the objects of a love which can never end, in a family relationship which can never be broken—His Father our Father, His God our God.

In Patmos all is different—we travel into other scenes and circumstances; it is no longer the Father and the children, the love of God to a perishing world, the lowly Jesus whose bosom was a pillow for John's head; we are not here in company with God manifest in flesh, stooping in grace to give living water to a defiled woman at Samaria's well, beholding the varied glories and beauties which shone in the Lamb of God, and the Living Bread in its perfect adaptability to man. Here our gaze is directed to one like unto the *Son of Man* "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

"And his feet like unto fine brass,

as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

"And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."

We might well inquire: Is this awe-inspiring Being clothed with majesty, in flowing robes and garments down to the foot, the same Son of man who with girded garments once took a slave's place and washed John's feet? Are those hairs and that head which proclaim Him to be the Ancient of days, whose goings forth have been from everlasting, the same head which was wet with the night dew on the mountain-top, when bent in prayer to God? Are those eyes which shoot forth fiery judgment the same which wept over guilty Jerusalem? Are those feet, burnished like brass glowing in a furnace, the same feet the Pharisee did not think worth washing, and which once rested in weariness at Sychar's well? Is that voice which thunders like a mighty cataract the same which once invited, in tones of tender compassion, the labouring and heavy-laden to come and rest themselves in the Revealer of the Father?

John had known a dependent Man, who ever spoke of Himself as the "Son of Man," wandering, a homeless stranger, not having where to lay His head. He had gazed into those eyes from whence the tears flowed at the grave of Lazarus; he had seen the marred visage of that same Son of Man as He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; but who is this resplendent "Son of Man" invested with the emblems of transcendent majesty? Is this the same Person? Yes, It is the same lowly Jesus to whom Salome—John's mother—ministered of her substance, whose feet Mary anointed with costly nard, whose tender look

broke Peter's heart in Pilate's judgment-hall; the very same, but here revealed as the "Almighty" "Who is"—subsists in the present; "Who was"—whose existence is commensurate with the past ages of eternity; "Who is to come"—who covers all the future, abides eternally—having no end as He had no beginning. The first and the last—none before Him, none having precedence over Him, none after Him, the beginning and the ending of all God's ways, counsels, and purposes; the Alpha and Omega who makes those counsels known and will make them good. He has lain among the dead, but is alive again, and lives to die no more. All power in heaven and on earth is His, all judgment is in His hand; to Him alone belongs a righteous sceptre, to Him every knee must bow.

Behold Him, ye sons of men who dare to assert that only a difference of degree—not of kind—exists between you and this glorious "Son of Man," that you are, equally with Him, a "Son of God." Contemplate this sublime spectacle, dwell upon those eyes which flame with fire, listen to that

"Voice as mighty thunder,
Sounding in eternal roar."

Think of those feet, strong as brass, burning as a furnace, ready to crush beneath them all who refuse to bow to His sceptre when He comes in solemn state and flaming fire to execute judgment. Gaze upon Him till you are bowed with holy awe and reverential fear at those feet, crying: "Woe is me, I am undone"; "I am a man of unclean lips"; "I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts"! Fix your gaze upon Him, until—like Daniel by the great river Hiddekel—your comeliness is turned into corruption, until—like Ezekiel by the river Chebar, and John in his cave at Patmos—you are bowed at His feet as dead, and own yourself a mass of moral corruption, the very opposite of One who could become dead, and even physically see no corruption.

Such visions as those that Daniel the prophet and John the seer beheld are intended to produce in us holy reverence; to remind us that the same Jesus who came so low in grace, is the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, between whom and seraphim, cherubim, and archangel, saints and men is an unbridgeable distance. However near to God we are brought as sons, however richly blessed as saints, He, in whom we are blessed, is immeasurably above us, for He ever was, is, and will be, God over all—blessed for ever.

Every eye shall see Him invested with royal authority to execute judgment. Yes, *every eye!* The Son of Man who was rejected as a Saviour is coming as a Judge. He will descend with a vesture dipped in blood, diadems on His brow, sword in hand, in flaming fire and feet of brass, to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. At His advent the blasphemer's lips will be closed, the scorner's mouth be stopped, the infidel's taunt cease; and instead, a deep, hopeless wail will arise, such as that wrung from those death-stricken homes in Egypt on that night when the destroying angel passed through, smiting the firstborn in every house unsheltered by blood. He will come clothed with a cloud, seated "on," "in," and "with" clouds (Dan. 7. 13; Matt. 24. 30; Mark 13. 26), His face as the sun shineth in its strength, His feet as a pillar of fire, and setting them on sea and land, will thunder forth sevenfold judgment with a terror-striking voice as a lion roareth (see Rev. 10. 1-3).

He will come with the angels of His power to clear out of His kingdom all those that offend and do iniquity, taking vengeance on them that *know not God* and *obey not the gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (see 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9). [Note "destruction," not "annihila-

tion," for all these shall appear again at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20. 12).

His epiphany will cause anguish and sorrow to that guilty nation whose High Priest secured His condemnation, and the revived Roman empire whose Governor signed His death warrant and whose soldier pierced His side. These shall, in that day, feel the wrath of that Lamb whose sacrificial blood they have refused; as indeed will all the kindreds of the earth.

Need we add that this is not the way we Christians are to look for Him. Our portion is to anticipate a bridal morn, when a betrothed virgin will leave this earth, caught up in clouds to meet her spouse. We are not waiting for a judge; or a mighty conqueror, in flaming fire, and vesture dipped in blood; whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength, attended by myriads of angelic hosts, tens of thousands of saints swelling the triumph of His train. We are not waiting for a king wielding an iron sceptre to reign and rule over us. No! We are waiting for the Bridegroom who loved the church, and for which He gave Himself, which He now loves and cherishes, and for which with patient longing He waits, to present her to Himself spotless and unblemished. We are not waiting for our Lord as the Sun of Righteousness, but as the Star of the Morning. Whilst all remains dark here, our eyes are directed to a lustrous light, brilliantly shining—like a beacon amid the darkness—beckoning us up, *from* earth to heaven. We are children waiting for the home-call, listening for that voice which shall bid the many brethren rise up to meet the Firstborn, and introduce them to those heavenly courts with a "Behold I and the children Thou hast given Me." We are the "preserved" awaiting the "presentation" day, when with exceeding joy we shall be presented faultless and blameless. We are the redeemed, waiting for their Redeemer to complete His work and clothe the living, and raise the dead in bodies of glory like

His own. When He comes we shall disappear from this world, and be received up in clouds to our great and eternal joy.

This event is known as the "rapture," or secret "catching away" of the saints, and must not be confounded with the "appearing," when the Son of Man will be revealed sitting on the clouds. Then we shall "appear with Him"; now our life is hid with Him (Col. 3. 2). Confusing the coming of Christ *for* His people and His coming back *with* His people has led to serious misunderstanding of both. They are totally distinct. To rightly divide the word of truth we must distinguish between them. Enoch's prophecy is the first mention of the appearing; John's last message speaks of the rapture. The "appearing" is largely spoken of in the Old Testament; Prophets and Psalms celebrate it. The "rapture" is a secret only revealed in the New Testament. At the rapture we are caught up, at the appearing we come down; at the rapture we go to meet the Bridegroom, at the appearing we come back with the King; at the rapture we shall behold a Saviour, at the appearing we shall accompany the Judge; at the rapture He will take the heavenly saints out of the world and leave the wicked, at the appearing He will remove the wicked and leave the earthly saints in the world.

The rapture will conduct us to the joys of the Father's house, the appearing will usher in a glorious reign over the earth. The rapture is the closing act of the story of sovereign grace, when all are caught up, irrespective of merit or demerit; it will not discriminate between "faithful" and "unfaithful." The *dead in Christ*—all the dead who have been redeemed to God by His blood—will be raised in bodies of glory; all believers who are alive when the assembling shout is heard will exchange their vile bodies for glorious ones like unto the Lord's own glorious body.

“Perfect Love casteth out Fear.”

1 John 4. 18.

I THINK it is blessed to dwell on that divinely-inspired word “*perfect*.” The love that rests upon us is *perfect* love, and where known it casts out fear, it takes away all that which is torment to the soul; it is *perfect* love. It is the love of God which has reached us in Jesus. Everything divine is perfect. When Christ comes out on God’s behalf in judgment in the coming day (Rev. 19. 11), it is *perfect* and unsparing judgment. He who drank the bitter cup of wrath to its dregs in divine love on Calvary’s cross is there seen in perfect and inflexible righteousness treading the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God; we, thank God, learn that spotless righteousness not from the way it acts towards us (as it will act towards the ungodly), but from the way it acted towards Christ on Calvary, when He was made sin for us, and now we are called to know and believe *perfect love*. Is there anything which causes fear or torment in your soul, Christian? God’s love is *perfect* love, which would remove

that because He loves you, and can because it is His love. Maybe something in your past history troubles you: because His love is *perfect* it reaches even to the removal of that from your heart. Go and tell *Jesus*. He is the blessed vessel of God’s grace, able to speak a word in secret to Him that is weary, the divinely given answer to *every* need of man’s heart. It may be some great sorrow in the present that overwhelms; as to this, there is a simple word about John’s disciples which is helpful, when all was dark with them the one they followed having not only been imprisoned but finally beheaded, they took up his body and buried it, and “*went and told Jesus*.” There *all* is perfect, perfect love is there. Or if the future fill the heart with alarm the words of our text dispel all this. “Herein is love with us [margin] made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because *as He is, so are we in this world*. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.”

What is Salvation?

(J. T. MAWSON).

There are some who look upon salvation as something they have received in the same way as they might receive a present by parcel post. It was good and kind of the Lord, and an evidence of His love to them, to send it to them. They had but to receive it, and had nothing to pay for it, for He paid the full price upon the cross, and now it is theirs. But though they have it, He, the Saviour, they imagine, like a friend who sends a present to them, remains at a great distance from them. This is an utterly false conception of the grace and ways of God, and accounts for much of the joylessness and retrogression of many converted people.

When the heart of Zacchaeus began to hunger for something better than gold, he climbed into a tree to see Jesus. It is more than likely that he could not then have given articulation to his deep longing, but Jesus knew it, and answered it in those words which must have filled the tax-gatherer with amazement, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for to-day *I must abide at thy house*.” And when the Lord reached the threshold of that hitherto godless and joyless house, He said, “This day is salvation come to this house.” But why and how had salvation come there? It was because He, the Saviour, had come. Salvation is in Him, He is it; and in

having Him we have salvation, and every other priceless blessing that God can give. He does not send salvation, He brings it; and where He is received there He abides, saying, "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Heb. 13. 5). It is as though He said, "I have sought you so long, and love you so well, that never again will I allow you out of my company and care!" This is salvation—blessed, present, every-day, and all-the-way salvation. It means to be protected, cared for, and upheld by the ever-present and infinitely tender Saviour, who has suffered for our sins, endured all our judgment, broken the dominion of the devil, and lives—yes, LIVES—

as the Victor over death, for those who trust in Him.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,
Slain in His victory;
Who lived, who died, who lives again
For thee, His church, for thee.

What a living, blessed, joyful, pulsating matter salvation becomes when it dawns upon the soul that it is in Christ Jesus; that it is ours because He is ours and we are His; that we are joined to the Lord by everlasting bonds, and bonds that no device of the devil nor power of hell can sever. Nothing less than this would suit Him, and meet our need. Anything else is but a human conception of a divine reality.

When did the Church Begin?

(JAMES GREEN).

What is the real ground for asserting that the church commenced in Acts 2. while "the Mystery" was not revealed until the Epistle to the Ephesians?

Is the church of God in Acts and Corinthians the same as the church (which is His body) in Ephesians?

IF Acts 1. vers. 4, 5, be compared with 1 Corinthians 12. 13, it will be seen that the coming of the Holy Ghost was an entirely new departure in the ways of God, and was the commencement of that of which the Lord had spoken in Matthew 16. 18—His church against which the gates of hell should not prevail. The disciples were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Spirit and were endued with power from on high. This took place at Pentecost, and the import of this baptism is unfolded in the statement, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." By this a corporate unity was formed, the unity of the Spirit, and for the first time there existed a living union between the glorified Head in heaven and the

members of His body here on earth, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6. 17). Such a thing could not have existed before, for in John 7. 39 it is stated that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and further there can be no fresh baptism of the Spirit, for the body was constituted by this at Pentecost, once for all. But while this was formed at the commencement and existed in the power of the Spirit, the revelation of what had taken place was gradual. At first only a saved remnant of Jews were included in the church (Acts 2. 47); but on the definite refusal of the risen Messiah by the leaders of the nation (marked by the death of Stephen), the chosen vessel of testimony, Saul of Tarsus, was called out, and at his conversion the mystery which already existed was revealed in the words,

“Why persecutest thou ME?” The subsequent conversion and giving of the Holy Ghost to Cornelius and his friends introduced Gentiles into the church, making them “fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph. 3. 6). The administration of the mystery being committed to Paul, it is in his writings that it is unfolded.

There is only one church of God wherever it is spoken of. Although it may be looked at under various figures or aspects, it is ever the one body, energized by the one Spirit, and having one hope—glory with Christ. In Ephesians we

are given the full unfolding of its constitution, and the counsels of God concerning it and its glorious Head; but we must not confuse its existence as formed by the Spirit at the beginning with the revelation by the same Spirit of its deep realities, until the Word of God was completed (Col. 1. 25). The period of the church here on earth is determined by the presence of the Spirit, whose baptism has formed it, whose activity maintains it, and whose power will translate it to heaven, when its heavenly Bridegroom’s voice is heard calling His bride to be forever with Himself.

“Much Tribulation.”—“The Great Tribulation.” (J. WILSON SMITH).

IN Revelation 7. we read of a “great multitude” and of a “great tribulation” through which that multitude had passed, but it is very important for a right understanding of the subject that the correct rendering of the passage should be known.

It is not merely “great tribulation,” but “**THE** great tribulation,” because a special trial is under contemplation. It is not ordinary, but most extraordinary trial, “such as was not since the beginning of the world [mark that!] to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24. 21). It stands alone, unparalleled, either before or after, in its appalling severity.

It is of brief duration, otherwise “there should no flesh be saved.” It is like the swoop of the eagle on the carcass—sudden, swift, resistless. It is the time of Jacob’s trouble, though not confined to Jacob. It precedes the coming of the Son of Man in judgment, who is seen coming in the clouds of heaven; it is the preparatory act in that drama when He shall take the reins of government into His own hands, and, in circumstances of unexampled power and great glory, inaugurate His millennial kingdom.

“The great tribulation” precedes

this. It is like the purging of the floor for the sway of His sceptre. It is divine judgment on apostate Israel and on wicked nations. With all this, the church—the saints of the present period—have, thank God, nothing to do. Ere then she has been called on high, and is “for ever with the Lord.” It was her lot to pass through tribulations and to glory in them (Rom. 5. 5), through “much tribulation” (Acts 14. 22), as Roman amphitheatres, Smithfield fires, and Huguenot massacres may remind us; all these were her honourable calling as the follower of her rejected Lord, but “much tribulation,” even though lasting for twenty centuries, is absolutely distinct from what is specifically described as “the great tribulation”—from the hour of which the church shall be kept (Rev. 3. 10); and hence we read that God hath not appointed us to wrath (of which “the great tribulation” is a part), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5. 9). That is clear; and a knowledge of the church’s relation to Him will settle the question of her future. Her portion here is to suffer, and to rejoice therein, but never to undergo judgment as in “the great tribulation.”

Gleanings from the Past.—No. 5.

Extracts from the Ministry of Ralph Erskine (1685 1752).

IF the enemy be no enemy to your faith, you may know it is a false faith. . . . If you have saving faith, it will be the eye-sore of hell. . . . No sooner doth true faith begin but the fight of faith begins. . . . If your faith be from heaven, it will meet with opposition from hell.

See the difference between the conviction of the Spirit and the temptation of Satan. . . . The convictions of the Spirit are humbling, tending to make the soul despair in himself, or in God, out of Christ. The temptations of the enemy are terrifying, tending to make the soul despair of help in Christ, or in God through Him. The former shuts the door of hope by the law; but the devil would shut the door of hope by the gospel.

When, like Peter, you cast yourself upon the water to come to Christ, be not terrified though the devil raise a storm; the Lord Jesus sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters (Ps. 93. 4). Never think the worse of Christ, though matters seem to grow worse with you. . . . **KEEP HONOURABLE THOUGHTS OF THE LORD JESUS.**

No man who ever saw sin can truly call any sin *little* or small; nor can it ever be till there be a *little* law to break, a *little* God to offend, a *little* guilt to contract, a *little* wrath to incur; all of which it were impossible to be, blasphemy to wish, and madness to expect.

“When I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love.”—Ezek. 16. 8.

It was not a look of observation only—for He beholds all things, they are naked and open before Him—but a look of commiseration. It is a look wherein His heart follows His eye. In the time of love the Lord gives His

people sometimes an appropriating look, an affectionate look, “His countenance doth behold the upright” (Ps. 11. 7). Sometimes a directing look, “I will guide thee with mine eye” (Ps. 32. 8). If He takes His directing eye off us we never make a right step. Sometimes a convincing look, a penetrating look, such as He gave to Peter, that pierced, melted, and dissolved his heart: “Jesus looked on him, and he went out and wept bitterly.” Sometimes a comforting look, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66. 2). With a look He breaks the hard heart, and with a look He heals the broken heart.

There are two words that should take up most of our thoughts and cares, namely, **TIME** and **ETERNITY**: Time because it will soon be at an end; and Eternity because it will never come to an end.

Was there ever love like Christ’s, which such floods of tribulation could not quench or drown! Though He was God, yet He became Man; yea “His visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52. 14). So that He was so far from appearing like a God, that He scarce looked like a man, but rather as a worm (Ps. 22. 6). A worm trampled on by all; a reproach of men and despised of the people. Why all this, but that His love might shine the brighter through the dark shades that sought to eclipse His glory.

He appears in heaven with the marks of His wounds, “a Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne”. The shame and pain of His cross redounds to Him for an ensign of honour and eternal glory, a perpetual memorial of His love, merit, and victory.—*Selected by Hamilton Smith.*

God's Great Gifts, and the Devil's Snares. (EDITOR.)

1. "The Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

THE greatest gift that God has given to us is the Holy Ghost, and we desire to speak of Him with deepest reverence, knowing that He is the Eternal Spirit, equal in glory to the Father and the Son. His greatness and eternal glory make the fact that He has been given to us, to dwell in us, and be with us, stupendously wonderful; a fact that surpasses all human thought, and that should profoundly affect us. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Cor. 6. 19).

This great gift was necessary for the carrying out of God's will, just as the foundation for the fulfilment of all His purposes was laid by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and could not have been laid by any other person, or in any other way, so now are those purposes, as a result of Christ's work, being effectuated in men by the Holy Ghost, whose power and wisdom are alone sufficient for this. We are willing to confess that the work of redemption was entirely beyond us; let us be equally persuaded that a true answer in the souls of men to that work of redemption can only be produced by the Holy Spirit of God. Human wisdom and power can only mar and hinder here.

So we thank God for the presence of the Holy Ghost. It is by Him that we are able to pray aright, for we are exhorted to be "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). It is by Him that we are able to understand the Word of God, for, "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2. 11). It is by Him that we are able to enter intelligently and joyously into our relationship as children with the Father, for, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father" (Gal. 4. 6). It is also by the Spirit that we are led into the knowledge of Christ, for the Lord has said, "He, the Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth. . . . He shall glorify me : for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16. 13, 14).

Indeed, there is no department of the Christian life in which the Spirit of God can be dispensed with, whether it be individual communion with God, and growth in the truth; the private life lived under the eye of God, or public witness and service; or the saints' relationships one to another, and their gatherings together in the name of the Lord; or, on the deeper side of things, in which we learn that it is by the Spirit that Jew and Gentile, reconciled unto God in one body by the cross, have access to the Father; and that they are builded together, an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2). Every right activity is from Himself, and there is nothing right in divine things that is not maintained by His power and energy.

It is here, however, that great danger threatens unwary souls. Realizing the necessity for divine power, many have turned to praying to the Holy Ghost, which Scripture nowhere warrants; others have laid themselves out to obtain "power" for public service and testimony, and "victory over sin," by seeking what is called "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit." It is to be feared that SELF-GLORIFICATION often lurks darkly behind these desires, though doubtless many of these seekers are honest and without guile, but, being uninstructed in the Word,

and self-centred instead of having Christ as the controlling object of the soul, they are deceived by the devil's wiles, and some of them have been carried away into the extravagance of the "Tongues" and so-called "Pentecostal" gatherings, where it is to be feared that other spirits than the Holy Ghost have played a part in the excesses of those who have yielded themselves to they know not what. "*God is not the Author of confusion.*"

From a contemporary magazine which is largely devoted to pressing "the Baptism of the Spirit" as something to be sought after, we learn that the track of this kind of ministry is strewn with the wreckage of "many of the brightest and most fully-surrendered children of God." It is there stated that "the number of the best and brightest believers who are deceived by the subtle spirits of Satan is far too large for the leaders of God's people to ignore them." This is a most solemn and serious admission to make, and it should cause great heart-searching amongst those who have given themselves to this line of things. We believe the cause of it is that the whole tendency of the ministry to which they have listened is to turn them in upon themselves, and make them self-occupied, thereby producing disappointment, depression, darkness, and often despair in the earnest and true souls; and this has given them over as an easy prey to the wiles of Satan.

Deliverance from such a condition, and restoration to normal Christian life can only come through the ministry of Christ. No rose ever unfolded its beauty or disclosed its fragrance by being occupied with the life-sap within it; it looks out towards the sun in the heavens, and, as it absorbs those glorious rays, it lives its God-appointed life. So the Christian cannot produce Christ-likeness by self-occupation, or by striving after a subjective condition; he must behold the glory of the Lord, and as he does this he is transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3. 18).

To set Christians seeking for "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," is to start them upon an unscriptural quest, and if unscriptural, then false, for all must be false in divine things that is not scriptural, and if false, then of the devil, for the devil is behind every movement and teaching that tends to turn souls from Christ, however little we may suspect it. We must awake to his wiles, and not be deceived into thinking that all must be well if the desires are pious, and earnest, and right; for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11. 14, 15); and he will endeavour to use even the holiest desires and things to turn the saints of God from the one great Christian pursuit—CHRIST—"the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

It is clear from many passages in the Epistles that all saints are indwelt by the Holy Ghost; that is, all those who have received the gospel, which has the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead as its great subject (Rom. 5. 5; 1 Cor. 6. 19; Eph. 1. 13, 14). In none of Paul's Epistles did he exhort the saints to whom he wrote to seek "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." He refers to this once, in 1 Corinthians 12. 13, to instruct us in the fact that we, all believers, whoever we are, are already baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. The exact words are, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." And the Corinthians to whom these words were written were not patterns of Christian grace and power, but worldly, carnal, pleasure-loving, and self-seeking. The presence of the Spirit in and with them was not dependent upon their condition, but upon their reception of the gospel of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout all Paul's Epistles it is taken for granted that those to whom he wrote, having believed the gospel, were indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

It is right that we should be instructed in all the activities of the Holy Spirit on earth, and these are made known to us in the Scriptures ; but the apostles of the Lord were not sent forth to preach the Holy Spirit but CHRIST, and that they might do this with unction and power the Holy Spirit was given unto them. The Holy Spirit is not presented in the Scriptures as the subject of ministry, but CHRIST; He is not the object of faith, but CHRIST. The Scriptures are concerning CHRIST; God's purpose is that every knee shall bow to CHRIST, and the Holy Spirit of God is engaged to-day in bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST; and it is as the soul is absorbed with CHRIST that the Holy Spirit is able to proceed with His gracious work in us, and through us, silently and unseen.

The Spirit of God has come into this world to be the untiring Servant of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ ; it is His mission to keep Christ, in His manifold glories, before the saints of God. As the Lord Himself declared, " He shall not speak of [or from] Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He shall show you things to come. HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: for He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you " (John 16. 13, 14). Yet, amongst many Christians, how little ministry of Christ there seems to be—of Christ, the beloved Son of the Father; the infinitely tender Son of Man who came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to be the Servant of man's necessity; the holy Sacrifice for sin upon the cross ; the risen Victor over death ; the glorious and all-sufficient Head of His body the church ; the quickly coming Lord, King of kings and Lord of lords. This dearth of the ministry of Christ is positive proof that the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched, and nothing can grieve and quench Him more completely than that Himself and His work should be made the prominent subject of ministry instead of Christ. May God pardon His servants in this matter, and mightily stir their hearts by the surpassing glories of Christ that they may preach Him—the centre of heaven's praise, and the one adorable and ever-blessed portion of the saints of God ; who is also the wisdom and the power of God, and who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

* * * * *

Obedience is a great necessity, the *sine quâ non* of a life of spiritual power and blessing, but it is obedience to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, whose will is expressed in the Scriptures; and the Holy Ghost is here to bring about this obedience in us. If we are conscious of the lack of joy and blessing and power (and how rare these things are) the remedy is not to seek " a Baptism of the Holy Spirit," but to adjust our relations with the Lord. The deplorably helpless condition of the servants and saints of God in the presence of the inrolling tide of apostasy and evil is a consequence of indifference to the claims of the Lord and disobedience to His Word.

In the letters to the seven Churches (Rev. 2., 3.), where the failure and declension of the church is prophetically outlined, there is no command to seek a baptism of the Holy Ghost, but to remember from whence they had fallen, and to repent and return. They had fallen from a full-hearted response to the love of Christ ; it was not *power* that they had lost in the first instance, but LOVE AND DEVOTION TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST; anything and everything is possible to him whose heart is true to his Lord. In these chapters the Spirit brings the Lord into prominence ; it is His will, His word, His name ; He commands, searches the heart, loves, rebukes, chastens, and He, alas, is outside the door, and the door shut upon Him in the Laodicean Church—the last phase of Christendom before the fierce judgment of the Lord is poured out upon it. But they are not there commanded to open the door to the Spirit, but to the Lord, to give Him His rights, and His

desires. This is the voice of the Spirit to the churches: "Open wide the door and give Christ His rightful place."

* * * * *

Questions may arise as to the passages in Ephesians 5. 18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." But this is just the normal Christian life: fleshly excitement they were not to run after but they were to let the Holy Ghost pervade their being, the result of which would be that they would be speaking to themselves "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts TO THE LORD giving thanks always for all things unto the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 19, 20). If the Lord is to be the subject of our praise, and the object of our adoration, He must be the portion of our cup, and the one who is filled with the Spirit is Christ-centred. It is not himself, or his service, or his victories over sin, that are the subjects of his thoughts or the theme of his testimony, but Christ; He is everything; and all to whom Christ is everything shall be always victorious over evil, useful to men, and delightful to the Lord.

Names, Sects and Parties.

IT is observable that in all the names the early Christians chose there was still some peculiar relation to Christ and God, from whom they would be named, and not from any mortal man, however great or eminent soever. Party names and human appellations they ever professed to abhor.

"We take not our denomination from men," says Chrysostom. "We have no leaders, as the followers of Marcion, Manichæus, or Arius."

"No," says Epiphanius, "the church was never called so much as by the name of any apostle; we never heard of Petrians, or Paulians, or Bartholomæans or Thaddæans, but only of Christians—from Christ."

"I honour Peter," says another Father, "but I am not called a Petrian. I honour Paul, but I am not called a Paulian. I cannot bear to be named from any man who is the creature of God."

They observe that this was only the property of sects and heresies, to take party names and denominate themselves from their leaders. But the church of

Christ still kept to the name of Christian. This was the name they gloried in as most expressive of their unity and relation to Christ.

Eusebius records a memorable story out of the epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, in France, concerning one Sanctus, a deacon of the church of Vienne, who suffered in the persecution under Antonine; that being put to the rack and examined by the magistrates concerning his name, his country, his city, his quality, whether he were bond or free, his answer to all their questions was, "I am a Christian"; this, he said, was to him both name, and city, and kindred, and everything. Nor could the heathen with all their skill extort any other answer from him.

Chrysostom gives the like account of the behaviour of Lucian, the martyr, before his persecutors; and there were some other instances of the same nature, by which we may judge how great a veneration they had for the name Christian.

From Bingham's *Antiquities*.

Prayers.

(F. S. CHAMPION).

The Call to Prayer.

Matthew 9. 37, 38.

Then saith He unto His disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.

Luke 18. 1.

And He spake . . . that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Matthew 6. 6.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

This habit of persistent "closet" and "secret" prayer is what is so much wanting, and the lack of it is the secret of much of our spiritual weakness, lifelessness, and unfruitfulness, and without which our prayers in public, and our service, will not only be feeble, but largely unacceptable to God.

In the rush and demands of business and daily labour, and of other things, there is danger of our excusing ourselves as not finding time for this closet prayer—yet we find time for other things: for talks with our brethren and others, and in forms of self-indulgence, and in putting our hands to things we might well leave. Thus valuable minutes are lost, running into hours, and we have no time for getting into our closet to be alone with God; with this there is also a lack of private study of the Word, for neglect of secret closet prayer leads to this, resulting in spiritual starvation and carnality.

It has been remarked: "When we go into our closet and shut our door, no one sees us, no one hears us, but God. No one is present before whom to make a little display of our devotion. No one is there to behold our zeal for the Lord. No one is there but God. We feel that He is looking through us, and knows us thoroughly. It is a searching spot—alone in the presence of God."

It is needful to spend time there if we desire to have our hearts searched by God and to be delivered from every evil way and led in the way everlasting (Ps. 139. 23, 24), and that our walk and ways should be acceptable (well pleasing) to God (2 Cor. 5. 9).

Romans 12. 12.

Continuing instant in prayer.

Ephesians. 6. 18.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto. . . .

Philippians 4. 6.

In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Colossians 4. 2.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

1 Timothy 2. 1.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

The Subjects for Prayer.

Ephesians 6. 18.

For all saints.

Colossians 4. 3-12.

For us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ. . . .

Colossians 4. 32.

That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

2 Thessalonians 3. 1.

Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

1 Timothy 2. 1, 2.

That the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.

James 5. 16.

For all men ; for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

One for another.

Matthew 6. 9, 15.

The Manner and Practice of Prayer.

After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Read this scripture and note the manner or the instruction it gives as to the order of our prayers. First, that which concerns the Father's name, kingdom, and His will ; then our personal needs, daily bread, governmental forgiveness, preservation from temptation and evil.

This prayer is entirely individual for the closet, and was for the condition in which the disciples then were. The prayer was given as a perfect model, and for use for the disciples previous to the death of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Since, then, prayer is to the Father in the name of Christ, and in the conscious acceptance in which the believer stands in the love of the Father, and in the knowledge that he is made the righteousness of God in Christ (see John 16. 23, 24 ; 2 Cor. 5. 21).

A well-known Christian writer has written with regard to this prayer : " There is not a clause in that prayer, I believe, but what one might prefer now, even to ' forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' For it is a mistake to suppose that it puts the sinner upon the ground of prayer in order to acquire forgiveness of his sins. Our Lord speaks of the believer—the child of God. Our daily faults and shortcomings we need to spread before our God and Father, as He encourages us to do day by day. It is a question of His government, who, without respect of persons, judges according to the work of each."

Acts 1. 14.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women. . . .

Acts 2. 42.

And they continued stedfastly . . . in prayers.

1 Corinthians 14. 15.

What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.

James 5. 16.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Jude 20.

Praying in the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 55. 17.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray.

The Conditions for Prayer.

John 15. 7.

If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 16. 24.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name ; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

1 John 3. 21, 22.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

1 John 5. 14, 15.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us : And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Fasting in Connection with Prayer.

2 Chronicles 20. 3.

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

2 Chronicles 20. 4.

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask . . . of the Lord.

Ezra 8. 21.

Then I proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves before our God.

Ezra 8. 23.

So we fasted and besought our God for this : and He was intreated of us.

Nehemiah 1. 4.

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.

Daniel 9. 3.

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, . . .

Luke 2. 37.

And she was a widow . . . but served God with fastings and prayer night and day.

Acts 14. 23.

And when they had . . . prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord . . .

Acts 13. 2.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted.

1 Corinthians 7. 5.

. . . Give yourselves to fasting and prayer.

2 Corinthians 6. 5.

. . . but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God in much patience . . . in labours, in watchings, in fastings . . . by . . .

2 Corinthians 11. 27.

. . . in fastings often.

Psalms 66. 18.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Isaiah 59. 1, 2.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

Ezekiel 14. 3.

Son of Man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

John 5. 21.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

The Lord's Appreciation.

Psalms 141. 2.

Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense.

Psalms 19. 14.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Revelation 5. 8.

And when He had taken the book . . . the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Some Warnings.

Matthew 6. 7.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions [to speak emptily], as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Proverbs 28. 6.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination.

Ecclesiastes 5. 2.

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: . . . and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

[Contrast Elijah's prayer of about sixty words with Baal's prophets calling on the name of Baal from "morning even until noon" (1 Kings, 18).³

“The Body of Christ,” and “Christ’s Body.” (EDWARD CROSS).

THE two expressions, “the body of Christ” and “Christ’s body,” are not confounded in Scripture. The former has the definite article; the latter is without it. When the definite article is used, it defines the word in its entirety; when the word is used without the article, it is characterized, but not defined. “The rule is simply this, illustrated in the known form of a proposition in Greek: That whenever a word, or combination of words, presents the *object* about which the mind is occupied, as objectively present to it the article is used; whenever a word is merely characteristic, it is not. Hence, when the article is used, it always marks the totality of the subject named, because it is a definite, entire object before the mind, and of course complete in itself. This is sometimes of little, sometimes of great moment, but always true. The word to which the article is attached is universal; that is, an ideal abstract, or individual; that is, a particular case of the term, and to the exclusion there of others. It cannot have the sense of ‘some.’ A word without the article may be numerically one, as is evident, if in the singular; but it is not any particular one, but characteristic.” (*J. N. Darby*.) Take as an example, Revelation 1. 13, “. . . in the midst of the seven lamps [one] like [the] Son of Man”; cf. Daniel 7. 13, where it is also used without the article. It is not likeness to a person John knew, but to the character known by this title in Scripture. It is characteristic, (note in I. N. T., *J. N. D.*) and so it is always. There is no indefinite article in Greek corresponding to our “a” or “an.” Nouns have either the definite article, or none; and the difference in meaning is very marked, although it is not always easy to reproduce it in a translation. The subject is of much interest and importance, and those desirous of pursuing it will find it fully discussed in *Collected Writings of J. N. D.*, vol. 13, pp. 46, etc.

Let us now turn to 1 Corinthians 3. 16: “Know ye not that ye are [the] temple of God?” Now plainly they were not THE temple; and Scripture does not say they were, although it is so rendered in the A. V. There was a temple—“the

temple” at Jerusalem; “burnt” by Nebuchadnezzar; rebuilt by the remnant returned from Babylon; subsequently to be destroyed by Titus; to be rebuilt again according to prophecy; and in a spiritual sense, the church is now “growing unto a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2. 21), but does not yet exist as such. Thus none of these could explain this verse (1 Cor. 3. 16), which says, “Ye are God’s temple,” *i. e.* they were characteristically such, though not definitely it.

The same principle applies in 1 Corinthians 10. 16, 17. “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not [the] communion of the blood of the Christ? The bread which we break is it not [the] communion of the body of the Christ? Because we [being] many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf.” Here, plainly, “the body of the Christ” is the Lord’s personal body, as the blood is the blood He shed. It is not “the church which is His body” (Eph. 1. 21). We have accordingly, “the blood” and “the body.” It was that definitely and actually. But communion, or joint participation of it, is put indefinitely as characterizing their position at the Lord’s table, whether they remained true to it on the one hand, or falsified it on the other hand, by returning to the table of demons, whence they had been called out by the gospel. It is no question here of the divisions of Christendom, or the separation between different sections of the Christian church; but the broad line of demarcation between those who are called in the faith of Christ into the fellowship that attaches to that name, on the one hand, and those who, on the other hand, refuse that name and the fellowship connected therewith.

“The expression in 1 Corinthians 10. 16 has no reference to one or many, but to what Christians do in contrast with Jews and Gentiles. The Apostle is treating the question of idolatry. Jews were partakers of the altar; Gentiles drank the cup of demons. What we (Christians) partake of is communion with the sacrifice of Christ. We are identified with the sacrifice; we cannot be with the cup of demons too” (*Collected Writings*, vol 13., p. 586).

1 Corinthians 10. 17: "Because we [being] many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf."

We have here two words, which are found again in Hebrews 2. 14:

κοινωνία = communion, fellowship.

μετέχομεν = we partake.

"The word communion = joint participation in a known fellowship, and the partaking, or taking part, proves them to be such" (see note on Heb. 2. 14, N.T. J. N. D.).

So then the cup of blessing which we bless—mark the force of the "we"—it is not here a merely individual act, for that would not express the communion, the joint participation of the act, but "we" . . . "because we [being] many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf." Plainly this is not "the body of Christ," one with Christ in heaven, "His fulness that fills all in all" (Eph. 1. 23); for, first, His body there is composed of living, indefectible members, quickened together with Him, and raised and seated in Him in the heavenlies; and, secondly, there is no breaking of bread in heaven; His body there is not so occupied with the emblems of His death. So it is not that. Nor can it be "the personal body of the Christ" (ver. 16). But, in contrast with the various altars and sacrifices of Jews and Pagans all around, with their "Gods many and Lords many," we Christians own but "One God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ"; we have but one loaf, which represents the one sacrifice; and we are "one body" in the professed faith of the gospel that has separated us from the world around, both Jew and Gentile.

Ecclesiastical differences between Christians do not enter here. When they arise they must be settled by other scriptures relative thereto.

We come now to 1 Corinthians 12. 27, and here we find the expression: "now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular." In this chapter (1 Cor. 12.) the figure of the human body is used to show the structural unity, or oneness, of the various members in function. It is not here "Christ, the head of the body," but "the Christ" (ver. 12); the many members forming "one body"; and, instead of Christ as head, the various

parts of the head are shown in co-ordination with other parts of the body. Such is the human body, the creation of Genesis 1., a striking similitude of that which is now formed by the baptism of the Spirit; and so the Apostle applies it to them in verse 27, "Now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular." That is what they were characteristically; but it is not said here, any more than in chapter 10., 17, that they were "the body of Christ." Neither is it said in chapter 10. 17, that they were "Christ's body." They were "one body." The ideas are different in the two passages, and both are different again from "the body of Christ." The transposing, or altering of these terms would but obscure the meaning of each. "One body," and "Christ's body," and "the body of Christ" represent several and distinct ideas. It is thus Scripture records them, and we can happily leave them there. Suppose that we were to substitute "the body of Christ" for "one body," in 1 Corinthians 10. 17, then, in the fact of breaking bread, all the privileges of "the body of Christ" would be secured thereby. This is the essence and stronghold of Romanism, attributing to a sacramental ordinance the virtues of a vital work in new creation. Suppose we were to substitute for it "Christ's body," that would be to confound a spiritual structure formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the mere act of breaking bread. It is the significance of the act that is here in evidence; not the spiritual condition of him who acts.

In Ephesians 1. 21 we read of Christ, "Head over all things to the church, which has this character (*ἡρως*) that it is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. So again Ephesians 4. 12; Colossians 1. 18. But these scriptures presuppose a work of divine power in a new creation, where all is redeemed from the failure of responsible man. The church, the body of Christ, is a mighty fact in the mind of God (Eph. 3. 20, 21). It will be effectuated by divine power, according to His eternal counsels; and the Spirit works now in view of this, according to the revelation of it made known in the prophetic scriptures (Rom. 16. 25-27); and for that very reason we must keep it clear in our minds, in the indefectibility of its own subsistence, from all that is ritual or sacramental, into

which the responsibility of man is allowed to enter, and by its entrance mar.

Accordingly, when the Apostle says (chap. 12. 27) "Ye are Christ's body," he lets them understand they were it characteristically, though he does not say they were it definitely, for two reasons, (1) because "the body of Christ" was not yet complete in all its members; and (2) of those addressed as such now, according to their responsible position, some are not true members of Christ at all. The wording of scripture provides for both these facts. The privilege and responsibilities of Christianity remain with us, without the pretension of being what we are not.

The importance of this distinction will

be appreciated when we consider the extraordinary subtlety of the enemy, whereby he has so successfully deceived us, in turning that which sets forth figuratively the unity of all Christians, ostensibly as such, represented by "one loaf, one body, inasmuch as all are partakers of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10. 17), into a warrant for sectarian division, more than any other text of scripture. There is no ground whatsoever for such in the passage, which does not even touch upon the various subjects of discipline which might be called for in other circumstances, and to which other scriptures apply. The spectacle of the sects of Christendom, each debarring the rest from the privileges and responsibility of the Lord's table, is not within the scope of this scripture at all.

A Gospel Song

(R.W., SOUTH SHIELDS)

Tune—No. 2 Alexander's, 85.

POOOR sinner far from God,
Treading the downward road,
Once more within thine ear,
The gospel bells we ring;
Jesus the crucified,
Is risen and glorified!
Wilt thou not trust Him
And with joy begin to sing? :—

God's love, surpassing thought,
To thee in Christ is brought,
Only in Him are found
Forgiveness, peace and rest.
Thy heart by sin so chilled,
May yet with joy be filled,
Thy voice may swell this
Happy chorus of the blest :—

Chorus.

Jesus! Thy love has sought me;
Saviour! Thy blood has bought
me;
In that bright home, with all
Thine own,
I'll praise Thee for evermore.

God's well beloved Son,
Redemption's work hath done.
Hark the glad gospel sound!
"Believe in Christ and live!"
To thee the Saviour calls,
Before God's judgment falls,
In true repentance
At His feet thy homage give.

The Shepherd.

(H.D.A., INDIA)

CHRISt JESUS yesterday, to-day,
For evermore abides the same:
Yet many varied rays display
The matchless beauty of His name.
(Hebrews 13. 8.)

Look back—behold the Shepherd good
In giving all that love could give!
Who freely shed His precious blood—
Who died that you and I might live.
(John 10. 11.)

Look up—behold that Shepherd great,
A mighty Victor o'er the grave!
Our risen Lord for whom we wait,
He serves us still, and lives to save.
(Hebrews 13. 20.)

Look on—for soon the Shepherd Chief
Shall come in glory, for His own:
His face will banish ev'ry grief,
His faithful ones shall share His throne.
(1 Peter 5. 4.)

The Coming of the Lord.—No. 7.

(JAMES BOVD.)

The First Resurrection.

A few words will suffice regarding the first resurrection. It is contended that this must take place at the coming of Christ to reign over the earth, and that no one can have part in that which is thus designated previous to the moment spoken of in Revelation 20. 4. If this were so it would of itself settle the question under consideration in this paper. But what then would come of our appearing with Him when he appears? (Col. 3. 4). And what about our coming with Him? (1 Thess. 4. 14). And what about the taking up of the living? There is no rapture here; no one is caught up at all.

The fact is, that "*first*" does not only refer to *time*—though the first resurrection is first in time—but it also refers to order of merit. Peter is called the first Apostle, though they were all sent out together, and he was not the first to be brought to the Lord at the beginning. The Lord also speaks of the last being first, and the first last. The first resurrection is the resurrection of the blessed and holy, over which the second death has no power, but there is no necessity of all who have part in it being raised at the same moment. The Lord Himself is the firstfruits of those who are asleep, and they shall be raised at His coming. But as we have seen, His coming has two parts in it: the coming into the air and taking up His church and those of His own who are in their graves; and afterwards coming forth with them, and completing the first resurrection by causing those who have lost their lives for the testimony of God during the evil days that shall end the present age, to live again that they may reign with Him.

In Revelation 19. we have the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, consequent on the judgment of the harlot upon earth. The bride is clothed with the righteousness of the saints, the effect of the work of the Spirit in the various members of the body of Christ. Then we have Him coming forth, followed by "the armies that were in heaven." In these those who compose the bride are included:

they are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (chap. 17. ver. 14). No angelic being is said to be either *called* or *chosen*. The beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, and the rest of the enemies are slain with the sword of His mouth. Next, we are told that the devil is cast into the abyss to be bound there for a thousand years.

John next tells us that he saw thrones and they sat upon them. Those who came out of heaven have thrones and judgment given to them. Then he says, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Then we have the statement made, "This is the first resurrection." The whole company of the redeemed, from Abel up till that moment, except those found alive on the earth, are here looked at as the first resurrection. We have those caught up included in this glorious company. They are blessed and holy, and on them the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. The whole vast company, those who came out of heaven with Christ, and those found slain upon earth, are all viewed in glory, planted in the resurrection sphere by the power of God, and together they are spoken of as "*The first resurrection.*" That those who came out of heaven were not raised then is evident.

While in some other parts of Scripture those caught up are distinguished from those raised from the dead, they are not so contemplated here. Nor are they in John 6. Four times over we get in that chapter, "I will raise him up at the last day." We are well aware that many who believe on Him, and who eat his flesh and drink His blood, and thereby find eternal life, shall be caught up without dying; yet here He speaks of raising such up, and that without any exception. The

change of the body when the Lord comes will be equivalent to resurrection. Therefore the Lord can say, "I will raise Him up." The last day, of course, is the last day of the present age, a general term for its conclusion, without meaning just the last twenty-four hours.

But I must now bring these meditations to a conclusion. His coming, in whatever way we view it, is precious to all who know and enjoy the blessedness of His salvation. Still, it would be well for us, and pleasing to Him, if we could all be in one mind about it. Scripture is plain enough on the subject, as it is on every subject set before the saints of God by its means. And then He has also given to us His Holy Spirit that we might understand the Scriptures. Therefore, if we find ourselves holding contrary views from one another, we can neither lay the blame on the Scriptures, nor on the Divine Instructor. We must take the blame to ourselves. Perhaps we have been following teachers who have been in measure carnal, and who have put too much trust in their learning, and in the power of their natural minds, and thus have we been led astray. If we could all get down in the dust before Him, and like little children, without any confidence in ourselves, look to Him to guide us, and to keep us from all wrong thoughts, we would find ourselves more

in agreement with one another. The desire of the Apostle was that the saints might all think the same things; but we almost feel as if this were an utter impossibility, for we seem incapable of thinking alike about any subject. Again I say the fault lies in ourselves. Let us take all the blame to ourselves, and carry it to God, and tell Him all about it, and we shall see what He shall do for us. Thank God, we are all of one mind about the Christ of the Scriptures. He is everything to us, as He is everything to the heart of the Father.

And it is for *Him* we look, and for no other, and for nothing else. What a day it will be when we see Him! If such a thing were possible in the joy of that day, how we would bewail our carnality, half-heartedness, and lukewarmness in His interests down here! And how, with hearts broken by the remembrance of our folly, on the one hand; and by His faithful and changeless love, on the other, we would mingle our praises with sore weeping and lamentation! But this shall never be. That day shall be a day of unmingled joy and gladness of heart, and however great our joy may be His shall be greater, for His love to us is infinitely greater than ours to Him. May the bright prospects of seeing Him as He is be the light of our hearts while down here, and until He comes!

Our Desires.

(JAMES BOYD).

O for the power to praise Him as we would!
 O for the grace to serve Him as we ought!
 O for the faith to follow as we should!
 O for a tongue to tell what He has wrought!

O to be waiting for His sure return,
 Ready to welcome Him when He draws near!

Oil in our vessels with our lamps to burn
 Through the long night that marks His absence here.

Saviour Divine, the Spirit and the Bride
 Are crying, *Come*, for Thou hast tarried long.
 Come for Thy members for which Thou hast died!

Come for the souls which unto Thee belong!

Come, for where Thou art not no rest have we!

Come, for our home is with Thyself on high!

Come, for our longing is Thy face to see!

Hear, O Beloved, hear our ceaseless cry!

Sometimes thou hearest one pray with a moving expression, whilst thou canst hardly get out a few broken words, and thou art ready to accuse thyself, and to admire him, as if the gilt of the key made it open the door the better.

Many have yielded to go a mile with Satan who never intended to go two. He leads poor creatures down to the depths of sin by winding stairs that let them not see the bottom whither they are going.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 8.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

“From suffering to glory.”

PSALM XXII.-XXIV.

THESE three Psalms are the fitting conclusion to the series of nine which begins with Psalm 16. There Messiah is introduced into His sphere of service and is seen taking His place with the repentant remnant of Israel as recorded in the Gospels. In Psalm 24. we find His reintroduction to take up the remnant of a future day into association with Himself in His holy hill of testimony and the holy place of communion and worship. If sinners are to be thus favoured, the work of atonement must take place, that not one attribute of God might be infringed, and this we find in Psalm 22. Other scriptures tell of other sufferings which are found in this Psalm too; but the first mentioned here is the forsaking of the spotless sinbearer by God in His holiness (ver. 3).

Verse 1 is the only portion of the first twenty-one verses to which audible expression is given according to the first two Gospels, and that in a loud voice as if He declare to all the true import of that hour which stands so absolutely alone in time or eternity. It is this suffering the forsaking of God on account of our sins along with, and not without, the shedding of His blood in death which together constitute the means of expiation. Such suffering none but He could pass through; such a death none but He could die. The simple truth of Christ's atoning sufferings has been so overclouded with vain thought in recent years, that a quotation from an old writer, Archbishop Leighton, may be permitted—"But that wherein lay the strength and main stress of the sufferings, was that invisible weight which none could see that gazed on Him, but He felt more than all the rest. In this are three things: 1. The weight of sin. 2. The transferring it upon Christ. 3. His bearing of it." Isaiah authorizes this language when he says, "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief," when His soul was made an offering for sin. The three hours' miraculous darkness which spread over

the land witnesses, in a symbolic manner, to the same fact and thus draws attention to the import of that solemn moment. The first three verses of the Psalm stand by themselves in bringing before us these expiatory sufferings of Christ; but there is a remarkable addition to His vindication of the divine holiness in verse 3, where God is addressed as dwelling among the praises of Israel. The allusion is to Exodus 25., where, the people having been delivered out of the house of bondage, Jehovah says to Moses, "Let them make Me a tabernacle that I may dwell among them." The materials described in verses 3-7 were really the praises of a willing people, typically Christ in His varied glories and graces: there God suitably to Himself may dwell (see Eph. 2. 22, "*In whom*, ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in Spirit"). It is out of the awful solitude of His abandonment that Christ contemplates this blessed association of God and man, and dies to lay the foundation of its righteous accomplishment. Accordingly, the first element in the victory and triumph of the risen Saviour is the bringing the believing remnant of Israel into the blessing which the nation as such had forfeited: "in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise to Thee" (ver. 22). Thus in a better way than that revealed to Moses on the mount, God receives the praises of His saints, inspired by the Spirit of Christ. What a glorious change is thus represented from the absolute weakness of verse 21, where Christ is seen pierced by the power of death, but crying to God and heard, to verse 22, where He claims as His brethren the faithful in Israel, and finds in them an anticipation of that future day when He says to the nation, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art MINE." Thus even now is the prey taken from the Mighty and the lawful captive delivered (Isa. 42., 49.).

Between this triumphant conclusion

and the first three verses, we find various characters of suffering multiplied, and felt as He alone could feel this letting loose against Him of all man's hatred and evil passions. Much of this is described in highly figurative language, the different classes of His enemies being described under such titles as "bulls of Bashan" and "dogs." The former, we may learn from Amos 4. 1, refer to the Jewish aristocracy; the latter represent the unclean Gentiles who sat and gambled for Christ's garments round the cross. The lion and the wild oxen (unicorns) (ver. 22) probably stand for spiritual foes—with Satan as leader.

It should be specially noticed how different the consequences of all this hostility are in this Psalm to that which we find in Psalms 21., 69., and many others in which terrible retribution overtakes the enemies of Messiah. In Psalm 22., on the contrary, beginning with those who are called "my brethren" ("the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty"), the sphere of blessing widens out to take in any poor Gentile in whom the fear of Jehovah is found. Then, anticipating the conversion of the nation, all the seed of Jacob is called to glorify Him and all the seed of Israel to reverence Him, and that on the ground of verse 21 that Messiah had been heard in the day of His trouble. After a further extension of grace to all the ends of the earth and to all the families of the nations, we come to verse 29, which presents some difficulty to interpreters. A comparison of it with Psalm 18. 44, 45, and Micah 7. 10, 11, suggests that the persons alluded to are those who do homage to Jehovah under the compulsion of His manifested power, and such cannot keep alive their own souls, for His holy government finds them out (see Ps. 101. 8, R.V.).

The last two verses afford the answer to the question in Isaiah 53., "Who shall declare His generation?" The holy seed (Isa. 6. 13) in whom the divine nature is found are reckoned of His generation, and such become the heralds of the story of the cross to a people of a succeeding age. How great the privilege of the Christian to have that knowledge now, and in the joy of redemption to "join the singing that He leadeth," to know the infinite love that is behind all

this history of suffering and to be a witness for Him where He is not.

PSALM 23. This exquisite little portion of the sacred writings comes in between the sufferings of Messiah in Psalm 22. and the establishment of His kingdom in glory in Psalm 24. and reveals the divine provision for the pathway between. It is explained to us by the Lord's own Word in John 10. 4, "When He hath put forth all His own, He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him;" so that while it reveals the path for the sheep, it is one that has been trodden by the Good Shepherd Himself. Indeed, it seems to the writer to be more prophetic of Christ Himself than is generally thought. A difficulty may arise in the mind in thus applying it because of verse 3, but the word "restoreth" does not necessarily imply restoration after sin. Mr. Bellett illustrated such an action in the case of our Lord in John 12. 27, 28.

The Psalm is divided into two equal parts of three verses each. The first gives us the heavenly side of life under the figure of green pastures and tranquil waters: for where can they be found on earth? The second part is the wilderness side, through the valley, not exactly of death, but of its shadow. What more fitting description could be given to this world and how has the shadow deepened since Jesus died? If such is the character of the world we are in, the immense favour of having a pathway marked out for us is evident. "He has Himself gone before," and His Spirit is saying to us, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted" (Micah 2. 10).

The happy experience of the whole Psalm begins with the appropriation of Jehovah as "My Shepherd." That being settled on our side, all the rich blessing the Psalm unfolds, flows from Him to the believer. He undertakes everything, for His own name's sake, as verse 3 assures us. But this blessed ground of confidence is only fully available for those who are in His pathway; mercy endures for ever to all, but the believer who, like Lot, chooses for Himself will not know either the green pastures and tranquil waters nor the comfort of the rod and staff and the overflowing cup. If I say He is *my* Shepherd it implies that I have given up catering for my-

self; and because He is that, I shall not want.

In the second part, Jehovah's presence with His own (as of old in the wilderness) banishes fear, and His rod and staff ensure guidance and control. The table spread in the presence of enemies is the witness of victory² in spite of all opposition, and is beautifully illustrated in the Lord's case by His own resurrection which was testified so powerfully to His murderers that they slew the witness; yet they have to say, "You have filled Jerusalem with this doctrine." Many a saint is never thus vindicated in this world, but nevertheless dies in faith. As a principle of God's government we may take it that the more truly the testimony of the believer is in the life of Jesus, the greater is the support and vindication accorded by divine power. It is the pleasure of Jehovah that prospers, though wickedness may be for a time successful (see Habakkuk, Ps. 73., The History of Job, etc.). The anointed head and the overflowing cup set forth spiritual joy and praise ministered by the Spirit of God. Goodness and mercy provide for all the need of the way, and for the Christian the Father's house is an everlasting Home. What a provision is thus afforded for the way and the end of it.

PSALM 24. The first verse at once defines the period to which this Psalm refers and points unmistakably to the time of the kingdom, when all now alienated by sin will revert to Him whose right it is. Here the Spirit claims it for Him and on the ground that He has created it, the reference being to Genesis 1. 9 (see also Ps. 104. 5-9). The question is then raised: Who shall be with Him in that day, in the hill of testimony and in the holy place of communion and worship? The reply is given in terms which leave this greatest of earthly favours open to any in whose heart the work of the law is written (Rom. 2. 15). Both tables of the law are referred to in verse 4, the first in not lifting up the soul to vanity or anything

false, in the way of worship; the second in no deceit to a neighbour. The cleansing | which this state is the result will be brought to pass for the Jew according to Ezekiel 36. 24, etc.; but we are assured from Revelation 7. 9, etc. that the same grace will operate in Gentiles to prepare them for the privilege of that day. Accordingly in our Psalm those who receive blessing from Jehovah are again described in verse 6, in which two classes may be referred to, for the words rendered "seek" are not identical, and the latter clause can hardly refer to a Jew, and must be understood in the light of such Scriptures as Zechariah 8. 20-23. Mr. Wigram translates the verse, "This is the generation of those following Him, seeking thy face, Jacob." The revisers on the authority of the Septuagint and Peshito versions introduce the name of "God" before Jacob; but there can be little doubt this is a gloss to explain what was not understood.

The character of those who shall enjoy the place of nearness in that day being thus defined, the King Himself enters through the everlasting doors (Ezek. 43. 4) (everlasting in the sense that the scene is one planned in eternal purpose), which are called to open to Him by those who accompany Him. The reply comes from within. "Who is this King of glory?" And the answer brooks no refusal or delay—it is Jehovah Himself, but now known as the One Mighty in battle (*cf.* Isaiah 63.). The powerful confederacy of the Western powers in league with Antichrist has been met and defeated, and the long centuries of His stranger-ship to Israel are ended, and blessed witness of abounding grace, the name of the city shall be Jehovah Shammah = the Lord is *there*. While there is nothing in this Psalm strictly applicable to the Christian, we should remember what another Psalm enforces: that "holiness becomes Thy house, O Jehovah, for ever." Of this the Christian needs to be reminded quite as much as the Jew—"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3.).

One Almighty is more than many mighties. All these mighty sins, and mighty devils, make not any almighty sin, or almighty devil. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Section 2. Chapters 49. to 57.

God's Salvation for All.**Israel's Restorer.**

NOTWITHSTANDING God's salutation given to our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3 of chapter 49., His outward ministry among the Jews *appeared* to so completely fail, that He replies: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain" (ver. 4). So it looked! But how sweetly the verse closes: "Nevertheless My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." Blessed confidence! blessed dependence! He knew that He had been formed from the womb to be Jehovah's servant. God was His strength for His service. And even if Israel was not gathered, yet He Himself should be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah (ver. 5).

Again, God addresses Him: "It is a small thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to *restore the preserved of Israel*: I have given Thee for a Light of the nations, that Thou mayest be *My Salvation unto the end of the earth*" (ver. 6). What an answer to the apparent failure of His work! The Apostle Paul, speaking of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, who is exalted to the right hand of God, said: He counted all things to be loss and dross on account of it. As we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to gain some of this excellent knowledge concerning Himself, it will be the same in measure with ourselves.

He is here proclaimed by God to be *Israel's Restorer*; but important as that is, God says it is a small thing comparatively; for not only this one nation shall come immediately under Him; all the nations shall have Him as their Light; so that, right away to the ends of the earth, our Lord Jesus Christ shall be *God's Salvation*. What excellent and exceeding distinctions are here attributed to Christ!

It was in the spirit of these scriptures that at Pentecost the Apostles preached

and prayed in the name of the holy Child ["*Servant*"] Jesus. They said, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"; and emphatically announced, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." They meant, of course, especially, none other for Israel. He alone was to be their Saviour, their Restorer. As He had restored the lame man so that he leaped and rejoiced and praised God, so He alone could restore Israel. There is no other name. *He is the Restorer of Israel.*

But though three thousand Jews from all parts were then brought to the Lord; we also find from our chapter (49.), the Jews will come to Him from all parts in the coming day; yet He is given to be a Light for all, the Salvation of God for the whole world; and, indeed, He will save the world in the day that is coming; but even now, in Him there is salvation for all. Would that more knew "the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus," the One who is **JEHOVAH'S SERVANT: ISRAEL'S RESTORER: GOD'S SALVATION FOR ALL.**

The Salvation of the Lord.

What a surprise awaits men! The One whom man despiseth and "the nation abhorreth"; who was not only the Lord's Servant, but became "the Servant of rulers" (ver. 7); this One they shall see exalted above all, righteously restoring Israel, and saving the world through His atoning work accomplished on the cross. He will then be supreme in royal grace and glory, and kings shall see and arise, and they shall "worship because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen Thee" (ver. 7). All this is in connection with *salvation*. The terrible judgment that swiftly, and surely, and suddenly descends upon a wicked world is not treated here; that comes in in the next

and last section. These scriptures deal with "salvation,"—it is "an acceptable time," "a day of salvation." This is the *character* of the present period. It is known to faith now. It will obtain publicly soon. Prisons, and darkness, and hunger, and thirst, will yield up their captives and their victims at the gracious command of our Lord Jesus Christ; to enjoy liberty, and light, and plenty. He will Himself guide them (vers. 9-10). They shall come from afar! "Behold these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of China" (ver. 12)!

No wonder the heavens are called upon to shout, and the mountains to sing for the comfort that has come to God's people, through Israel's Restorer. Zion thought she was forsaken altogether. A woman may, unnaturally, forget the

child of her womb; but Jehovah does not forget His own people. He comforts Zion; He consoles her, and rapidly increases her children, saying to her: "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold, all these gather themselves together, they come to thee" (ver. 18). The nations, and the people too, "bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (ver. 22); "And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah" (23).

It will all be done in righteousness, as well as in grace;—"the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered" (24). His salvation is then publicly seen. "And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (26).

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels. (J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

LUKE XVII., XVIII. 1-34.

THE Lord continues His instructions in view of the new moral order of things about to be established. Woe be to him who should be a cause of stumbling to one of the little ones owned by Him in grace! Personal trespass was to be rebuked, but forgiven, practically without limit, on repentance. The smallest faith would put them in connection with the resources of God's power. Yet when they had done all that was commanded, they were only entitled to take the place of unprofitable servants. Then the way of deliverance from the whole system of Judaism, though still owned of the Lord, is seen, before judgment should displace it for ever. The ten lepers in going on the word of the Lord to show themselves to the priests knew that it meant their cleansing. Why go to them otherwise? One of them, a stranger and Samaritan, more readily discerned that He who was sought in connection with the priests was really to be known in the One who had cleansed them, and was the only one of the ten to turn back and glorify God, giving thanks at His feet. But then he was not only cleansed, but free from the order of things represented by the priests.

The kingdom of God was indeed there in every trait of moral power in the person of Christ ["among you"—observe not "within," Pharisees! as A.V.], while not yet manifested publicly. But He was to be rejected, so that the time was coming when the disciples would desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man as then present in grace and should not see it. The Son of Man would be revealed in judgment with all the suddenness of lightning flash, as it was in the days of Noah and of Lot. Let them take heed that their hearts were not held by anything they possessed in the judged place. To escape judgment would be impossible, for it was God's, and would take out its objects, even if together in bed or at the grinding-stone.

It will be remarked that this judgment, though taking effect specifically on the generation of Jewish unbelief, is not that which was impending over Jerusalem, of which there is a special revelation in chapter 21, and is distinct from that of MATTHEW 24., save that as the principles are general, the days of Noah and of Lot are brought in. The judgment was dis-

criminative, and there would be an oppressed but elect remnant (chap. 18.), who were not to faint, but find their resources in persistent prayer to God who would avenge them. [Note—"men" has no place in ver. 1. Ver. 7 shows to whom the "they" of the critical text refers]. But that kind of faith would not generally be found on earth when He came, as the question (v. 8) shows. Chapter 12. had given His coming as it would affect the Christian profession; in all this passage it is found in relation to Judaism and the world. It is peculiar to LUKE, as so much from chapter 10. has been seen to be.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican the Lord resumes, as to the characteristic features of those who should enter the kingdom. The utter pride of self-justification and exaltation has no place there. It was he who stood afar off and cried, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," who went down to his house justified, rather than the Pharisee, who prided himself on the contrast of his state. The relation to the kingdom of children and their position, given fully in MATTHEW, is here re-

ferred to in a moral connection, as usual in LUKE. The lowliness and simplicity, in total absence of self, of the little child is what is essential in receiving the kingdom. Then follows, in the same historic order as in MATTHEW and MARK, the rich ruler who would connect eternal life with works, and had to learn that none was good but God, and that his possessions held his heart from the path of a rejected Christ, with the consequent warning thereon to His disciples and encouragement to those who had left all for Him. And we are again at the case of the blind man of Jericho, that introduces, as in each of the Synoptic Gospels; the last scenes, prefaced also by the Lord announcing to the twelve, more fully than previously, what was before Him at Jerusalem, adding in LUKE the accomplishment therein of all things written by the prophets concerning Him.

For the way in which these scenes are presented in the Synoptic Gospels the reader is referred to Dr. Warren's papers that have, in preceding numbers, pretty fully covered this ground. (See vol. iv. from p. 120.)

Answers to Correspondents.

W.I.—1 Corinthians 15. 51, 52, and 1 Thessalonians 4. 15-18, undoubtedly sets before believers of this present period their glorious prospect. It is their hope—the hope of resurrection, and of being for ever with the Lord. "We shall not all sleep" and "We which are alive and remain" can only refer to Christians who shall be alive on earth at the coming of the Lord. But the first resurrection from the dead will not be confined to those who belong to the church, *i.e.* believers of this present period, "they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23) includes all who have died in faith—from Abel onwards.

So that when the Lord is manifested in His glory there will not be a single individual who died in faith left in the grave.

The special and exclusive hope of the church is set forth in such passages as Ephesians 5. 27. Philippians 3. 8-14 is the expression of the earnest desire of the *individual* saint, whose heart is filled with the excellency of Christ Jesus. It is an individual desire rather than a corporate one. Though all may and ought to be governed by it, for in that epistle we have Paul as *the pattern saint* expressing his desires and declaring his experience.

"I know whom I have believed." Abraham did, indeed, go *whither* he knew not, but he knew *with whom* he went.

Weak faith will as surely land the Christian in heaven as strong faith; but the weak Christian will not have so pleasant a voyage thither as the strong one. Through all on the ship come safe to shore, yet he that is sea-sick throughout the whole voyage hath not so much comfortable sailing as he that is in perfect health.

A Dearth in the Land.

(J. T. MAWSON).

“And Elisha came again to Gilgal : and there was a dearth in the land ; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him : and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.”—(2 Kings 4. 38).

“*A DEARTH in the land!*” How that would please the devil. For would not the Godless nations that hated Israel say with scornful utterance : “Is that all the Jehovah in whom you have boasted can do for you? You came to this land when it flowed with milk and honey, and behold it now, dry as a sun-baked or rainless desert, and you, the chosen people, beloved of the Lord, hungry and dying. Our gods are better than yours.” But Israel only was to blame ; they were suffering because they had broken the commandments of the Lord, and because they were suffering the devil was delighted, the tender heart of God was grieved, and His name was blasphemed amongst the Gentiles.

“*A dearth in the land!*” How often we hear the sad tale told by saints of God who mourn the fact that error has usurped the place of truth ; that their souls are not fed as in former days ; that when they ask for bread they are given the stones of man’s vain imagination, stones that no power can turn into bread, but which are the devil’s imitation of it, his invention with which he mocks the craving of the soul. They read of the days when Christ was ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit and the churches were edified ; and when with hearts on fire the Christians witnessed for Christ and looked and longed for His coming again. They can remember the time when even their hearts were greatly cheered and made happy by ministry which was according to the Word of God ; but which in these days has become unpopular ; and has been forced to give way to that which feeds the fleshly mind, and to amusements galore. For it is said : “Must not we provide something bright and attractive for the people ; must not they have entertainment and recreation ; and is

not this the churches’ mission ?” And the saints of God are suffering, and the tender heart of the Lord is grieved, and His name is blasphemed by those that love Him not, for they say : “Then has your Lord failed you? Is your Christianity played out? Does it no longer satisfy? Then welcome to our board. Let us cater for you. Eat of our fare, for it is better than yours.” And the world and the flesh and the devil preside at the feast ; and love to Christ grows cold, and spirituality wanes, and Christian life is sickly and ready to die ; and the world, while it patronizes and flatters and smiles, can barely conceal its contempt of a seduced and faithless church.

It would be an easy matter to fill volumes with an exposure of this condition of things, but those for whom we write do not need such an exposure ; they know it and deeply feel it, and some of them go from their Sunday services to weep and pray before the Lord about it all. The questions they are asking are : What is the cause of this woeful dearth? and : Is there any remedy? Why is the Lord’s fair garden laid waste? and : Why do His lilies droop and die? May we hope to see these lilies again lift up their heads and disclose their beauties and shed their fragrance for His joy? These questions we desire to answer.

This condition of things has undoubtedly resulted from the fact that the saints of God have left their first love, and so have grown indifferent to His Word and careless as to His Name. Like Israel of old, they have grown slack concerning His will. They have given ears to those who first questioned and then denied the Word of God, until they know not what God has spoken, or whether He has spoken at all ; they

have no guide for their feet and no lamp for their path. They are like a ship at sea without compass or chart being driven by false winds to certain wreck. Moreover, they have broken down the barriers that separated them from the world that crucified their Lord, as Israel mixed herself with the nations, and the foul weeds that are native to the world have shed their seeds in the fair garden of the Lord, and now grow rankly there. Indifference to the Word of God and association with the world are the result of the loss of first love to the Lord, and are the great devastators, the reasons for the wide-spread dearth.

Elisha came to Gilgal, and there the dearth was, and the sons of the prophets were hungry. Now Gilgal was the last place at which you would have looked for dearth. It was nigh to the city of the palm trees on the banks of the life-giving Jordan. It was there that the Israelites first celebrated the passover feast, and ate the old corn of the land. It was a place of happy memories, and those sons of the prophets would know all about its history, and sadly recall the good days long since past. But the presence of Elisha in the midst of them changed everything.

Elisha the prophet was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the man whom God sent to His people—whom He sent to them because He pitied them in their poverty. And in the midst of Israel he manifested the grace of the Lord. He looked for no merit in those that He blessed; it was sufficient that they came to him bringing their need as their only introduction. In the power and mercy of the Lord he was equal to every trial. He helped kings and great captains, and he blessed bankrupt widows and loathsome lepers. No manner of circumstance baffled him, and the resources of God that he commanded were sufficient for every need he met. It is because of this that I say he stands as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is good to have the Lord Jesus Christ to turn to, for He is full of grace

and truth, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Him. No problem or difficulty, no circumstance or crisis in which either individual saint or company of Christians can find themselves can be too great for Him. He is equal to every test, and His grace is all-sufficient. "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Wonderful, most blessedly wonderful, and for ever adorable Saviour!

There is one way, and only one, in which His grace and power and wisdom may be ours. It is at our disposal, at the disposal of every individual saint, and of every company of God's people the wide earth over, but we must turn to Him for it, and in turning to Him acknowledge His authority. He must be supreme. Surely He has a right to be supreme in His church! Did He not love it and give Himself for it, that He might "present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blame?" Are not the saints of God bought with a price, a price that never can be priced—the precious blood? And, if so, has He not the right to control and command, to be absolute in the affections and ways of His people? Who will dare to challenge His right? To whom shall He be accountable? And yet as Israel once cast Him out of His own vineyard, so now is He cast out by a large proportion of His professing church. He stands outside a closed door, as at the Laodicean church. His Word has not been kept, His name has been denied. This is, above all things, the cause of the great dearth.

The only remedy is to go back to first things. "Thou hast left thy first love. . . . Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." There must be a return to the beginning, and in the beginning Christ was everything. His will was paramount. He alone was

"honoured, loved, adored."

Let the saints of God who mourn the

dearth give the Lord His rightful place in their midst, and if any are in religious associations where this is impossible let them at once and for ever sever themselves from those associations, let them do it for the glory of His name and for the good of their own souls. Let none be satisfied with anything short of the absolute assurance that He has the supreme place in the midst of their gathering, that He—and not men—controls. Then shall they be able to count upon those mighty resources that dwell in Him, and He will sustain them in the freshness and vigour of true Christian life.

We may not expect things to be as great as they were in former days, but there is no reason why they should not be as bright. And yet they will not be small, for no grace that the Lord bestows, or blessing that His presence gives, can be small. "*Set on the GREAT pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets,*" said Elisha. They must be fed. So the Lord can feed His saints, as He fed Israel in the wilderness when He rained down bread from heaven for them. Look not to men of learning, lean not upon the servants of the Lord. But turn directly and completely to Him. Own His supremacy, and do His will simply and whole-heartedly, and leave every difficulty and all the consequences in perfect trust to Him.

* * * *

"There is Death in the Pot."

"And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not.

"So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof."—(2 Kings 4. 39, 40).

When we go back to the beginning, we learn that the first thing in Christianity is the acknowledgment of the lordship and headship of Christ, and then, that believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and forming Christ's body are necessary to each other; that they are all dependent one upon the other, and that each contri-

butes to the prosperity or harm of the whole. This truth is solemnly taught in 1 Corinthians 12. 12-27. The help we render to each other is also most blessedly shown in Ephesians 4., the chapter in which the Lord's glorious supremacy over all things is declared. We read there: "But 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" (vers. 15, 16).

The harm we may do to each other is illustrated in our story. They went out, these sons of the prophets, to gather herbs for the meal that Elisha had commanded. And one gathered wild gourds—his lap full—and came and shred them into the pot of pottage. His ignorance and folly almost resulted in the whole company being poisoned; there was death in the pot.

It was from a wild vine that he gathered his gourds, from a plant that had not come under cultivation—fit figure of the evil flesh. Of it we read, "The carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7). It is that which has not, and will not come under God's cultivation. And it always brings forth death and corruption, "For to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8. 6), and, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6. 8).

Now every believer is either walking in the Spirit or in the flesh; each one is pursuing the things of the Spirit or the things of the flesh, and whether we will or not, what we are, and how we live, and what we pursue, and that of which the heart is full affects all with whom we associate.

Suppose by way of illustration that envious feelings, or a hard and unfor- giving spirit, is allowed or cultivated in

the heart of any believer towards any of his brethren; or suppose one brother becomes jealous of another because he seems to have more honour than himself,—these are bitter roots from which will spring “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, and strife”—works of the flesh, and most deadly in their effect wherever they show themselves. How often have we seen happy Christian companies blighted and broken by “bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking;” or as a result of one or more who ought to have served all in love, lording it over the Lord’s heritage. Our association with all the saints of God is a divinely-formed association, and we must not, we cannot, ignore it. The spiritual prosperity of one is a help to all, and the works of the flesh in any means harm to all. We can no longer live as though we alone are affected by our living, “for if one member suffer all the members suffer with it.”

It was a happy thing for those sons of the prophets that Elisha was at hand, and that they had sufficient wisdom to

refer the case to him. It is a most blessed and comforting thing to know that we may cry to the Lord, even when things are at their worst. He is our resource when death instead of life is in the pot. How different would things have been in the church of God, if the saints of God had had enough wisdom to do this, instead of trying themselves to put things right when they have gone wrong. How many a disaster might have been averted if instead of officious meddling there had been a lowly and broken-hearted crying to the Lord. If that which has proved beyond our skill to put straight had been simply carried to Him. If we had said to the Lord, as the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot.”

There has been much failure in this respect, but He fails not, and we may count upon His deep and tender interest in His own, and counting upon this we shall not be disappointed. Moreover, He has the means whereby sorrow may be turned into joy, and spiritual health recovered to those who are sick unto death.

Next month: “These bring Meal and cast it into the Pot.”

The Bible.

THE volume is the writing of the living God, each word of it dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Ghost. It was God who gave the thunders of the law through the lips of Moses; it was God who held the hand of David and guided his fingers over his harp of gold, producing those melodious psalms. It was God who dipped the pen of the prophets into the ink of sorrow, and through them told out His grief at His people’s sins, or sang through them the joyful poetry of the reign of the coming King.

And what shall we say of the New Testament; let a verse from it bring the grandeur of it before our souls: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these

last days spoken unto us by His Son.” (Heb. 1. 1).

The One who spoke worlds into being, is seen, in the Gospels, speaking words in season to the weary, gathering the children about Him, saying to sinners: “Thy sins are forgiven;” and to the sorrowful: “Weep not.” We hear Him speaking words that are spirit and life; words which reveal to our astonished hearts what God is in His boundless love to men.

In the later books of the New Testament, God is still speaking, for “All scripture is God-breathed.” His glory and His grace, His righteousness and His love are all unfolded for us in the Holy Scriptures, and we cannot know God apart from them. The Scriptures are able to make sinners wise unto salvation, and to fully furnish the Christian unto every good work.

The Supreme Authority.

(A MISSIONARY).

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”—(Matt. 28. 18, 19, 20).

ALL authority as far as God is concerned is vested in the risen Saviour—all authority both in heaven and in earth. He said it before He went to heaven, for Matthew's Gospel does not carry us beyond resurrection, but it is no less true now that He has gone into heaven. He will infallibly secure all that God had purposed and promised for heaven and for earth.

There is no part of this universe that is not, by the will of God, put under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may go among all nations and claim people for Christ. The commission, as He gave it, is, “Go . . . to all nations.” You may go into a republican or a monarchical country, civilized or savage, and while you seek to walk in subjection to the powers that be, you recognize that the Lord has sent you there to make disciples. What does it mean in a practical way? You might find that the authorities in either town or country may be inclined to resist the gospel. Our business is certainly not to be Socialists, or to defy the powers that be, but as simple Christians, the servants of the Lord, we should have this fact written with fire in our souls, that wherever we are He can make room for His own Word. Whatever may be the difficulties that Christians are exposed to, there is always the appeal to the highest authority in the universe.

It so happens that for some years we have been working in — —, and the authority we had to recognize was that of a certain well-known State. We went as unknown individuals, known only to the Lord of Glory. As soon as we got there we found that the Roman Catholics claimed religious jurisdiction over all that section of the State where we proposed to settle, and they demanded our

expulsion. Then it was rumoured that we were English spies, the consequence being, that in addition to the religious influence of the Roman Catholics, we had the political powers of the State against us. The local commissaire said we must go out and find some other place. This was confirmed by the Vice-Governor in the capital. Eventually we had letters from the Governor himself to the effect that we should leave there. A Royal Commissioner came from the Sovereign. He investigated the correspondence, and said, “I cannot find any reason why you should stay here; you must go.”

Then, in order to gain by intrigue what they wanted for their own purpose, the Roman Catholics secured the passing of a decree by the King, the object of which was to oust us from the country. So, from the local officials to the Government staff, then to the central authority itself, there was this authority of the earth demanding us to leave. By the grace of God we have continued our work there to this day. God blew upon every intrigue.

At the time when we were in this state, crying to God to open the way, the British Consul wrote us to say, “I write to you as a private individual, that if you will appeal to me as Consul I will see your case through.” As much as to say, if you will only cast yourself into the arms of the British Consul, he will use all the influence of Britain to gain your point. I replied, “It has been the habit of our souls to look to the Lord alone, but—while declining it—we thank you for your kind offer.” Do you think God failed us?

Whatever may be the wall that is in front of you, yet, if you go forward in

simple confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, all authority is given to Him in heaven and earth. What He decrees, all kingdoms have no power to resist. We can reckon upon the Lord. Whatever difficulties we have, threatening worse and worse, let us lay this to heart, that our resource is in Christ Jesus the Lord. All authority is given to Him in heaven and earth (ver. 18). Then we need not go outside of Christ to gain authority to go into any place or to work in any service, but we may appeal to Him immediately and directly, and we may do this among all nations.



If you are here in these Christianized lands, which are fast apostatizing from

the truth, with increasing difficulties for preaching the gospel, you need not look to worldly authorities, nor seek any earthly patronage or influence, but look simply and directly and immediately to the Lord. Every simple and true-hearted Christian worker has immediate access to supreme authority. There is no need to conceal our Christianity for the sake of diplomacy. You have got the authority of Christ, the Supreme Power in heaven and earth, to insist upon the performance of every part of His will.

He says, "I am with you alway." The bright days, the dark days, until the end of the age. There is no diminishing of His authority.

"New Birth," "Quickened," "Quickened together with Christ."

(WILLIAM BARKER).

I

IT is in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, as narrated in John 3., that the need of the New Birth is so strongly insisted on. The Saviour's words upon this momentous subject are exceedingly plain, and leave no room for doubt or argument. The need, moreover, is universal. If any individual under the sun would see and enter into the kingdom of God, he *must* be born again. The "must" is most emphatic. The devout Pharisee, orthodox in what he holds, and the rigid Ritualist, scrupulous in what he observes, must alike be born again, or remain ever blind to the kingdom of God, and outside its hallowed pale. From the application of the Lord's words no child of Adam is exempt.

The doctrine of the New Birth receives a very suited and significant introduction at the close of the preceding chapter, and to overlook this is to miss much. When Jesus was at Jerusalem many believed on Him, we are told, when they

saw the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them. Why not? The answer is, that He knew what was in man. Their faith, if indeed it could be called by that name, rested on outward evidence. It influenced their judgment but did not stir their conscience. It was therefore worthless, in that it left them exactly where it found them. Conversion is not a mere intellectual change, even when it is a change in one's thoughts about Christ. An atheist might examine the historical evidence in favour of Christianity, and be convinced by it, and be but little the better. So the men of Jerusalem saw the miracles which Jesus did, and were persuaded that His mission was heavenly in its origin. But Jesus did not trust them. He knew, if others did not, what was in man. Every spring of his moral being was under the eye of Christ. He discerned what was there, and needed no one to tell him that the very men who accredited him to-day might crucify Him to-morrow. Man, unregenerate, was not to be trusted, and the Saviour knew it well.

The personal presence of the Son of God upon earth manifested what was in man. The Old Testament Scriptures told, in many a sorrowful story, that the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint; but not until that blessed One was here had man fully displayed himself. Then he did. No heart, no room for Christ had he. Nor was that all, as His crown of thorns and cross can witness. It is to the tragic scenes of Calvary we must turn, to the cruel wrongs connected with them, if we would learn what was in man. Who is there that can contemplate those scenes as the display of what man is, and wonder at the words, "*Ye must be born again*"?

It is by the power of the Spirit of God, in conjunction with the Word, that men are thus new-born. "Born of water and of the Spirit," are the Lord's own words. Some have sought to make the water here to be actual water in order to support the deadly theory of baptismal regeneration. But is not water spoken of symbolically all through the Gospel of John, save as in such passages as admit of no dispute? It is impossible to deny that it is so in chapters 4. 14, and 7. 38. And in chapter 13., where the Lord enjoins His disciples to wash one another's feet as He had washed theirs, no one can suppose that feet-washing with actual water is intended. Why, then, should it not be symbolic in chapter 3. 5? Moreover, the *Word* is elsewhere expressly mentioned in relation to the New Birth. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23). "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth" (James 1. 18). These passages shed light on that with which we are now dealing, and show the sense in which the Lord speaks of water. It is the water of the Word (Eph. 5. 26).

And if "the Word of truth" is the instrument which the Holy Spirit employs, bringing that Word home in quickening power to the individual, it is

evident that this is not apart from faith; for how shall the Word profit if it be not thus received? If souls are born again without faith, then are they born again without the Word. But it is not so, for the Word is that which produces faith simultaneously with the communication of divine life. And the faith and the life are both of the Spirit of God.

It is important to see that what is begotten in the soul is of the nature of the One who begets. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, even as that which is born of the flesh is flesh. The life thus communicated is of the order of Him who communicates it. Its nature is holy, and in the things of the Spirit it delights. Hence in 1 John 3. 9, where the one born of God is looked at in relation to the new nature, it is said, "Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God." Between that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit there is nothing in common. The mind of the flesh is ever enmity against God. Between it and the new nature there is perpetual antagonism, even as Paul says in his allusion to Ishmael and Isaac, "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4. 29).

II

The truth of the New Birth did not necessarily assume men to be dead, though in point of fact they were so. The generations that lay in the loins of Adam fallen were all dead, in a moral sense, though the reality of their condition only came fully out when Christ was here on earth. New Birth rather supposes men to be corrupt, blind—their nature poisoned at its very source. But in John 5. the Lord is presented as the quickening Son of God, and men are viewed as *dead*. To the Son, as man, the Father had given to have life in Himself (ver. 26). In the power of this life the Son could and did quicken others in the exercise of His sovereign will (ver. 21).

“The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” Thank God, that hour is not yet at an end. And if any hear His Word, and believe on God who sent Him, then have they everlasting life; they shall not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life (John 5. 24).

III

In John 3. it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is seen in sovereign exercise in effecting the New Birth. In John 5. it is the Son who quickens, and in Ephesians 2., which I would now briefly consider, it is God the Father—speaking as we speak when distinguishing the Persons of the Godhead—who acts.

At the close of Ephesians 1. Christ is seen in death, and the mighty power of God is displayed in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. That same power has been put forth in connection with the objects of divine mercy who were dead in trespasses and sins. “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 (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Such are the words chosen for the setting forth of the great truth of our not only being quickened, but quickened *together with Christ*. Now, it will be evident to every reader that here we are on a larger platform in relation to quickening than either in John 3. or John 5. In the former the individual is simply born of the Spirit; in the latter he is quickened by the Son, and is passed out of death into life; but in Ephesians 2. it is life in association with Christ risen and glorified. Quickened, raised up, and made to sit together in the heavens in Him. This sets the believer on heavenly ground, and in heavenly associations. “If anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things

have become new.” Neither New Birth nor the Son’s quickening—if John 5. viewed alone, and apart from the Scriptures in which the great doctrine of Christian life is further developed—places us there. Life, in present association with Christ in resurrection and ascension glory, could only be declared after Christ was glorified and the Holy Spirit given. Nor, in the very nature of things, could it be before.

IV

Connected with this subject, and essential to the understanding of the believer’s present position in life before God, is the immense truth that we have died with Christ, though this is the teaching of Romans, not Ephesians. Here faith must do its work, faith that receives without debate that which God has been pleased to say on such a subject. In the death of Christ our links with the first Adam have been dissolved. *We* have died with Christ. It is ourselves, not our sins, that we speak of now. And if we have sin still in us, as is assuredly the case, yet we are entitled to speak of it as “No more I” (Rom. 7. 20). The “I” to whom sin attached has died with Christ. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20).

V

But though we have sought to distinguish between New Birth, quickening, and quickening together with Christ, yet we by no means wish to separate them, as if a man might be born again to-day, quickened to-morrow, and quickened together with Christ the day after. We speak subject to correction when we say that they are to be regarded rather as different parts of the same mighty work of grace, different sides of the same great truth, though the sides be not equal, and indeed are not, as we have endeavoured to show.

When we speak, however, of the

apprehension of these things, the soul's really getting hold of them, as deep and precious realities, by the teaching and effectual working of the Holy Ghost through the Word, then we treat of quite another matter, and one that does mark undoubtedly distinct stages of spiritual growth. And the importance of this cannot be overstated, inasmuch as the Christian's character is formed, and his whole life moulded, by the objects before him, and by his present living associations. If we narrow down the doctrine of Christian life to life communicated to the soul, if we sever life from the knowledge of the heavenly position and relationships in which the believer is set, we do ourselves a grave wrong, and deprive life of much that makes it to be life indeed. Hold fast by all possible means to life on the side of possession, for that is fundamental truth, and anything that weakens it should be resolutely resisted. But the Saviour came not only that we might have life, but that we should have it more abundantly (John 10. 10). There are the known blessings of redemption, and the heavenly position and relationships into which Christianity introduces the believer, as marked off from all that was known in preceding ages. It is the knowledge and enjoyment of these things that constitutes *Christian* life in the sense in which we are now speaking of it, and that makes it easily distinguishable from anything that went before, either under law or in patriarchal days.

If what has been advanced is lacking in simplicity, an illustration at this juncture might serve to make our meaning plain. A child is born heir to vast estates and a ducal coronet. It happens that in his earliest years, and in an untimely hour, the child is stolen from his parents, and becomes the inmate of a gipsy's tent, and the sharer of the wandering life a gipsy leads. The child grows up in ignorance of his parentage, and never dreams that other surroundings than his present ones

belong by right to him. By the hand of a gracious Providence the youth is eventually discovered by his sorrowing parents, and restored to the position suited to his rank. What a contrast between a gipsy's tent or caravan and a ducal mansion! Between the selling of brushes, brooms, and baskets, and the higher occupations that engage him now! And yet, when under the canvas of the gipsy's tent he was as truly a duke's son, and heir to a princely inheritance, as when recalled to his rightful home and place. But surely any one can see that the knowledge of his noble birth, and his restoration to his father's house, made life another thing to him. Life, as that which constituted him a living being upon earth, was truly his when as a gipsy boy he ran with bare feet across the village sward, or along the dusty road; but when seated as a son at his father's table, life on the side of knowledge and enjoyment was altogether another thing.

There is nothing on God's side that is true of the one who has been longest "in Christ," that is not true of the one whom God has just set there. "All things are yours," can be said of all who are in Christ, quite irrespective of what they understand and enjoy. Yet the latter is of infinite moment; for, as we have already said, the Christian's character is formed and moulded by it, and by these things he lives.

In conclusion, we have only to add that the cross is the basis of all that into which we are brought through grace. Indeed, it cannot be too clearly seen, that every exercise of divine power in blessing to man, from the clothing of our first parents in "coats of skin" down to the ingathering of the last that shall be blessed, has its foundation in the cross of Christ. In whatever way it may please God to bless the objects of His grace according to varying ages or dispensations, it is all founded on the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord is Coming.

(EDWARD CROSS).

NOTES FROM AN ADDRESS (REVISED).

THERE never was a time when there was not sufficient in Christ to meet the need of His saints, whatever their circumstances. What we want to find in Him is that which meets our own need individually, and having found it, to pass it on to others similarly situated. We must not be discouraged because things are weak and feeble. Weakness and feebleness abound on every hand. But all weakness is not confined to the present time. Things are no worse to-day than they were in times gone by. Of course, they are poor enough now, as we look around. But we must view them from a general standpoint, and not as connected merely with ourselves, or with any one time, or place. God, in His wisdom, has been pleased to allow everything He has set up in the responsibility of Man to fail, one thing after another ; but after each breakdown, He brings in something better than the former ; so that, like Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness," Christ is the solution of that riddle. "In Him all the promises of God are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." And we may rest assured that God has got something for His people to-day, in spite of all the weakness and failure which is our common lot. Christ is coming ! He is coming quickly ! This is the relieving light in the present gloom. And it is our business to see that, so far as we are concerned, everything should be held by us in relation to His coming again. If you don't keep yourself in relation to the coming of Christ, your Christianity will drop down to mere human improvement, and that according to the course of this present age. Thus the great necessity for us is to be in personal exercise before the Lord, and waiting consciously for His return.

If you were riding a bicycle, and you

found it going heavily, you would say at once, "I have got a puncture," and you would set yourself straightway, in the place where you broke down, to make reparation. Where, then, did the church break down ? First, they forgot the coming of the Lord ; and that was quickly followed by the flat denial of it. Compare Matthew 24. 42-51 with the history of the church through the centuries past, when the coming of the Lord was either ignored or denied ; and that in spite of His parting promise, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22. 12-20). How, then, can this declension be remedied ? By the revival of the hope of the coming of the Lord. Get into your soul the blessed hope of His return, and by the Holy Spirit seek to keep yourself in conscious touch with Him who is coming.

Ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. The foolish took no oil in their vessels ; but the wise took oil—a figure, no doubt, of the Spirit of God. The former knew of their Lord's return as a matter of head knowledge ; the latter had the hope of it in their souls from heaven. And we must remember that that alone is profitable which is operative in us in faith by the Spirit.

The hope of the Lord's return, blotted out for centuries from the mind of Christendom, is revived, and the cry goes forth, "Behold the Bridegroom !" In this expression attention is drawn, not so much to the fact of the Lord's coming, as to the coming Lord Himself. That is the great point: "Behold the Bridegroom: go forth to meet Him." And they all arose and trimmed their lamps. Now the question is : Who has the energy to continue waiting for Him till He comes ? Those who had no oil could not carry on, and they say to the others, "Give us of your oil, for our

lamps are going out." But, not so. Each must buy for himself; each must have oil for his own use; each must walk in the conscious sense of his or her own relationship with the Lord, by the Spirit. If you find the oil slackening in your vessel, and your soul is declining in this blessed hope, go and buy while yet there is time. Get to your knees, and seek earnestly of the Lord that He may revive in your soul the bright hope of His coming again.

And the "Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." What a day it will be when Christ comes to claim His bride! The marriage feast of John 2. was "a feast of the Jews." They wanted wine. Jesus was there to grace the feast, but they did not apprehend the meaning of His presence. He was lightly esteemed by them, even where He was not definitely refused. But they will turn to Him by and by, and He will come to them, with restoring grace; and then the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and the whole scene be filled with the glory of His presence.

"Then the whole earth, with satisfied desire,
Will see the fruits of love divine, in glory;
While too, the music of the heavenly choir
Will join to celebrate the endless story
Of Him, who came where sin had plunged
us all—
Came, by His death to crush the powers
infernal—
Came to redeem us from our cruel thrall,
And of His grace to bring us life eternal."

Then will follow, too, rewards for service. One has one talent, and another has another; each "according to his several ability;" and while their Lord is away, He expects that each will trade with what he has got. Timothy was not Paul. He had not Paul's place, nor energy. But he had his own place; and in that place he was put to serve the Lord. And so with each one of us. Where and as the Lord has called us, there we have to serve Him. Only let us do it heartily, with all our might. Our time here is short, but it is unspeakably precious. Our little lives are the seed-plot of eternity. He gave Himself for us

that we might have eternal life. He redeemed us that we might serve Him joyfully, with all our hearts, "You in your small corner; I in mine." And so it is written, "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads, and His servants shall serve Him." It will be our eternal joy to serve Him then. It is our blessed portion now.

The first four churches, in Revelation 2., bring us down from the primal failure of the church at Ephesus, to the "depths of Satan" in Thyatira, in which the papal system is represented to the end. That is, Revelation 2. pictures the history and failure of the church viewed in its entirety. Revelation 3. gives us the history of Protestantism and its offshoots, to the end also. Thus, in Sardis we have the history and failure of the Reformation, so-called: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. . . . I have not found thy works complete before my God." Then Philadelphia represents a feeble people; but the Lord says of them, "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Then comes Laodicea; and of her He says, "I am going to spue thee out of My mouth." From chapter 4. following we have the history of the world, and apostate Christendom in it; and we read no more of the church in her own estate, until we see her rise up in the glory and beauty of the New Jerusalem (chaps. 21. 22.). And what a comfort to keep this before our souls through all the intervening time of evil; just as it was with Enoch, of whom we read that he "walked with God: and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5. 24). Happy man! In the midst of the surrounding darkness his own prospects were of the brightest; while as to the prevailing ungodliness around, his prophetic warning rang out in terms clear and uncompromising. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all . . ." (Jude 14, 15).

Things are dark enough now, and if we keep looking around, we shall be pessimists of the most pronounced type.

But, if we are looking in faith for the coming of the Lord, we shall be optimists of the highest kind. To wait for God's Son from heaven is our "blessed hope"—to look for the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." In Luke 21. the Lord forewarns His disciples how all is trending to an awful cataclysm; and then He says, "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws nigh." Such was to be the issue of all these events. And then, as regards themselves, He bids them, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

When you are looking for the Lord, you will not be anxious how things are going on in this world. Your mind will not be on the improvement of the masses—not even the professing Christian masses—nor on the staying of the judgment of God; but that His mercy may be on all His own, and that their hearts may be kept waiting for His salvation. Those who companied

with the Lord here were a poor and feeble people—twelve fishermen, mere simple folk, with sundry women, and Mary Magdalene among them—utterly unknown and disregarded, so far as the world was concerned. But He calls them the "excellent of the earth" (Ps. 16. 3), and their destiny was to share the coming glory with Him (Matt. 19. 27. foll.). That is how we are instructed to look at things; not as they appear in their present view, but as they are seen in the light of the coming day of His glory. God is not interested in what interests the man of this world. His interests are in Christ, and in those who belong to Christ. He cares for His own because they are His own. They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world; and it is of all importance that we should look at things as God looks at them, for then only shall we look at them aright. Then, let us have our eyes fixed on the glory of Christ, and our hearts alive with the bright hope of His coming again, and we ourselves in our walk and ways, "like unto people that are waiting for their Lord from heaven."

"Who Will Go?"

(D. SCOUGAL).

'TIS the Lord who speaks from heaven—

Him from whom all grace doth flow—
To the blood-bought and forgiven,
Saying, "Who for us will go?"
Who will go to lands benighted;
Go to set the captives free?
Shall *your* word to Him be plighted,
"Here am I! oh, Lord, send me"?

Not for earthly fame and glory,
Honour, praise, or power, or gain;
But to tell the blissful story
Of the Lamb for sinners slain,
In the dark and dismal places
Christian foot has never trod,
Bearing to sin-blighted races
Blessings from our Saviour-God.

Oh, how lovely on the mountains
Are the feet of them who bring
Draughts from the celestial fountains,
Life from Life's eternal spring.
Let the cost by thee be counted,
Lay each weight and hindrance down,
Let each barrier be surmounted,
Go, "let no man take thy crown."

See the Saviour's hands preparing
Crowns for those who win the fight.
Shall our eyes behold thee wearing
One of these in glory bright?
Shall we see it glance and glitter,
Gemmed and jewelled on thy brow?
Could a recompense be fitter?
Darest thou? "Then do it now."

"God My Exceeding Joy."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THERE appeared in the June issue of "Scripture Truth" a striking paper by W. H. Westcott, entitled, "Man dwelling in God and God in Man." I will quote one or two of its sentences: "But may we find home in God! And may God find home in us?"

"My guilty history is so dealt with . . . that my coming into God's presence is not to be reminded of anything which would make me uneasy there. For ever no! The heart draws near to God in happy and holy freedom; we have access by one Spirit to the Father . . . made *at home* in God. All that the renewed heart sees in God makes it feel more and more at home. Holiness my home; righteousness my home; light my home; all that He is my home, my joy, my boast, my ecstasy. I dwell in God. Do not ask me to exchange that home for another. Do not tell me I shall be better off if I make more of this present world. I have found in God my Treasure, my Fame, my Life, my Recreation, my Repose, my All. What a God is He!"

Such words bear repeating. They come from a heart conscious of redemption—a guilty history dealt with; and not only peace with God possessed and enjoyed, but God Himself its realized home and resting-place. God is all! They bear witness to the more than possibility of "man dwelling in God." They supply the fact. But what man? Man as a race? No! There is no immanence, either way, but on the ground of redemption. Man cannot dwell in God nor God in man apart from that work of His Spirit which takes man clean off the ground of nature, and places him, by faith in the blood of Christ, in new relations with God. It is only His children who can dwell in God and God in them. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 8). "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." And what are the possibilities of such? To what

glorious altitudes may not they ascend? What a wealth of experience may not be theirs?

Let me quote that of S. Rutherford, written in dark days and small privilege, but telling, in his fervid and glowing style, of apprehensions very similar to those just quoted.

"What is it," he asks, "to be in God: to dwell in God? What a house must that be (1 John. 4. 13). How far are some from their house and home! How ill-acquainted with the rooms, mansions, safety and sweetness of holy security to be found in God. O what estrangement, what wandering, what frequent conversing with self and the creature! . . . When shall we attain to a living in only, only God, and be estranged from all the created nothings, the painted shadow beings of yesterday, which, an hour and less before creation, were dark waste negatives and empty nothings, and should so have been for eternity, had the Lord suffered them to lie there, for ever. It is He, the great He, 'who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers . . .' (Isa. 40. 22); and He, the only He, and there is no 'He' besides Him! . . . Yet we live at a distance from Him. O, if we knew how nothing we are without Him!"

Words two hundred and fifty years old, but fresh and rich and young as ever. Years, centuries, ages make no change in God. "Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," said Moses in Psalm 90., for that dwelling place was never closed to the generations of God's people. He was, ever and always, their home. "So teach us," said the same psalmist, "to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." No wisdom like that. He is a wise and happy man who makes God his dwelling place.

"Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy," said David

in Psalm 43. The knowledge of God supplies a joy which exceeds all other joys; a testimony true of all times and places.

I have been struck by the fact that Paul uses the words "My God"—seven times, and, on one occasion, with charming felicity. In writing to the suffering assembly at Philippi, he says: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (chap. 4. ver. 18). Notice, he does not say, Your God shall supply your need; nor, Your God shall supply mine; neither does he say, My God shall supply my need—all quite true; but he does say, My God shall supply your need—nay, all your need!

Wonderful intimacy! He lays down the riches of God alongside Philippian poverty, in the well-grounded assurance that the one would obliterate the other. He was confident that the infinite resources of Him whom he could call "My God," were amply sufficient to meet the wants of His struggling people. But how could he say that, unless he had proved for himself, and in long and happy experience, that God was his own "shield and exceeding great reward." He puts the two together—"My God," "Your need," and the need is gone! So he believed.

All sweetly true; only the resources of God are not to be measured or limited by our little need. Nay, place creation—the vast universe—alongside of, and in absolute dependence upon God! Do the same with that which exceeds creation; see that redemption in His work

as well, and then think of God! And yet the Agnostic tells us to-day that God cannot be known! But neither can light be seen by the blind! It is the proper and normal privilege of the true Christian to know God (see Gal. 4. 9), for that knowledge, in its blessedness, is an integral part of the New Covenant. Hence we read, "They shall all know me, saith the Lord." But while this is so, while this lies at the very bottom of true and vital Christianity, how deeply important it is that such knowledge should not be merely theoretic, but real, practical, and living. Thus we find, in 1 John 4. 16), that "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The condition for this mutual immanence is that we dwell in love. There can be no such intimacy apart from the fulfilment of this condition. May we seek to dwell in love—holy, pure, divine love! Dwelling in God is no absorption, by and by, into some imaginary Nirvana, or the loss of all individual consciousness in a dreamy, unknown future. It is for us, here and now, in sorrow and trial, and weakness, and need, and opposition by the world and Satan, to dwell in God and God in us, and to find in Him all that heart could wish—that God is, indeed, "my exceeding joy."

"Source of purest bliss I find—
Find in Thee alone, my God!
Boundless love has made me Thine,
Brought me nigh through Jesu's blood.

"What the world could ne'er bestow,
I have found it all in Thee;
In Thy perfect love I rest,
Satisfied eternally."

Prayer.

The best way to keep vessels from leaking is to let them stand full. A vain heart *out* of prayer will be little better *in* prayer.

Christian! use the world as a servant, and you may go to prayer, as Abraham up the mount, leaving his young men below. . . . Either use the world as not using it, or else you will pray as not praying.

There is an antipathy between sinning and praying. The child that has mis-spent the whole day in playing abroad steals to bed at night for fear of a chiding from his father. Sin and prayer are such contraries that it is impossible at a stride to step from one to another. Prayer will either make you leave off sinning, or sinning will make you leave off prayer.

The Lord's Presence in the Midst.

(H. D. R. J.)

"Where two or three are gathered together to My name, there am I in the midst."—(Matt. 18. 20).

THE FACT.

WHEN as Christians we do not understand any part of God's Word, when what is proposed passes beyond our higher conceptions, when we have no experimental realization of its truth, then it is that we find ourselves very apt indeed to water down its statements, to explain them away, or to so "spiritualize" their meaning as to make them coincide with our own experience.

In nothing is this more likely to occur than in connection with the truth of the Lord's presence with His own. His Word tells us that where two or three are gathered to His name there He is in the midst; but though gathering thus to His name, it may be we do not at all realize His presence in the midst, and forthwith explanation is necessary. Perhaps the Lord only means that we shall have a deep sense of His love, and what we enjoy then of Himself and His grace is what He means by His presence; perhaps He means that it is only in a general kind of way, as that God is everywhere; perhaps He means our looking up by faith into heaven and seeing Him there; and so on.

Now there is another truth which is just as wonderful and which has been "spiritualized" away in just similar fashion. I refer to the truth of the Lord's second coming.

But this truth is guarded in Scripture in a special way, and by the use of just one word; and if we refer for a moment to what is stated of it, we shall be prepared for the way in which the truth of the Lord's presence with saints to-day is likewise divinely guarded.

The Bible is full of references to the Lord's second coming; no one

can read it, however casually, without admitting that. But that He will personally and visibly return to this world is so wonderful a proposition that repeated attempts have been made to explain it away. It is said in the first instance, and believed by multitudes, that the meaning of the coming of the Lord is that when we die He receives our spirits to Himself. It is said again that He is coming truly, but that it is in the gradual spread of Christendom. The world is looked at by those who believe this as gradually becoming (what it is not) better and better, and giving more and more place to Christ, so that eventually a millennium of blessing will be brought in by Christ having the control of all, and dwelling in the hearts of all, and so, as it were, "coming again."

But without pursuing further the various ways in which this precious truth is explained away, let us look at the one simple word by which it is guarded in Scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 4. 16 we read, "The Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven." It is by that one simple word "*Himself*" that the truth is guarded. He Himself is coming, not a spirit or pervading influence merely, but our Lord Himself, personally and actually, shall descend from heaven.

In Luke 24. 33-49 there is given to us a pattern or model of the Lord's gathered people, and in that passage by the same word "*Himself*" is avouched the real presence of the risen Lord with those gathered to His name to-day. Here was the first gathering together to His name, that is to say, of those who came together just because of their common interest in the risen Lord; and then we read, "Jesus *Himself* stood in the midst of them"—Himself, not another; not a vision; not an influence, but "Jesus *Himself*." Three times over is the

personality of His presence avouched in these verses (15, 36, 39).

It was love that carried His footsteps on the resurrection day into the midst of the gathered company in that upper room. He desired their company. The same blessed love carries Him into the midst of His own thus gathered to-day, for Himself hath said, "Where two or three are gathered together to My name, *there am I* in the midst of them."

The reality of the Lord's presence with those gathered to His name we need to lay hold of in a simple faith. We may not always realize it, but it is always a great and wondrous FACT that He is there, our risen and glorious Saviour.

ITS CHARACTER.

The truth of the Lord's presence is presented in Scripture in various connections, each of them distinct and with its own blessedness. The individual saint is joined unto the Lord, and may realize the abiding presence of One who has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Again, when we meet one another by the way, He is there. No two of us can journey together without knowing the presence of a third Person; even as the two going to Emmaus on the resurrection day journeyed in company with their risen Lord, for "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." If we accepted this more simply, how would it affect our intercourse one with another.

Again, looking wider still, Christ is not with the world, but He *is* with the Christian company according to His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 20). This, as the context shows, has special reference to His presence with us in service and testimony, though not limited to that (*cf.* also Acts 18. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 17).

But the presence of the Lord in

the midst of those gathered to His name is, so to say, the crown of it all; it has a character all its own; there reserve is done away and *His* things open up to the soul.

A reference to one of the beautiful types of the Old Testament may illustrate what is meant by saying that "there reserve is done away." The ark of the covenant of shittim wood and gold prefigured our Lord Jesus Christ, and as from between the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat there shone the glory of God in the tabernacle of old, so in His unveiled face to-day shines the light of that same glory. Now the ark accompanied Israel in all their journeys (Exod. 40. 36) onwards, even as Christ is with us to-day in all the circumstances of our journey through this wilderness.

But there were times when the guiding cloud moved on, then the tabernacle was taken down and the people journeyed. Then the ark was by divine direction *covered*; over it was placed the veil of blue, purple and scarlet, and over that again a covering of badgers' skins and a cloth wholly of blue (Num. 4. 5, 6); there could not be, so to say, *full* disclosure of all that His presence meant save in the inside place, the holy of holies, where all was eloquent of His unveiled glory. In the wilderness the cloud of the divine presence was *always* with Israel for guidance and blessing (Deut. 1. 31-33), but at divinely marked stages the people halted, the tabernacle was erected, and the glory hidden in the cloud became *effulgent* between the cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat (Lev. 16. 2; Exod. 40. 34, 35) that prefigures the fullness of His presence as it is known within, where all is *suit*ed to *Himself*, and, apart from the reserve, the necessary limitations of disclosure that accompanies His presence with us in *our* circumstances.

We cannot read the account of the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24. 13-31) without feeling that there was reserve. Our Lord was *Himself* with them,

it is true, but we are made to feel it was with an end in view. In tender love He walked by their side, and so ministered Himself out of the Scripture that their hearts did burn within them, but when, in the house, He was known of them in the breaking of bread, He "vanished out of their sight." Why was this? Ah! He would lead them to find Him in His own sphere, or, so to say, His own platform; and we read that "in the same hour of the night" they rose up and returned to Jerusalem "to meet with the company into whose midst came Jesus Himself; there they might freely gaze on Him and there were their understandings marvellously opened" (vers. 36-49). If in that instant, when they recognized Him in the house, He had tarried with them and eaten and drunk with them, they might have imagined that He was back with them on the old footing. But it was not so; they had to learn the lesson contained in His words to Mary Magdalene when she recognized Him as risen: "Touch Me not." He was no longer on the old platform, no longer in the flesh-and-blood condition in which He might be known "after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5. 16). He was RISEN; hence, while in grace He might walk with them in their circumstances, it was in order to enlighten their faith and lead them out of all that out of which He had died to know Him on the new resurrection platform on which saints to-day are "all of one with Him" (Heb. 2. 11).

And this we, too, need to learn; for when the Lord comes into our midst it is as the risen One, and if we are to learn the gain of His presence, we *must* recognize the truth of His new condition and our associations with Him on that new platform.

Then what will He do when in the midst? He showed unto them His hands and His side, the witnesses of His matchless love (John 20. 20); and it is in allowing Him to do this to us to-day that we shall get the

warmth and cheer of His blessed presence. He *is* with us whenever gathered to His name, whether we realize it or not; but once we have in a simple faith accepted the fact of His very presence, then it is not ours to try and realize His presence by efforts of our own, but just to let Him do as He desires to do when He has us together, and that is to show us, as it were, His hands and His side; to engage us with Himself and His love proved at Calvary; and it is as we come under the influence of this love that we shall realize the gain of that blessed presence which is apprehended by "the faith which worketh by love."

HIS OWN THINGS.

But there is more: the Lord would lead us when gathered in this way into His *own* things, and so He says, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praises unto Thee" (Heb. 2. 12); and again: "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." He has entered the Father's house; He dwells in those courts of light and love, and it is into the unclouded joys that are there His that He would lead us even now—not that we can now actually enter those scenes of light, but He who dwells there comes into our midst, risen and glorified, and in unfolding to us that into which He has actually entered, He causes us, as in His life and as associated with Himself, to respond to the declaration of the Father's name.

May the Lord grant us not only to know the gain, the warmth and cheer of His presence, but there, too, to enter in spirit into *His* things, made ours through grace, the joys that are His as Man in the sunshine of the Father's love, as that love is known in scenes where all is cloudless light.

Section 2. Chapters 49. to 57.

The Controller of Creation Subjected to Shame.

Chapter 50.

THE fiftieth chapter of our prophecy shows the suffering of the Lord at the hands of men, and in this way is very different from chapter 53., which speaks of His atoning sufferings from the hand of God. In this chapter we see Him as the One who in marvellous love "came" and "called" to His unfaithful people, but there was no response to His call. He was the Controller of all creation, yet they scorned Him and put Him to shame, as our chapter declares. His own words declare His greatness:

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

How persistent and unwavering and unwearied was His love for sinful Israel! See where it carried Him! "He became a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers." It was for their sakes the Controller of creation was found as a Man serving amongst them; and He said (ver. 4), "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary." What inexpressible grace! The Commander of the universal forces, came down to speak words of cheer to weary creatures! There were individuals, when the Lord came, just and pious, who deeply felt Israel's position and condition before God; they waited for the One of whom Isaiah spake. Such an one was Simeon. When Christ came He saw in him the salvation of God and the consolation of Israel.

Nathaniel, that guileless Israelite, too, feeling keenly the fallen condition of Israel, was consoled and cheered by the

discovery that "the Son of God, the King of Israel" was in the midst of His people, and that those who mourned the condition of the nation of Israel did not escape His eye.

So real was the dependence of the Lord in His humility upon earth that He said, "*He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned (or as the disciple).*" He whose commands all creation heard and obeyed became a Man, and as a disciple had His ear made attentive by His Instructor. Readily that ear was awakened to be instructed, that He might speak the succouring word that the Father gave Him day by day to communicate to those who were weary of the hollow shams of men and the world, and He could say, "The words which Thou hast given Me I have given them."

It was thus that He trod the path of obedience. Creation's Controller became the obedient Servant! But unfaltering obedience in the midst of disobedience necessitated suffering. God gave Him instruction for the path. He had "uncovered His ear" (ver. 5). Unlike the "rebellious son," He obeyed, and "turned not away back" to escape the sorrows and the shame involved. He took the path appointed. He trod every step to the glory of God. Not one word of His had to be withdrawn; not one step that He took had to be retraced. Men heaped indignity upon indignity upon Him, their determination to degrade Him gained in force as the days went by, but still He pressed forward to do God's will. He had to say, "*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*" (ver. 6).

In this connection Israel cannot say as they will yet say in the words of chapter 53., "He was wounded for our transgressions," for in this chapter it is they who wounded Him, not Jehovah.

They were moved by *hatred* to smite

Him, in chapter 50.: He was moved by love to suffer Himself to be "smitten of God" for them, in chapter 53. In these days of carelessness and callousness as to the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do well to ponder prayerfully the differences in those sufferings.

The Justified Servant.

Such lowliness, such longsuffering, such love, such obedience, however scorned by men, must receive justification from God, and justification of such sort that all who would condemn must be silenced for ever.

It was in the full consciousness of this that our blessed Saviour says, "*Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth Me*" (vers. 7, 8). He was in the place of man: but He fully relied upon divine help (vers. 7 and 9). Nevertheless, the path involved not only the shame, and the smiting, and the spitting of which we have spoken; but also death itself. With His heart full of love and His face firm like a flint He pressed forward with holy resoluteness, and He was slain.

But God has taken Him out of death, He has raised Him from among the dead! What a victory! What a vindication of the perfect life of Jesus! What a justification! "Blessed Saviour," our hearts say, "Thou art worthy!" He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Father was the first visitor to His tomb, before the disciples, or Mary, or even the angels. His satisfaction was so complete in Him!

Where now are those who would contend? Where now those who would condemn Him? He was seen of the apostles in resurrecton; yea, by five

hundred brethren at one time. A sure witness this! Yet some there be who still deny His actual, His physical resurrection. But "if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15. 17); so the Holy Spirit teaches us in the great chapter on *the resurrection of the body*. Thank God He is raised; and believers are not in their sins: they are in Christ; they also are justified in Him.

God has shown how entirely He is for Christ; and He is also for those who believe on Him. He is against those who are against Him. There were those that hearkened "to the voice of His Servant" (ver. 10), but when He was slain all seemed to sink into darkness; they were nevertheless to stay upon God, who would raise Christ from the dead. Then what fullness of light would shine! God was for Him! God was also for them! So true is this that Romans 8. 33-34 uses these very words of them, used here of Christ personally. Who then shall condemn Him? who condemn them? *It is God that justifieth!*

One word more before we leave this wonderful chapter. Look at the last verse. There are men who make sparks. They love the product of their own intellects. Let them "walk in the light" of such; but what shall the end be? *They "shall lie down in pain."* Solemn warning to ritualists and rationalists alike; to all who walk not "in the light as God is in the light" (1 John 1. 7); the revealed normal position of true believers. One professing Christian wrote "Lead, kindly light, amidst *encircling gloom*;" another wrote, "*Light divine surrounds* thy going, God Himself shall mark the way." Which of these expressed the truth?

Prayer.

Will God hear thee, when thou mockest Him? And if it be not mocking Him to let thy heart be overrun with wandering thoughts in prayer, what is? Like children that knock at a door, and then run away to their play again, so thou raisest thy voice to God, and then art gone in thy roving thoughts to hold converse with the world.

Nehemiah, on the occasion of Artaxerxes'

speech to him, interposed a short prayer to God between the King's question, and his answer to it. "Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king," etc. (Neh. 2. 4, 5). So soon was this holy man to heaven, and back again, without any breach of manners in making the King wait for an answer.

The Salvation of the Soul.

(J. BOVD).

In these papers, written in the form of a dialogue, views put forward in a book recently published, entitled "God's Pilgrims," are reviewed in the light of Scripture.—Ed.

SOLOMON has said, "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Eccles. 12. 11, 12). And to words such as these we require to pay special attention in a day such as the present, when the printing-press stands ever ready to give expression and publicity to every thought that rises from the human mind, religious or otherwise.

That this is a day of "*much study*" may be open to question, for it is certainly a day of unparalleled superficiality and infinite conceit. I suppose these two things always go together. The enormous quantities of light literature which are scattered abroad, in which the depraved animal passions of fallen man are portrayed and glorified, are simply appalling. And the more these wretched, empty, and miserable visions of filthy dreamers are read, the more the lust after them is increased, until the desire for wholesome reading becomes dead within the soul.

E. But is the literature put forth in the religious world of a less dangerous character?

T. Surely not. It is indeed a great deal more dangerous; and even that which has the greatest appearance of truth about it may be the most dangerous of all. The devil has a tremendous pull on the printing-press, nor is he particular with what he occupies men with so as it is not Christ. Even those who love the Lord and mean to serve Him in ministering His Word to His people require to be very careful that they do not play into the enemy's hands by sending forth as His truth that which is the mere imagination of the natural mind, but mistaken by them for the thoughts of God.

E. I was thinking about that to which you have just given expression, especially with reference to the subject of salvation, upon which either you or I require to have our thoughts remodelled, for on this subject I fear we do not think alike. I have read some things written by you and those who think as you do, and I have read very different ideas by others on the same subject, and that in very piously written books, and my mind rather inclines to what I have seen in these. Hence my desire to discuss the matter with you in all brotherly love. I do not doubt we have all much to learn regarding all the blessings of the gospel, and just because of this I do not desire to be bigoted in my ideas, but rather to look for things novel in connection with the truth of Christianity. We cannot be always at the same thing.

T. It is all very well to be looking to God for fresh acquisitions of light, and for this no honest heart ever looked to Him in vain. "They looked unto Him, and were lightened" (Ps. 34. 5). He disappoints none who come to Him and whose desire is to do His will. But if I only desire the light in order that I may be considered something great in the midst of my brethren, He will have no regard to my quest for truth. There is also the "*itching ear*" to be guarded against; that is to say, the ear that is weary of hearing about Christ, and prefers "*fables*," which are the inventions of the natural mind under the influence of the power of darkness, novelties instead of the living truth of a Saviour-God. We must also remember that John says to the babes, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (1 John 2. 24).

E. But surely there must be a great deal yet for us to learn. Of course, it is all in the Holy Scriptures, but out of that Book people seem to be bringing new ideas every day. You do not think that is wrong, do you ?

T. A great many seem to be able to bring out of Scripture things which they never found there, for the fertility of the imagination of man is astonishing. That the spiritual mind will always be discovering new beauties in the Word of God need scarcely be said, for the depths of wisdom found within that Volume are infinite; and in whatever way Christ is presented—and the Word is Christ—there are always fresh attractions for the heart. The "*form of sound words*" (2. Tim. 1. 13) will not admit of the slightest change, but the varied glories of the Son of God are inexhaustible, and by these the hearts of the saints are attracted and nourished. For centuries after the passing away of the apostles the blessings of the gospel, as set before us in Scripture, were neither ministered by the professed servants of the Lord, nor enjoyed by His saints. But within the last century the Holy Spirit of God has awakened many of His own to the whole revelation of the thoughts of God, and the blessings of the gospel are now widely disseminated. One can truthfully say at the present moment that what is *new* is not *true*, and what is *true* is not *new*.

E. You mean that the truth was all there in the Scriptures ?

T. I mean more than that. The truth was not only in the Word, but it was in the hearts of some of the Lord's servants in the power of the Spirit, and ministered to all that had ears to hear with both freshness and energy. No one at the present time who knows what the Spirit of God has wrought in the way of recovering His truth for us would pay the least attention to any one professing to tell us something *new*. We can take no glory to ourselves: "Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours" (John 4. 38) can most truly be said of us, though I

fear we have but little availed ourselves of the rich field of blessing laid open to us through their faithful service.

E. Judging from what you say, I fear you will think I have paid but little attention to the things ministered for our profit during these last days, when I communicate to you my difficulties concerning the truth of salvation. But I will first of all begin by asking you a question. What is meant by "The salvation of the soul" ?

T. The emancipation of the soul from the whole power of evil, by which it was held in bondage in the fallen condition in which man is by nature. In this also is included deliverance from the consequences of our sins, and being reconciled to God. Peter speaks of it in contrast with the temporal deliverance accorded to Israel when they were brought out of the grasp of the oppressor to God in the wilderness. This was a salvation which was open and manifest to the nations of the earth (Jos. 2. 10); but the salvation of the soul of which the Apostle speaks, and which is accorded to us, is not yet revealed. Outwardly there is no alteration in our circumstances. As far as the human eye can see there has been no deliverance effected for us. Our salvation has not yet come to light. It still awaits its manifestation. When Christ appears we shall appear with Him in glory, and then shall our salvation be revealed.

E. But do you mean to say that when one believes the gospel his soul is saved ? I think Scripture speaks of us as being saved by hope (Rom. 8. 24). Surely this means that our salvation is yet future.

T. Not necessarily so. The point in that passage is the effect of the presence of the Spirit in us in this creation which has been made subject to vanity. It is a groaning creation; but its fall, on account of the transgression and fall of its head, has not been irremediable and hopeless. It has been allowed to fall under one head in order that it may be recovered under another. It has been made subject to vanity in hope of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into

the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Now, through the grace of God we have been saved, as to our souls, in hope of the ultimate deliverance which shall be ours when the time comes for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

E. But Paul does tell us that "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13. 11), and surely this must look at something not received by us as yet.

T. Certainly it does. But this is not peculiar to salvation. Other blessings of the gospel are spoken of in the same way. John says that He who believes in the Son has life eternal, but Paul speaks as in the hope of it (Titus 1. 2). The righteousness of God is upon the believer (Rom. 3. 22), but in Philippians 3. he counts everything in which he could glory in the flesh as rubbish, that he might be found in Him, not having on his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith. Every blessing of the gospel is ours now in the grace of God, and in the power of the Spirit, but for the completeness of all blessings we await the coming of Christ. It is so with salvation. In 2. Timothy 1. we read: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling;" and in Titus 3.: "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Present salvation is the deliverance of the soul from the judicial consequences of its sins, from the dominion of sin, from the fear of death, from the power of the devil, and being brought into right relations with God in Christ.

E. What then do you make of the *hope* of salvation?

T. The hope of salvation is the prospect of final deliverance; not merely as we have it now in the life of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit, but in a change of body; which will place us with Christ in glory, as we read in Philippians 3.: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the

Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body." The presence of the grace of God in the gospel has brought salvation to us in a moral and spiritual way, and the presence of the Lord in person shall bring it to us in an actual, complete, and final way. There is also a deliverance which is effected for us day by day. Our great Priest who has passed through the heavens is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him (Heb. 7. 25). There is still another aspect of salvation to be referred to; that is, salvation from wrath through Him (1 Thess. 1. 10; Rom. 5. 9). That will involve what is called the rapture of the church, which will remove us out of this world before the wrath He speaks of is poured out upon it. There are, I think, four aspects of salvation. First: the deliverance of the soul from the consequences of sin, and from every adverse power, and setting it in right relations with God in Christ. Second: the adoption, which is the redemption of the body, when we shall be planted in the position and place designed for us before the world was. Third: the daily deliverances which are vouchsafed us through the intercession of our great High Priest. Fourth: salvation from the coming wrath.

E. That is all very interesting; but how do you regard the salvation spoken of in the Hebrew epistle?

T. In the same way in which I regard it as spoken of in any other Epistle. To the people to whom God had formerly spoken by the prophets He had in these last days spoken in the Person of the Son, and the word which was spoken by the Lord to them during His life here upon earth is spoken of as salvation. Just as Paul, speaking to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch, and also to the God-fearing Gentiles amongst them, says, "To you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13. 26). And later on, when the Jews would not have the gospel, he says, "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts 28. 28). Why should I think the salvation spoken of in

Hebrews different to salvation referred to anywhere else ?

E. It is addressed to a people who are viewed as in relationship with God. It is not the gospel to sinners.

T. But no epistle is addressed to sinners. All the epistles are addressed to the professed people of God. But the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to a people who never were out of relationship with God. But the relationship in which they had been previous to the coming of Christ was connected with the old fleshly order. It was not man in relationship with God in Christ, which involves a wholly new order of blessing, but man in covenant relationship with God, responsible to maintain himself in life and blessing by the fulfilment of his obligations. The salvation to which they had been accustomed was entirely temporal, as I have already said. It began by the shelter of the firstborn from the sword of the destroying angel in Egypt, and would have been completed, had they been faithful, by the destruction of their enemies in the land of Canaan, when and where they would have found rest. But all this having failed, and Christ being rejected by them the moment they saw Him, another kind of salvation begins to be announced by the Lord, and that is the *salvation of the soul*. Hence the Lord in the Gospels constantly speaks of this salvation. At present men were no longer to expect temporal deliverances, which were fruitless as regards any lasting blessing for the people; they were now to hear from the lips of the Messiah the Word of a new and eternal salvation, which, though for the moment it carried no temporal deliverances with it, emancipated the soul from spiritual bondage, that it might find its liberty and delight in the service of the God of salvation. And whatever may be said to the contrary, this is just what this salvation means. It takes in all the communications that fell from the lips of Jesus while He was here upon earth. It takes in also His death for our sins, His resurrection, and session at the right

hand of God. These Hebrews, then, to whom this epistle was written, are looked at as in an unbroken line from the Fathers, but in the confession of Christ, in whom the power of this salvation was centred.

E. But this salvation is not what is represented by the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, but what is represented by bringing the survivors into the promised land.

T. Nothing in the epistle gives you the slightest warrant for either saying or thinking so. It began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard Him; and we have only to listen to what Peter and the other apostles preached to know what that salvation meant. Peter speaks, at the first announcement of this salvation by the apostles, of the guilt of the nation in their rejection of Christ, of His resurrection from the dead, of His exaltation to the right hand of God, and exhorts his hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and they shall receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2.). To the house of Cornelius he goes back to "the Word that God sent to the children of Israel" by Jesus Christ, and winds up with the statement that all the prophets give witness to Jesus, that whoever believes on Him receives the forgiveness of sins (chap. 10.). These were the words by which Cornelius and his house should be saved; and I suppose there was no temporal deliverance granted to him; if it was not the salvation of his soul, I should like to know what it was.

E. But the forgiveness of sins in Hebrews is not the forgiveness of unconverted men upon believing the gospel of the crucified and risen Saviour. It is the forgiveness of the sins of the people of God. I refer to chapter 2. verse 17.

T. There is nothing about forgiveness there. The only place we have forgiveness in the epistle is where he speaks of the terms of the new covenant, and there it is just presented in the way in which you deny. It is the terms upon which God will place the two houses of

Israel with Himself when He takes them up in grace in the age to come. But instead of this salvation being that which is represented by bringing the survivors into the promised land, there is not a single type that lies on the Canaan side of the wilderness referred to. There is not a semblance of the Brazen Serpent, Jordan, or Gilgal; whereas there is the antitype of the Red Sea in the destruction of the one who had the might of death, and the setting free of the people in order to their taking their journey toward the Land of Promise. It became Him who was bringing many sons to glory—the

exigencies of His nature and character demanded it—that the Leader of their salvation should be made perfect through sufferings. Propitiation had to be made, God in His nature and character must be vindicated from the suspicion of being indifferent to sin, death as the expression of God's judgment of sin must be annulled, the power of the devil must be broken, before ever a soul can move forward toward the rest of God. That rest will be glory, and we who are justified by faith rejoice in hope of that glory (Rom. 5. 2).

(To be continued.)

Victory.

(Wm. McGowan.)

WE are nearing our goal in the glory,
 And soon we shall journey no more
 Through a world with iniquity hoary,
 And Jesus, its Judge, at the door.

In the meekness of manhood so lowly,
 He came from the Father to save ;
 But the world, for the Sent One so holy,
 Had naught but a cross and a grave.

Were the legions infernal rejoicing
 That Christ had succumbed to their might ;
 With gladness their victory voicing
 In gloom of Cimmerian night ?

Had evil o'er goodness abounding
 Successfully battled with God ?
 Had lawlessness, fell and confounding,
 Enveloped the universe broad ?

* * * *

Declare through the breadth of creation
 The work and the worth of the Son,
 Proclaiming the perfect salvation
 The glorified Victor has won.

Death's cruel domain has been shattered,
 And broke is captivity's chain ;
 The forces of evil are fettered,
 For Jesus is risen again.

And peace is our portion eternal,
 Which nothing can mar or molest ;
 Before us is glory supernal,
 With Him in whose love we are blest :

And soon He will come in His glory,
 And then we shall journey no more
 Through a world with iniquity hoary,
 And Jesus, its Judge, at the door.

The Day of Atonement.

(JAMES MCBROOM).

Leviticus 16.

IT is important to take account of the place this precious chapter has in the Book of Leviticus; whether we regard it historically in its bearing on the congregation of Israel, in covenant relationship with Jehovah, or in its typical character as shadowing forth the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God had delivered Israel from their enemies and brought them to Himself; He had come down to dwell among them in the tent which Moses had reared up according to His directions. In His mercy He had established a system of sacrifice whereby the uncleanness and transgressions of the people might be met provisionally, and in a way consistent with His holiness, so that He might dwell among them. The uncleanness, transgressions, and sins of the people made blood-shedding and death a necessity (ver. 16). Sins and transgressions were met by the offerings and their laws detailed in chapters 1.-7., and in chapters 11.-15. instruction is given in regard to the uncleanness of the flesh. Both are in view in chapter 16.

Chapters 8.-10. give the history of that which was the immediate occasion for the ordinance of the day of Atonement: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me" (chap. 10. 1, 2, 3). But it was impossible that God, who is love, and whose love is the mightiest force in the universe, could be limited to one class of men to the exclusion of the rest of mankind; hence, while dealing with Israel in relation to the circumstances of the moment, He gives, in His matchless wisdom, a figurative representation of how the whole question of man's relationship with God would be taken up and settled in Christ in divine righteousness, for His own eternal satisfaction, and the good and blessing of men.

The great theme of the chapter is Christ and His work, for it is true, here as elsewhere, that "Christ is the end of the law;" the spirit and substance of it all is found in Him. What He is sacrificially in all His peerless excellence

comes first and gives the foundation for all else. But two things claim our attention. First, Aaron's garments, then the distinction between the priestly family and congregation. The linen garments mean holiness and purity. It is no question here of outward display; all these garments set forth in figure what Christ is as come to take up the question of sin, all in Him is in perfect moral accord with the purity and holiness of the throne of God; and although we know Him now in the garments of glory and beauty (see Ex. 28.), "crowned with glory and honour," yet this could only be as the result of what is prefigured in the holy linen garments and the work connected therewith. The Holy Ghost unfolds these things for us in Christ in Hebrews 9. We see Him there wearing the holy linen garments, as the anti-type of Aaron in the solemn work of *atonement* (vers. 11, 12). Then in verse 24 of the same chapter we see Him as He now appears in the presence of God *for us*. These words clearly indicate the robes of glory and beauty, as it was in these that the names of the people were set.

The distinction between the priestly family and the nation is doubtless intended to show the distinction between the heavenly saints and the earthly saints, the former, the church composed of His brethren (Heb. 2. 11, 12), are associated with Christ in the sanctuary and have boldness to enter the holiest, whither He has entered, while the earthly company, Israel, await His coming out (Heb. 9. 28).

In the purpose of God, those who form the church are made holy and without blame before Him in love and in relation to Christ, are brought into the distinctive relationship of His body and His bride, and are now being educated for the day of display (John 16. 14, 15; Eph. 3. 14-21).

In the sacrificial work the sin-offering came first (vers. 11-14). After it was slain the blood was taken into the holiest and sprinkled on and before the mercy-

seat. The priest could only enter the holiest enveloped in a cloud of incense, which was symbolic of the fragrance of Christ. Without this he would have died, for no flesh could stand there. The glory of God is secured for Him in His creation in the blood of Christ as sin-offering. The blood of the burnt-offering was not to be taken in. We have here, in figure, a two-fold declaration of the truth that God has carried out His own sentence upon man. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood," and the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat was witness that life had been given up. The judgment of God has fallen vicariously upon Christ, and if the life is gone the man whose life it was goes too. The only One who ever lived upon the earth who had not forfeited His life, and upon whom death had no claim has died, and in that death God has carried out His own judgment, for His own glory, in the removal by judgment of sinful man, so that he can not again have any standing before Him for ever. In the case of the animal whose blood was carried in, the carcass was taken out, "without the camp," and burned (vers. 11-15 and 27; Heb. 13. 11, 12). In this we have the truth, clearly prefigured, that sinful man, in whichever way he may be viewed—learned or ignorant, rich or poor—has come under the consuming judgment of God in the death of Christ, who alone could sustain that judgment. There was also on the part of man that which made death a moral necessity. The creature in which God's highest thoughts were centred lived in enmity (Rom. 8. 7), and it was impossible for Christ to connect Himself with man in such a condition. Clearly "no act of power could e'er atone." But Christ came in the purpose of God to die that the confusion might be removed, consistent with the being of God, and that in His resurrection a new creation might be brought into being where no disorder can come.

We may be conscious that this cuts right across all the lofty dreams of poor, fallen man, but being what he is, a lost sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, nothing else is possible. But many believers while trusting in Christ have not learnt the truth of the cross as the immovable basis of divine righteousness from which all blessing flows, and they do not see that it introduces into a new

order of life on the other side of death with relationships and affections which all centre in Christ our risen Head. To refuse this side of the truth is to slight God's most cherished thoughts and works in the attempt to connect Christianity with man and his world instead of with the risen Christ.

There is that in the work of Christ and His adorable Person which is beyond description. Human conception and language are of necessity limited; hence, no type can fully show the truth. Christ is before us in the animals of sacrifice, and also in Aaron and his going in to accomplish the work, and still most of all He is seen in the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat—the living, triumphant Saviour in glory—"redemption which is in Christ Jesus." But mark the contrast: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Aaron went in *to accomplish* the work, which in its bearing was efficacious for ONE YEAR, but at the cross the work *was accomplished*, and the stamp of divine approval put upon it, and His going in is the result of having obtained *eternal redemption*.

In the case of the people, though the act of atonement was identical with that of the priestly house, yet there are certain differences which are of interest.

The goat, though of a lower order of sacrifice, is duplicated. On one upon which the Lord's lot fell is connected the great truth of propitiation; the other, called the scapegoat, was for the people, and sets before us substitution.

These blessed truths—so largely developed in the New Testament, in which Christ has glorified God in regard to sin, and also borne away the sins of the believer—have often been dwelt upon.

But there is a hint here by the Spirit of God as to the difference between the church and Israel which may yield profit. As already noted, the bullock is the highest order of sacrifice and indicates the fullest measure of communion with the death of Christ on the part of those who form the assembly. This truth, involving the counsels of God in regard to the heavens and the earth, shows us

that the divine intention is that the church should apprehend the cross in its relation to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit; to men, angels, and devils; to the universe at large; to apprehend that wondrous, amazing scene, where we get the full moral display of God in a way creation never could display Him, where the great problem of the universe is solved—the question of good and evil—to the everlasting glory of God. What wondrous thoughts fill our hearts as in silent adoration we gaze on that cross!

Though this may show the moral distinction between the two, there is also a dispensational touch of great beauty in the ways of our God. The place of association and nearness peculiar to the church is known and enjoyed by faith during the moment of the long-suffering of God with the world. Not so with the earthly company; for when He—the true Aaron—comes out, it is then the scapegoat aspect is seen: sin is taken away and they are brought into the enjoyment of forgiveness and righteousness in virtue of that wondrous work so long before accomplished at the cross. This is the time of which prophets have spoken and psalmist has sung, when “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me . . . said the Lord,” and the time when

Jehovah says, “I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel” (Jer. 31. 34; Hos. 2. 21, 22; Ps. 96.—100.).

The work of propitiation and cleansing being past, Aaron put off the holy linen garments and washed his flesh in water, and proceeded to offer the burnt-offering for himself and the burnt-offering for the people, significant of the divine acceptance of the work of that day. This was a sweet savour as it was burnt on the altar, and with it the fat of the sin-offering, whose carcass had been burned without the camp, there was signified the complete identification of the two, and that He who “was made sin” is, in the internal excellencies of His being, the same One who is acceptable to God as a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. 5. 2; 2 Cor. 5. 21). It may be remarked that though there are different families in the divine order of blessing all are brought into supreme happiness for the glory and praise of God. Then the praises of the Lamb shall vibrate through the vast extent of creation “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;” and then shall He “see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

“Oh 'tis His due—that worthy One
Tastes now the fruit of love's blest ways;
Eternal is His joy in us,
Eternal is our song of praise.”

Dear Saviour, I have naught to plead
In earth beneath or heaven above,
But just my own exceeding need
And Thine exceeding love.

The need will soon be past and gone,
Exceeding great but quickly o'er;
The love unbought is all Thine own,
And lasts forevermore.

In social prayer don't pray too long, for when we pray in company we must consider those who travel with us in the duty; as Jacob said, “I will lead on softly as the children are able to endure.” . . . Beware of praying the company into a good frame, and then praying them out of it.

None will bear the loss of an enjoyment so patiently as he that was exercised in prayer while he had it. Job, by sacrifice, sanctified his children every day; and therefore, when he lost them all, he could bless the name of the Lord. The more David prayed for his child when alive, the less he wept for it when dead.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 7.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 25. to 29.

FOLLOWING the series of nine Psalms we have been considering which reveal the introduction into the sphere of service and testimony, in this world, of One "fairer than the children of men," with its results in blessing and in judgment, we come to a cluster of fifteen Psalms more exclusively experimental in character than the foregoing nine. They may be compared with the other two series of similar character each containing five: 3.-7. and 11.-15. We shall find, as might be expected, that those which form our present study exhibit a deeper and more varied experience than the earlier ones, the charm of which lies in their exquisite simplicity.

The moral state which the Spirit will produce in the souls of the believing remnant is set forth in its fundamental element in Psalms 25. and 26. The first exhibits faith and trust in Jehovah with repentance for sins which are freely acknowledged in verses 7, 11, 18. The twenty-sixth shows that uprightness of soul which accompanies true repentance.

PSALM 25. is another abecedarian Psalm, and like 9. and 10. the structure is not altogether regular (see note, p. 116). It may be divided into five sections, ending with verses 3, 7, 14, 20, 22. The first of these merits some attention. In view of the circumstances of distress mentioned in verses 16-19 the believer lifts his soul to Jehovah and claims God to be for him against his enemies. We are thus taught the simple yet profound lesson which Caleb and Joshua learned in an earlier day (Num. 14. 6-9) to measure the power of our foes by what God is, and not by what we are. This point is more fully dealt with in Psalm 27. In 25. 3 the character of the righteous is given as those that wait on God, and as such are definitely separated from the transgressors; the latter will surely be put to shame, the former as certainly not. The soul having appropriated Jehovah as "*my* God," the need of guidance and teaching becomes imperative, for in times of distress how often the enemy succeeds in luring us into false ways! Are many believers now

found so filled with the knowledge of God's will as to walk worthy of the Lord unto *all* pleasing in the various relations in which we are set? Verse 9 states an indispensable condition: "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." This we learn in one school only (Matt. 11. 29).

With respect to the confession of sins, found here for the first time in the Psalter, each mention of them anticipates a later revelation of God's ways with the true penitent. Thus verse 7 is answered in the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31. 34. Verse 11, "For Thy name's sake . . . pardon my iniquity; for it is great," is met by Jehovah's declaration, "I, even I am He which blotteth out thy transgression for mine own sake" (Isa. 43. 25; see also 1 John 2. 12). Verse 18, "Forgive *all* my sins," finds a warrant in Hosea 14., where Jehovah bids the prodigal Israel to say, "Take away *all* iniquity."

The last two verses are interesting as showing that while the work of redemption must be of God, He does not act apart from a moral state in the soul: "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on Thee." His word and His ways are, as always, the means used to effectuate this moral cleansing (Ezek. 36. 25, Isa. 4. 4). Its result in blessing to Israel is told in the song that will yet be sung in the land of Judah, never heard there before: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isa. 26.).

PSALM 26. is the proper sequel to 25., and takes up the last two verses to indicate how integrity and uprightness preserve the saint, even in the evil surroundings of verses 4, 5, 8, 10. First of all they secure that God in His holy government is for him, and the petition is "Judge me, O Jehovah, for I have walked in my integrity." Secondly they give stability, "I shall not slip." So the last verse, "My foot standeth in an even place" ("righteousness," *Kelly*). Where this integrity exists there is always found the desire for a more true correspondence to the divine nature, and the prayer is "Prove

me, Jehovah, and test me; try my reins and my heart." And this is not in any spirit of self-righteousness, but with the sense of dependence on mercy and the purpose of heart to walk in truth. It is not said as in Psalm 17., "Thou hast tried me and found nothing;" that was Christ personally; in this Psalm it is His Spirit in the failing yet true-hearted believer. Separation is clearly marked in verses 4 and 5, and an earnest desire to be kept in holiness in verses 9 and 10. This picture of a right spiritual state would not be complete without mention of approach to God, according to the way He reveals Himself (6, 7, 8, 12). The first requisite is personal purity, and the second the use of the appointed means—the altar—of which Christ is the anti-type; the third, the knowledge of God in what He has done, "His wondrous works;" the fourth, right associations, "in the congregations will I bless Jehovah," the place where His glory dwells (8).

PSALM 27. continues this spirit of confidence and worship, even in view of the apparently overwhelming forces of the foe; and the saint desires and diligently seeks (contrast Prov. 13. 4) to know not merely victory, he is confident of that, but the secret of Jehovah's dwelling-place, where He Himself may be known and enjoyed. This holy intimacy being secured, an outward and manifested triumph is expected over all enemies. These two positions answer to the two spheres of blessing, the house and the hill, so often mentioned in the Psalms.

The special interest of this Psalm is the marked contrast between the first six verses and those that follow. In the presence of enemies there is confidence and exultation; in the presence of God there is deep exercise and anxiety. Can it be the same person who says, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear," and in prayer to Him, "Hide not Thy face from me: put not Thy servant away in anger"? The first confidence is surely right, but the question must arise in every humble soul, "Am I right who make this boast," and this produces anxious searching of heart. This should not be regarded as needless legality, for it arises from a true estimate of the holiness that nearness to God requires. The answer comes in the blessed truth that it is Jehovah Himself whose mouth had said "seek My face."

Will He give me up when I respond, "Thy face will I seek." The moral result is found in the exclusive waiting on Jehovah which the last verse describes; as this is known the heart is encouraged. An illustration of this point is found in the case of Ezra, who boasted in "our God" before the King Artaxerxes and fasted and humbled himself before God ere the trial came (Ezra 8. 21, 22, 23).

In PSALM 28. the exercise deepens, yet verse 7 shows a blessed link with the last verse of 27: "My heart has trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him." The man of faith has the consciousness that he is not one of those whose lives are a mere procession to the grave, and he craves to receive an answer to his petitions which such neither desire nor seek after (vers. 1, 2). It is important to notice how in these Psalms, in which separation from the wicked is so plainly marked, that the heart is first set apart to Jehovah; the holiness of walk follows as a proper consequence. This distinguishes the man of faith from the Pharisee, who boasts himself in his outward garb of religion, but whose heart is full of spiritual pride. Perhaps the distinguishing feature of this Psalm is the mention of Messiah in verse 8. The power that brings deliverance to Him is seen to be the same that operates in favour of His people. What an assurance of victory this gives! Such a people must be saved, blessed, shepherded and borne for ever, according to the prayer of the last verse. The same connection of thought is found in Ephesians 1.: "That ye may know . . . the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ." This power of God was revealed in Old Testament times in the sphere of creation, and is gloriously testified of in the next Psalm. In the New Testament it is manifested as entering into the region of death and claiming Christ for the highest place in heavenly glory.

PSALM 29. calls on the offspring of earth's great ones* who have been

* The word is "elohim," God or gods, and hence used for those who are God's responsible representatives on earth (John 10. 35). The character of those addressed in verse 1 is explained by a reference to Psalm 2. 9-12.

characterized by independence of and rebellion against Jehovah, the God of Israel, to ascribe to Him glory and power, and to worship Him according to what is due to His name. These first two verses give the moral conclusion of the rest of the Psalm, which proceeds to describe the irresistible power of Jehovah under the figure of a storm which begins in Lebanon and sweeps through the land to the Wilderness of Kadesh in the south. A sample of life-giving power as well as of destruction is given in verse 9. These are characteristic of the power by which the kingdom will be set up in its own time.

As confirming this thought the temple is mentioned in the same verse, once more brought back to its rightful use. Every one in it, or the whole of it, utters "GLORY." Over all the realm of nature the God of Israel is King, and every foe having been subdued, He blesses His people with peace. How the victorious Son of God brought peace to His people in another day should be remembered by way of contrast with the different character of the blessing spoken of in this Psalm. "Peace I leave with you, MY peace give I unto you," is the portion of the Christian, not of Israel.

Answers to Correspondents.

**"Not Discerning the Lord's Body."—
1 Cor. 11. 29.**

C. M. INSENI.—Those here referred to had lost all sense of the import of the Lord's Supper. They were turning this most blessed and solemn ordinance into an opportunity for the gratification of their sinful gluttony, eating and drinking to excess, and so dragging the Lord's Supper down to the level of the feasts held in celebration of the heathen deities.

No question as to the worthiness or unworthiness of the person who eats and drinks comes into the passage—none out of Christ are worthy, all "in Christ" are worthy and to partake the Lord's Supper is their privilege; but the question is of the way in which it was being done. Their manner of doing it was unworthy of the sacred act.

The Supper speaks to us of the Lord in death for us, His body given and His blood shed. He went into death, suffering the judgment of God against our sins and our whole sinful condition, to meet all the holy claims of God against us, that we, delivered from all condemnation, might gather in the presence of the Lord in holiness and love, and have our souls filled with a sense of that love which led Him to die for us. The death of the Lord has put an unmeasurable distance between us and the sinful indulgence of the flesh which met its condemnation in His death, and nowhere should this be realized and recognized more truly than at His Supper. One cannot imagine the

excesses of the Corinthians taking place in any Christian assembly to-day; yet the same carnal condition which led them into these things will, if we sink into it, make us careless and indifferent as to the true meaning of the Supper; and from this may the Lord preserve us.

"Love Never Faileth"—1 Cor. 13.

BETA, BRISTOL.—The statement "Love never fails," does not mean that there are things which prophecies and tongues and knowledge fail to accomplish which love cannot fail to do, as your question suggests. That undoubtedly is true, and the whole chapter teaches it, but it is not the meaning of this particular sentence. Prophecies and tongues and knowledge shall cease, because the time shall come when they shall no more be needed; but the love of 1 Corinthians 13. shall never fail or cease. They are but temporary; it is everlasting, for it is the very nature of God. Prophecies and tongues and knowledge, and even faith and hope, have to do with our present imperfect condition, but when we no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face, these things which are necessary to us in our period of growth shall drop away as the scaffolding of a building when it is completed; but love shall abide, for God is love. So we are exhorted to "follow after love."

Love is to be in activity in this period, and here comes in your thought. Love sets itself to seek out its objects and bless them, it is untiring in its labour

for the comfort and prosperity of the loved ones, and it continues to labour even though the response to it is feeble or lacking. It is the greatest thing in the world. It was seen in its full manifestation when the Son of God was here upon earth; it is to be manifested now in those who have His life and nature—the children of God.

The Silence of Women in the Assemblies.

H.—Thanks for your letter. One thing is certain, God will not lead any one to act contrary to His Word, and if He has said, "Let your women keep silence in the ASSEMBLIES: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14. 34), no woman under His guidance will speak in the assemblies. And do not overlook the fact that this chapter closes with the words, "THE THINGS THAT I WRITE UNTO YOU ARE THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD." If any, through self-will, or a desire for prominence, or through misdirected zeal, refuse to hear and obey this commandment, then the solemn statement that follows will be true of them: "But if any man be ignorant let him be ignorant."

In 1 Timothy 2. 11, 12 we read: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." You may be sure that God will not lead any woman out of this place which in His infinite wisdom He has assigned to her. The reason for this is also given. The man was before the woman in creation, but she got out of her place and took the lead, and was consequently deceived by Satan, and sin and death were the result. Solemn warning this to us, and wise shall we be if we keep our God-appointed places. Redemption does not alter God's order in creation, but adjusts the relationships of man and woman according to His original thought.

The passage you quote as to there being neither male nor female in Christ has no bearing on the matter at all, and you must not make one word of God of non-effect by quoting another. The statements in 1 Corinthians 14. and 1 Timothy 2. could not be more explicit; they set forth the word of the Lord for His assemblies, and for order in the house of God,

and in connection therewith the relationship in which women stand to men according to God.

This does not hinder any from singing the praises of the Lord in the assemblies, as you suggest; it is a question of teaching and leading; nor does it hinder Christian women from serving the Lord in the many ways that are open to them. Some of these ways are dealt with in the paper you criticize: "Woman, her place in the Scriptures," July issue of this magazine.

"Every Family in Heaven and Earth"— Ephesians 3. 15.

R.V.S.—You are right in saying that there will be more than one family of God in heaven; the correct reading of Ephesians 3. 15 proves this. But we do not think that it is possible to say how many. We judge that every separate testimony that God has given to men must have produced a separate family. He spoke before the flood, and after it. Then He called out Abraham and gave the law by Moses and maintained a people who knew Him as Jehovah throughout the Old Testament days. But He was also working in sovereign mercy outside the chosen nation, as the cases of Melchisedec and Job would prove.

Then He gave, and still gives, to the heathen nations a testimony in the firmament to His God-head and glory. Psalm 19. speaks of this and tells us that "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. . . . Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." We are sure that this testimony to Himself as a beneficent and glorious Creator has not been in vain, and it may still be doing its work in those parts of the earth where the gospel of the grace of God has never been. Different companies, each forming a separate family, come into view in the Revelation, each having its own special relationship with God according to the revelation which He has made of Himself to each. The everlasting praise to Him whose mercy is so great will be made up of many tones, varied in pitch and wide in range according as each family of singers has known the glory of the Lord, and thereby shall perfect harmony be produced, in which no discordant note shall sound for ever.

“ Let us . . . love . . . in deed and in truth.”

TWO Christian men visited an aged Christian dependent on what was given her for her subsistence.

One of them suggested to the other that they should each give this poor sister five shillings. His companion refused, making some excuse about not being able to spare the money. The first one felt impelled to give not only five shillings, but ten—his own share and his companion's.

Walking to the railway station a horse-fly bit the hand of the one who declined to give. His hand swelling, and the railway journey he was about to take being a long one, it was thought advisable to call on a doctor. The hand was examined, the inflamed part treated and bound up, and a fee of five shillings charged.

We cannot dogmatize on this remarkable coincidence, or say that the man would not have been stung if he had not refused to help the Lord's poor, yet God's hand is over the smallest details of life, and it is very significant that the very sum he refused to part with voluntarily, he was forced to spend, and that before he reached the railway station.

If he had given cheerfully and with a ready mind, reward would have accompanied the gift; his companion, however, was the gainer, for he will reap a double reward, doubtless.

The practical James says: “ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give

them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2. 15-17).

To this John agrees, when he says, “ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3. 17, 18).

And to crown all, there is that magnificent appeal of the Apostle Paul's. In the middle of his charity sermon, as it were, he brings out this gem of purest light, this appeal, based on the highest and most transcendent grounds, even bringing in the knowledge of the grace of the Lord Jesus in giving HIMSELF up, as a reason we should give our pence. Read the glowing, palpitating words:

“ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8. 9).

The Christian friend who narrated the above incident, and who knew the circumstances of the case intimately, had no doubt as to what should be learned by it. Nor does this incident stand alone. We could point the lesson with many such tales.

But if the reader stands in doubt as to the incident, there is no obscurity about the Scriptures quoted. Let them speak to your conscience and soul, beloved Christian friend. (*Contributed.*)

Take heed that thou art not tempted to question whether God *hears* thee because he does not immediately *answer* thee. Mordecai's name stood long in the records of Ahasuerus before he was publicly honoured. So God records

the names and prayers of His saints with the intention of fulfilling their requests. Abraham waited long for Isaac; and so mayest thou for the accomplishment of thy prayers, but it will come at last.

“Then Bring Meal.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

“And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.”—(2 Kings 4, 39-41).

WE have pointed out in a former paper that one of the chief facts of Christianity is that the members of Christ's body are necessary to each other, and that every one of us is either a help or a hindrance to every other co-member of that one body, according as we walk in the Spirit or follow the things of the flesh. We need to have this great truth pressed upon us, for the times in which we live are selfish times, and it is so easy for us to think that we have only ourselves to please, and that we can do as we choose without regard to any other person. It is upon this most pernicious principle that the evil flesh which is within us acts, and it is thus that it serves the law of sin, for it is not only indifferent to the welfare of others, but it is also insubject to God. It is enmity against God: “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8. 7). As we have already shown, the flesh is like the wild vine from which one of these ignorant sons of the prophets gathered wild gourds his lap full; if we tolerate or cultivate it our laps also will be filled with the sorrow and shame of its deadly fruits. And how terrible these fruits are! Some of them are enumerated in Galatians 5. 19-21:—

“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and the like.” These things may not all appear equally heinous in our sight, but they are all the works of the flesh. Yes, variance, strife, and envyings are as truly the works of the flesh as adultery, heresies, and murder. Corruption and death always follow in their wake,

not only for the individual who gathers any one of them, and who, to change the figure to that most solemn one given by the Holy Ghost, must reap what he has sown, for God is not mocked (Gal. 6. 7), but for many others also, who are associated with him as a member of Christ's body. It is because this is so that we are exhorted to “Follow peace with all men, and HOLINESS, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, AND THEREBY MANY BE DEFILED” (Heb. 12. 14, 15).

“There was death in the pot.” These sons of the prophets, had they all been wise, might each have had the honour of contributing to the common good, but, through the ignorance of one and the folly of all, the meal that was intended for their nourishment threatened to do incalculable harm to every one of them. They brought in the poison and spoilt the feast, but they had no antidote for the harm that they had done. They were wise enough, however, to perceive this and to cry to Elisha, the man of God, and in doing this they laid their distress down in the presence of the power of God, which worked through him on their behalf.

Here is clearly indicated for us the way of wisdom in times of difficulty and sorrow. The Lord, of whom Elisha was a type, is our resource in every trouble. If we think of the responsibility of the saints of God to maintain the truth of God and to edify one another, these days are not better than any that have gone before. From the beginning and throughout the centuries carnality and failure have marked the church's

course. We can see this, and were the church's history written for us by the finger of God, what sad reading it would be. There have been times when the flesh has broken out outrageously, shocking even the natural conscience, but this, whenever or wherever it happened, was but a symptom of the general condition : fruit of the wild vine allowed to flourish in the very garden of God, and the common shame of all.

We ought to have learned lessons from the past, but history has repeated itself in our day, and our failure is less excusable than any that has gone before.

Yet the Lord has not changed and He cannot fail. He has always been the resource of His saints when they have fallen upon evil days, and He is so today. But the failure must be owned and the need confessed, and this means the humbling of our pride. We have often thought, when we felt that there was death in the pot, that we, by the application of some principle, could turn it into life ; that we could straighten and correct that which was crooked and wrong by some ecclesiastical action of our own devising, perhaps ; and it was often flesh reproving flesh, because it was not the peculiar kind of flesh that we favoured ; and confusion has been made worse confounded and the evil increased ten-fold. We have saved ourselves, probably, from the deep heart-searching that should have been ours, and preserved our pride and boasting, but have failed to reach the root, and have it all out and confessed and judged. May the Lord give us grace to feel this if it is so, and to confess it so that we may be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and may He preserve us from growing indifferent to the condition of things amongst His saints ; and may we never fall into that fatalistic state of mind which says, "What is, must be ; there is no remedy." May we be honest enough to make no attempt to hide our need from the eyes of the Lord, but, instead, lay it all before Him, and say, as we feel it deeply and

with tears, "Oh, Thou Man of God, there is death in the pot."

Elisha's remedy was not far to seek, for He said, "*Then bring meal.* And he cast it into the pot ; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot." We have no wish to be fanciful in our application of this story to our present need, but it strikes us as being remarkable that Elisha called for meal and used it as the means of healing the pottage, and not salt as in the case of the waters of Jericho (chap. 2.). And our thoughts are carried back to the Levitical offerings, one of which was the meat, or meal offering (Lev. 2.). This offering was made of fine flour, and typified the life of the Lord Jesus here upon earth.

Every heavenly grace shone out in perfection in Him in manhood, for He was everything that the heart of God desired that man should be. But there are two traits that seem to be specially made prominent by the Holy Ghost for our help : they are His humility and obedience. They are set before us in that wonderful passage in Philippians 2. :

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

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God :

"But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men :

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—(Phil. 2. 5-8).

This is Christ as the meal offering, and He is presented to us in this character that we might admire, adore, and imitate. Think of His humility :

"Heaven's arches rang as the angels sang,
Proclaiming His royal degree ;
But of lowly birth came the Lord to earth,
And in great humility."

Though He were in His own person the everlasting God, yet He did not disdain the Virgin's womb and that lowly birth in Bethlehem's stable.

Though He were Lord of all, He accepted without resentment the despising of the people, and continued unweariedly

to serve them. When His disciples contended who amongst them should be greatest of all, He, their Lord and Master, bent low to wash their feet. He sought no honour, no name for Himself; His joy was to do His Father's will, and to serve the weakest and the worst. And this path led only to the cross, with its degradation and unparalleled shame. He knew from the beginning that this would be the end, yet He murmured not. It was obedience that led Him along that road, but His humility was as perfect as His obedience, so that no thought of His own reputation or question as to the rightness of the path entered His thoughts. It was the will of God, and in that He delighted.

At Philippi the wild vine of the flesh was beginning to produce its bitter fruits of pride and division. These had not developed as much as in some of the churches to which Paul wrote; but death was working there and his keen eye detected it, and to arrest the growth of these pernicious things and antidote their deadly effects he brought Christ before them in this way. The meal was cast into the pot.

This is the great remedy. By this is discovered to us the hatefulness of every carnal work. All fleshly pride stands rebuked in the presence of that lowly life so meekly lived, and if

this mind that was in Christ Jesus be in us we shall walk in grace toward each other and in obedience to God; we shall with lowliness of mind each esteem others more excellent than himself, and in humility and obedience work out our own salvation. What place could strife and envy have amongst the saints of God if this mind were in us? Yet this is only possible as the meal is cast into the pot—as we feed upon this life-sustaining food.

“We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And feign would like Thee be;
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning, Lord, of Thee.”

Evil cannot be ignored where it appears, and the works of the flesh must not go unjudged. But no true judgment can be arrived at save in the presence of the perfection of Christ and His cross. There evil does not appear less evil, but we see it, not only as it spoils our own spiritual good, but how it appears before God; then how great is the relief to turn from it to Christ.

The Holy Spirit is ever ready to fill our thoughts with Christ, and since He is the true food of every saint, we find practical unity and fellowship as we feed upon Him. And not only fellowship with each other, but with God also, for He is the Bread of God.

Pride.

PRIDE is the greatest of all evils that beset us, and, of all our enemies, it is that which dies the slowest and hardest; even the children of the world can discern this. Madame de Staël said, on her death-bed, “Do you know what is the last to die in man? It is self-love.” God hates pride above all things, because it gives to man the place that belongs to Him who is above, exalted over all. Pride intercepts communion with God, and draws down His

chastisement, for God resists the proud, He will destroy the name of the proud. and we are told that there is a day appointed when the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man laid low. One man cannot do another a greater injury than to praise him and feed his pride. “He that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a snare for his feet,” and a “flattering mouth worketh ruin.”

J. N. Darby.

"Before the World's Foundation."

(INGLIS FLEMING).

THE minds of men are mostly occupied with the things which can be seen, with matters connected with the earth as it now is.

Astronomers and geologists are engaged with the manner of the earth's formation, expounding their own theories and exploding the theories of others as to this matter.

Believers understand that "the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11. 3).

But the Spirit of God would take us back in our thoughts into the eternity before the earth began to be:

"Before its deep foundations
On nothingness were laid."

What was then? Very little is made known, but all that is communicated is of the profoundest interest.

I would like to call your attention to three passages where these eternal realities are presented, and where the expression "Before the foundation of the world" occurs—the only three in which it does occur.

John 17. 24.

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." From this we learn that "before the foundation of the world" the Father loved the Son.

In the deep affections of the Father the Son delighted then. In the deep affections of the Son the Father found His pleasure. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father hath now declared Him to us; but before there was any revelation made, and before the world where the revelation was to be made existed, He was rejoicing

in the love which is now declared so fully. As it is said of Him, as Wisdom, in Proverbs 8. 29, 30, "When He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

We are thus led into the realm of divine affections, and privileged to contemplate, as it were, the infinite and eternal delight of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Father. The Father's love in all its blessedness resting with infinite complacency on the Son. The Son responsively delighting in being the object of that complacent love.

All this is natural, if we may so say. The very nature of God is LOVE (1 John 4. 8, 16), and this love of complacency rested on a perfect Object with perfect delight.

Ephesians 1. 3, 4.

But a deeper mystery attaches to the fact that in that bosom in which the Son lay eternally, thoughts of love should be found towards us.

Ephesians 1. 3, 4 brings this into view.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Thus the Apostle begins to pour out his heart in praise as he contemplates that of which I now speak.

The Son, the eternal Son, who was eternally the object of the Father's love has become incarnate, He has glorified God about the whole matter of sin, has upheld the majesty of His throne, has magnified the law and made it honourable, has wrought atonement at Calvary, and thus has finished His blessed work. Now He is exalted to the right hand of His God and Father.

It is as the blessed, risen, exalted Man that He is viewed in this passage. Therefore it is that God is spoken of as His "God and Father," who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings "in Christ." He is the measure of the blessings that are ours. His place of nearness is our place of nearness. We look upon Him where He now is as Man in all the favour of God, and we read our acceptance in His acceptance there. "In Christ" speaks of the fullness of favour and privilege which are the portion of all who are His. And this is for time and for eternity.

And all this is "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." His purpose was made *then*; that is, it was outside and apart from the world altogether. *Then* it was God chose us for blessing in Christ, to be holy and without blame before Him in love, blessing to be enjoyed now in part, but which, in its fullness, will be known only when we are conformed to the image of His Son.

This is distinctly Christian blessing. Israel was chosen *from* the foundation of the world, its blessing is earthly in character and connected with time. Christian blessing is heavenly and eternal.

So it is that the Christian is not understood by the men of the world. Their ultimate thought is prosperity in the world. Their minds travel not beyond the confines of things seen; they have nothing outside of them. But for the Christian these things are not *all*; indeed, they are of minor import to him, for he looks, as the Apostle Paul says, "Not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

But if these unseen, eternal, heavenly blessings were to be ours they must be so in perfect righteousness. "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts." "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." It could not be that He could pass over the question of sin, the

blighting influence of which has been cast over the whole world, and has involved those who were foreordained to the blessing as well as all others. How, then, could the demand of His holiness be met? How could God have those predestinated to the adoption of children before Him in righteousness.

1 Peter I. 11.

This passage gives the key. We are "*not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*"

Here we see that when the Son lay in the bosom of the Father—the object of His love—when the purpose was formed that that Son, having become man, should have companions to share the Father's love with Him—then also was He foreordained to be the Lamb of God whose precious blood should open the way in righteousness for the accomplishment of the Father's will.

Of this fact of redemption by blood there were indications all along the history of man on the earth. The animals slain to provide the skins wherewith our first parents were clothed—the firstlings of the flock brought by Abel in sacrifice—the burnt offering presented by Noah on Ararat—all shadowed the redeeming work of Christ. Isaac's inquiry of his father Abraham as they two went together and ascended the mountain where he was to be offered, "Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering?" tells that he knew what the customary offering was. And his cry has been echoed by the centuries. The offerings on Jewish altars all cried out for Christ to come and fulfil the truth of which they were but shadows.

At length the solemn time drew near, and John Baptist was sent as forerunner before His face. Then, looking upon Jesus as He walked, he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God." *There was the Lamb*

for a burnt offering. He who was fore-ordained to be it had now come.

Then, later, we gaze with wonder and with worship upon Him on the cross, and see Him accomplishing redemption and glorifying God in the very place of death and judgment. *There is the Lamb* offering Himself without spot to God, fulfilling every type and shadow and definite prediction of the law and the prophets. That work is finished. Redemption by blood, eternal redemption has been obtained, and He who obtained it is in glory. Now we may see Him crowned with glory and honour and with glad hearts we may say again, *There is the Lamb*. He is now in the brightest spot of heaven's glory, acclaimed as worthy by all the hosts above. And His presence there opens the way for all His fellow-heirs and companions to be with Him.

Thus in perfect righteousness can all God's counsels have their fulfilment. His majesty, His truth, His holiness, have all been fully expressed, and praise, eternal praise, is His.

“ Before the foundation of the world ”
the Son was loved by the Father.

“ Before the foundation of the world ”
we were chosen for blessing in and with Him.

“ Before the foundation of the world ”
He was foreordained to be the Lamb of God who should accomplish the necessary redemption work.

Well may we bow in worship while we wait for Christ's coming to receive us unto Himself.

“ God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be ;
And radiant hosts for ever share,
The unveiled mystery.”

Cleanse Thou me from Secret Faults.—Ps. 19. 12.

YOU have seen a ship out on the bay, swinging with the tide and seeming as if it would follow it : and yet it cannot, for down beneath the water it is anchored. So many a soul sways in its desires towards the Lord, feels that it ought to be wholly for Him and often longs so to be, but the desires and longings are futile because it is anchored to some secret sin.

When *one* saith “ How shall I do this, and anger God ? ” *many* in their hearts say, “ How shall I do this, and displease men ? ” Herod feared John and did many things ; had he feared God he would have done everything.

Satan makes choice for such as have a great name for holiness to do his work ; there is none like a live bird to draw other birds into the net. Abraham tempted his wife to lie—“ Say thou art my sister ”. The old prophet led the man of God out of his way.

A tear in the eye for sin adorns a sinner far more than a jewel in the ear. . . . Hypocrites ! can you show one tear that ever you shed for a wrong done to God ? Esau wept because he *lost* the blessing, not because he *sold* it.

Christians, give not place to Satan ; no, not an inch in his first motions ; he that is a beggar, and a modest one without doors, will command the house if he be let in.

Set a guard on thy outward senses ; these are Satan's landing-places, especially the eye and the ear. Wanton objects cause wanton thoughts.

The least passage in thy life may prove an occasion of sin to thee. At what a little wicket a great sin may enter ! David's eye did but casually light on Bethsheba, and, lo ! the good man's foot was presently in the devil's trap.

The Literal Inspiration of the Bible.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

AT a recent public meeting held in the city of Norwich on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the speaker of the evening indicated three headings in connection with the subject in hand, viz. "The Literal Inspiration of the Bible":—

- (1) The absolute infallibility of the Word of God.
- (2) Its perfect adaptability.
- (3) Its vitalizing power.

The Absolute Infallibility of the Word of God.

In the address, Jonah and his story came in for more than a passing share of notice. The speaker rightly took the ground that the book was historical, correct in all its details, and to be believed just as it stands.

At the close of the meeting the Dean of Norwich moved a vote of thanks to the organizers of the meeting and to the speakers. In his speech he assailed the integrity of the Word of God, and gave expression to the "shallow criticisms" of the Higher Critics.

It is well for the sake of young Christians to explode the position the Dean of Norwich took up, for they are meeting continually with such objections, and it will strengthen their faith to see how untrustworthy such objections really are.

His action provoked expostulation at the moment, and correspondence in the local newspaper. In a letter to the newspaper he stated his position as to the book of Jonah more fully. He wrote:

"I felt it right at the recent meeting of the Bible Society . . . to dissociate myself and the other ministers present from this view of the matter because it is not a view to which the Bible Society is pledged. If it were, some of us would not be able to appear upon its platforms."

It is time the young were warned. How widespread the leaven when the Dean is able confidently to dissociate not only himself but other ministers present from the view that the Scriptures are literally inspired, and to declare that some of them could not attend such meetings if the Bible Society were pledged to such a view.

I feel slow to believe there was not present some Elijah who refused to bow to the Baal of Higher Criticism—some faithful minister who dissented entirely from the Dean and abhorred such soul-destroying doctrines.

Let no Christian swallow the teaching of any man, be he Pope or Cardinal, Bishop or Dean; or accept a minister's teaching to be authoritative simply because it flows from a minister's lips. Rather let him be like the noble Bereans, who "received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched THE SCRIPTURES daily, whether these things were so," even when they were ministered by no less a vessel of the Holy Ghost than the Apostle Paul.

But let us particularize the Dean's objections. He writes:

"We should say that the story [of Jonah] bears upon its face, as clearly as the Book of Job, all the signs of what the Jews called a *midrash*, i.e. a story constructed to teach a spiritual lesson. If it is taken as history, the commentator has an impossible task. He must tell us who the King of Nineveh was and why he was so called, instead of the King of Assyria. He must tell us what language Jonah spoke; why the size of the city is so much exaggerated; why nothing is known of Jonah's preaching at Nineveh by prophets subsequent to the reign of Jereboam II, under whom the historical Jonah lived (2 Kings 14. 25), even when their theme is

Assyria, and so on, and so forth. These difficulties are so great that it would never have occurred to any modern writer to take the book as historical, any more than the Book of Job, had it not been for our Lord's reference."

So in spite of our Lord's reference to Jonah as having been in the belly of this great fish and as having preached in Nineveh, the Dean tells us the Book of Jonah is "a story constructed to teach a spiritual lesson," that it is "inspired fiction," as he phrased it in his speech moving a vote of thanks.

If our confidence in the Bible is shaken a breach is made in the citadel of our faith through which infidelity can find an entrance and become master of the fortress. This is a matter of life and death. This is vital. It is abominable beyond words for ministers to draw salaries for defending the faith and use their voices and pens and influence in the destruction of it. Similar conduct in politics or diplomacy, or on the field of battle, would be treason, and would meet with its prompt reward.

Let us examine some of the Dean's objections. They will be seen to be very puerile, and if he had read both sides he would have found some of his objections had been already exploded—for history has supported, in important details, the Book of Jonah—and I think he would wish he had not spoken.

The Dean tells us the size of the city is exaggerated. The Higher Critics as a whole show their animus by trying to discredit the Bible; they will readily believe the testimony of any heathen historian, of Josephus and Herodotus, but will refuse to believe Matthew and Paul, and even the Lord Himself.

And bear this in mind. *Every* discovery of the explorers and excavators, *every* revelation by spade and mattock, *every* testimony on Egyptian papyrus or Assyrian tablets, has uniformly supported the Scriptures, and exploded the theories and rash conclusions of the

Higher Critic. Let the young Christian weigh this fact well. In no instance has the critic been right and the Bible wrong. It is indeed good that the discoveries were made *after* the mistakes of the critics, and not before. Is this not an amazing tribute to the literal inspiration of the Bible? Can any other book in the world stand such a test?

Now as to the size of the city being exaggerated. De Wette, an accomplished Hebraist and critic, who desired nothing more than to discover proofs of the late date of the Book of Jonah, says, "The statement respecting the size of Nineveh (3. 3) is of no importance in determining its date." Urquhart says of this: "The justice of this remark has been recognized by later Hebraists. Schroder testifies that the city, as it stood in Sargon's day, was ninety miles in circumference, and was, literally, therefore, 'an exceeding great city of three day's journey.' Sargon built a certain quarter of the city a little subsequent to Jonah, but he probably built on the old foundations, and did not alter the huge lines of the older fortifications."

Then again the Dean asks :

"Why nothing is known of Jonah's preaching at Nineveh by prophets subsequent to the reign of Jereboam II, under whom the historical Jonah lived, even when his theme is Assyria?"

We reply: As the whole Bible is inspired, one would not expect needless repetition, which would swell the Book beyond the limits of one binding, and give us a dozen or twenty volumes in the place of one. The *silence* of the Bible is as marvellous as its *speech*, and as indicative of its authorship.

Does the Dean refuse to believe Josephus because he alone testifies to some fact? Then why refuse to believe the testimony of Scripture? And in this case especially, in which the very imprimatur of the Lord is placed upon it.

Then again, his difficulty as to what language Jonah spoke is surely puerile.

Can he not find a Jew to-day, who speaks more than one language? Is it impossible that Jonah was bilingual? Does it not show animus when inspiration is derided on such flimsy grounds as these?

Take the difficulty of the whale swallowing Jonah. Remark, Scripture tells us "a great fish" was prepared by God to swallow the disobedient prophet. The word "whale" is used in Matthew 12. 40 alone, and it was the King James's translators who translated the word wrongly. The word means a great sea-monster.

On the other hand, there is a whale which the naturalist, Buckland, has described as capable of swallowing a man several times the size of a man. He tells us that these whales vomit the contents of their stomach when dying, and that they are known in the Mediterranean, in the neighbourhood of Palestine.

And yet how many wise critics have assailed the Christian's faith by ridiculing the story of Jonah and the whale, when all the while the Bible never speaks of a whale; and if it did, whales capable of performing the feat exist in the neighbourhood in which this remarkable event happened.

And as to God keeping Jonah alive for a certain period in the fish's belly: are not men kept alive under water by using diving suits and diving bells? Does not the submarine plunge under water like some great sea monster, and keep its crew alive inside it? Is man cleverer than God?

* * * * *

The second point in the address was:

The Perfect Adaptability of the Word of God.

The fact that a collection of sixty-six books, written by men living far remote from each other in most cases, both as to time and place and circumstances of life, written in every case by *Easterns* with no such advantages of civilization

and education as we have to-day, should be printed into over four hundred languages and dialects, should possess the largest circulation by far of any other book, should be the most travelled, most abused, most written against, most loved, most revered book in the world, is a phenomenon that is absolutely unintelligible save by the one word—INSPIRATION.

And mark, the last book of the Bible was written nearly nineteen centuries ago, whilst its first was written at a time when the Higher Critics declared that writing was an unknown art. Tablets now in the British Museum have long ago made the rash statements of the critics to recoil on their own heads, and still they are unabashed.

King George reads a chapter of the Bible every day; the German Emperor declares it is his constant companion and adviser. We are all familiar with the pictures of good Queen Victoria reading the Scriptures to an old crofter in a Highland cottage; or handing the Bible to the dusky monarch as the secret of England's greatness, showing the Queen, the cottager, the heathen—all alike feel its winsomeness, its power, its pathos, its message of hope, awe, and its solemn warnings, to be indeed the message of God to their souls.

When Sir Walter Scott, dying, asked his son-in-law to read to him, his son-in-law replied, "What book shall I read?" Sir Walter Scott, the maker of books, which had earned for him the title of "The Wizard of the North," which had brought him a baronetcy and honours, replied: "There is only one book—the Bible; read that."

I called on an aged Christian between eighty and ninety years old. He was surrounded by books. Two thousand volumes lined his shelves. He said to me: "You can take whatever volumes you like. The Bible is the only book I want now." Surely the perfect adaptability of the Bible is evident.

* * * * *

The third point of the speaker was:

The Vitalizing Power of the Word of God.

If we could turn this chapter into a testimony meeting, there are tens of thousands of Christians who would testify to this. The writer can. We can say we know what it is to have "passed from death unto life."

The speaker at the British and Foreign Bible Society narrated the following:

"A man once took a friend to a river that flowed past the end of his garden, and said, 'Did you ever see this river before?' 'No; nor did you,' replied the friend. 'What do you mean?' said the owner of the place; 'I live upon its banks, and I have seen it every day of my life.' 'No,' said his friend; 'You have seen the banks of the river; you have seen the bridge which spans it; did it run dry you might see its bed; but the river itself is ever new, ever freshly flowing, day by day, hour by hour,

moment by moment. It never is the same river.'

"And so it is with the Word of God. Its covers might be the banks; the actual printed word might be the bed; the various expositions they heard about it might be the bridge; but the vitalizing thing was the living truth of God which flowed through it, ever new; and that that truth could only come in power if they realized that it must be read and understood through the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, of whom Christ said, 'When the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth.'"

In conclusion, dear young Christian friend, your great safety is to be familiar—reverently familiar—with the Word of God. In it you will find knowledge and wisdom. In it you will find a more effective armoury than all that is written about it. Search the Scriptures. Read them reverently and prayerfully. Remember the Bereans. They "searched the Scriptures DAILY." Let this be your custom.

Eternal Punishment.

(F. VAUGHAN).

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of wisdom, the personification of Eternal Truth . . . Holiness in utterance. As the "Word of God" He revealed the Truth; in that Revelation He declares the existence of a place or state of punishment in the next world which He states is "everlasting" and which He speaks of as "the damnation of hell" (Matt. 23. 33). "Everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25. 41). "Everlasting punishment" (ch. 25. 46). "Torment" (Luke 16.), etc., etc.

Now, here is Infinite Truth accommodating itself to the finite mind; if it

was necessary to explain or illustrate the Truth in such terms as these, what must be the nature of the infinite reality in His mind which these words represent?

It is impossible to accept the doctrine of His eternal holiness, His divine tenderness, or His supernatural wisdom, without being appalled at the reality which must have been in His mind as He thus spake.

The sincere follower of the Lord Jesus *must* believe all that He spoke—any "mystery" thus accepted is no *greater* than the mystery of His Personality, and of His redeeming love.

Let us proclaim to the world that we do believe in a blessedness to come by living blessed lives now; walk as becometh the heirs of blessedness; a Blessed Crown and a cursed life will never agree.

Gleanings from the Past.

From a Sermon by Daniel Rowlands (1713-90).

[Little is now known of this devoted servant of Christ. This is probably due to the fact that practically the whole of his life was spent in an obscure part of Wales, and not in incessant travels, like Whitefield and Wesley, whose contemporary he was. Raised up by God in the darkest days of Wales, he laboured uninterruptedly for no less than forty-eight years at Llangeitho, Cardiganshire. For years crowds gathered to hear him, many thinking nothing of travelling fifty miles for the purpose. His full and clear gospel brought blessing to hundreds.—E. W. T.]

“*ALL things work together for good to them that love God.*” (Rom. 8. 28.)

OBERVE what He says. Make thou no exception, when He makes none. *All!* remember, He excepts nothing. Be thou confirmed in thy faith; give glory to God, and resolve, with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!” The Almighty may seem for a season to be your enemy in order that He may become your eternal friend. Oh! believers, after all your tribulation and anguish, you must conclude with David: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes” (Ps. 119. 71). Under all your disquietudes you must exclaim: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11. 33). His glory is seen when He works by means; it is more seen when He works without means; it is seen above all when He works contrary to means. It was a great work to open the eyes of the blind; it was a greater still to do it by applying clay and spittle—things more likely, one would think, to take away sight than to restore. He sent a horror of great darkness on Abraham when He was preparing to give him the best light. He touched the hollow of Jacobs’ thigh, and lamed him when He was going to bless him. He smote Paul with blindness when He was intending to open the eyes of his mind. He refused the request of the woman of Canaan for a while, but afterwards she obtained

her desire. See, therefore, that *all* the paths of the Lord are mercy, and that *all* things work together for good to them that love Him.

Even affliction is very useful and profitable to the godly. The prodigal son had no thought of returning to his father’s house till he had been humbled by adversity. Hagar was haughty under Abraham’s roof, and despised her mistress; but in the wilderness she was meek and lowly. Jonah sleeps on board ship, but in the whale’s belly he watches and prays. Manasseh lived as a libertine at Jerusalem, and committed the most enormous crimes, but when he was bound in chains in the prison at Babylon his heart was turned to seek the Lord his God. Bodily pain and disease have been instrumental in rousing many to seek Christ, when those who were in high health have given themselves no concern about Him. The ground which is not rent and torn with the plough bears nothing but thistles and thorns. The vines will run wild, in process of time, if they be not pruned and trimmed. So would our wild hearts be overrun with filthy, poisonous weeds, if the true Vine-dresser did not often check their growth by crosses and sanctifying troubles. “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth” (Lam. 3. 27). Our Saviour says: “Every branch that beareth fruit, My Father purgeth, that

it may bring forth more fruit." There can be no gold or silver finely wrought without being first purified with fire, and no elegant houses built with stones till the hammers have squared and smoothed them. So we can neither become vessels of honour in the house of our Father till we are melted in the furnace of affliction, nor lively stones in the walls of New Jerusalem till the hand of the Lord has beaten off our proud excrescences and tumours with His own hammers.

He does not say that all things *will*, but *do*, work together for good. The work is on the wheel, and every movement of the wheel is for your benefit. Not only the angels who encamp around you, or your friends who continually pray for you, but even your enemies, the old dragon and his angels, are engaged in this matter. It is true, it is their not design. No! They *think* they are carrying on their own work of destroying you, as it is said of the Assyrian whom the Lord sent to punish a hypocritical nation: "Howbeit, he meaneth not so"; yet it was God's work that he was carrying on, though

he did not intend to do so. All the events that take place in the world carry on the same work—the glory of the Father and the salvation of His children. Every illness and infirmity that may seize you, every loss you may meet with, every reproach you may endure, every shame that may colour your faces, every sorrow in your hearts, every agony and pain in your flesh, every aching in your bones, are for your good. Every change in your condition—your fine weather and your rough weather, your sunny weather and your cloudy weather, your ebbing and your flowing, your liberty and your imprisonment, all turn out for good.

Oh, Christians, see what a harvest of blessings ripens from this text! The Lord is at work; all creation is at work; men and angels, friends and foes, all are busy, working together for good. Oh, dear Lord Jesus, what hast Thou seen in us that Thou shouldst order things so wondrously for us, and make ALL things—all things to work together for our good?

Selected by E. W. Townley.

Growth in Grace.

(P. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

THIS subject is one of greatest importance to Christians, and the Scriptures speak frequently and decidedly about increase in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherever there is life, there is progress in that life. A plant which makes no shoots is sickly and dying. A tree is constantly renewing and varying its form. If thus it is in the realm of Nature, how much more so will it hold in the realm of grace. "Be ye therefore renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph. 4. 23). "Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4. 16). No passage is more accurately descriptive of normal Christian life than the words of the Apostle

to the Philippian believers: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect . . ." (Phil. 3. 12-14). These are not the words of a beginner in the pathway of grace, but of one who had probably made greater progress than any other has made since. He could say "Brethren, be followers together of me" (Phil. 3. 17). He was not speaking of what he was as to the question of justification before God, or of his standing in grace before Him, for elsewhere he plainly teaches that "Christ by His one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14). But the Apostle wished to see the life by the faith of Christ increasingly manifested in his daily conduct. To be self-satisfied with our attainments be-

trays ignorance of Christ, and unbelief; yet many Christians appear to believe they have "already attained." Many are well versed in the fundamental truths of the gospel and are able to defend it by argument, and have their memories stored with no small number of texts and hymns. In conversation with such we are glad to find them apparently well furnished, but a year later we find them just the same.

They remind us of a piece of wood carved in the form of a tree rather than a real living tree, which is periodically exhibiting fresh shoots and new foliage. On the contrary, the same modes of speech, the same limited sphere of spiritual conception, show that no addition to the treasury has taken place. If our souls are healthy and prospering we shall be sensible of the imperfection of our knowledge of the precious truth that lies in the mine of wealth. Consequently we shall peruse the Scriptures with increasing interest and search diligently after the inexhaustible riches.

But there is a stagnation in spiritual life which is worse even than self-satisfaction. It is often betrayed in the expression: "At a certain time I received the assurance that my sins were forgiven, and I know that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and that is enough for me." But was Paul not fully assured of his forgiveness and election? We cannot too carefully remember that continued progress in inward life is essential for the enjoyment of spiritual health. The new creation tends to grow upward to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

We cannot be ignorant of the fact that there are many hindrances to our attainment of this vigorous state, the knowledge of which should awaken within us a vigilant spirit of prayer and diligence. Ever then let the prayer of Moses be ours: "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory" (Exod. 33. 18). Paul followed after, that he might apprehend that for which he had been apprehended.

He desired that every fresh experience might result in his being more like Christ, and by entering more feelingly every day into the spirit of His gracious will. For Christ's sake the Apostle had thrown everything overboard which he once had counted gain.

He forgot himself with respect to all that he was by birth and effort. He cast away all his specious advantages as an effacing from his sight. He was not afraid of his natural sinful condition, because he knew that grace excelled. He was much more afraid of the insinuating fancies of his own virtues and works; thence the whole-heartedness with which he repudiated everything in which he might be tempted to boast. Many have been tempted to spiritual pride or else to spiritual depression by thoughts of their past experience. Some are apt to indulge in melancholy reflections on a past and better state than that they now enjoy. They praise the golden days when they first tasted that the Lord is gracious. Thus they stand like pensioners who have left the fairest periods of their life behind, and have no definite aspiration or hope for the future; who only occasionally warm up when the past presents itself to their minds and sends a few rays of gladness into their wintry existence. How different was the case of Paul! Still brighter attainments of confidence and joy of faith were the objects he kept constantly in view. He pressed forward towards the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. He saw the fairest days of his spiritual life not behind but before him. He was not satisfied with a few glimmering rays of divine glory, nor with anything short of being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18). Compared with what was to come the past was only a foretaste; an earnest of the inheritance.

May the God of all grace cause us to flourish, that we may be perfect in love and grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ (Eph. 4. 15).

The Kingdom and the Gospel.

(EDWARD CROSS).

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew xvi. 19.

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—Matthew xviii. 18.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—John xx. 19-23.

THE distinction between Matthew 16. 19 and John 20. 19-23 is very marked. The former refers to the authority of Christ in the Kingdom: an authority which He delegates first to Peter under the figure of "the keys," and afterwards to the assembly (Matt. 18. 18); the latter, to His lifegiving power as "a quickening Spirit," the last Adam (1 Cor. 15.), risen from the dead, as He breathes on His disciples the Spirit of life, ere He sends them out to proclaim the gospel of peace and the remission of sins. This quickening power He does not delegate to others. It resides in Himself alone. When He sends His disciples to preach the gospel in His name, He communicates by the power of the Spirit with that gospel, mediately through them, what they had received directly from Him. It is the administration of the gospel by those whom He sends to preach it, carrying its virtue, not by their authority, but by its own. They are merely the instruments of its administration; as a remedy is prescribed for a patient, but the virtue is in the drug, not in the druggist.

In Matthew 16. there is the delegation of authority to Peter, personally, as an apostle; in John 20. Peter is no more than the others. There is no mention, in the passage, of the apostles as such; and there is no delegation of authority to any, beyond the publication of an authorized message. Again, in Matthew 16. the authority exercised, by the Lord is inherent in Himself, in-

dependent of circumstances; while in John 20. He is acting in the power of resurrection. "Except a corn of wheat . . . die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24).

Let us now look briefly at the general trend of Matthew's Gospel, and then at the new order of blessing in John 20., and the mission of the disciples in proclaiming it.

Matthew is characteristically the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. In it we have the divine character of the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us, "born King of the Jews." Then, chapter 3., John Baptist announces, "the kingdom of heaven is near at hand": and this word is taken up by the Lord Himself (chap. 4. 17). We must turn to Daniel to learn the import of this expression.

Daniel is occupied with the history of the four Gentile monarchies during the period of Israel's rejection, and the transfer of the royalty that belonged to the house of David to them. Of these empires, Nebuchadnezzar was "the head of gold." It is thus he sees himself in his dream (chap. 2. 38). "The God of heaven had given him a kingdom, and power, and strength, and glory" (ver. 37). But viewed morally, as Daniel sees him in his dream, he was merely "a great beast" (chap. 7. 3). He had no proper knowledge of the true God, nor of the relation of the *heavens*, as the seat of ruling power over the

earth. This was the lesson he had to learn, that the Most High, the God of heaven, is the real King (chap. 4. 37). Notice how often this expression "the God of heaven" occurs—Daniel 2. 18, 19, 28, 37, 44). He is "the great God," who knows the future (ver. 45), "the God of gods, and Lord of kings" (ver. 47).

Then (Dan. 4.) his eyes are opened to more wonderful things, as he learns that "His kingdom," in contrast to all earthly kingdoms, "is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion to all generations" (vers. 3, 34); and that He rules in the kingdom of men with autocratic power (vers. 17, 25, 32). In fine, that "the heavens rule" (ver. 26), and that He is "King of heaven" (ver. 37).

This is the foundation of the expression in Matthew "the kingdom of heaven," announced first by John the Baptist and then by the Lord Himself, as being near. Had they received Him, the kingdom would have been publicly set up. But they refused Him; and chapter 13. give us "the mysteries of the kingdom"—*i.e.* the present form of it—instead.

Then we come to Matthew 16., and there we have the assembly that Christ builds. Peter is a stone in it, and no more. He has no authority in it, and he is not a builder. It is Christ who builds; and Peter's confession of Him as Son of the living God is common to all Christians, and puts him merely as a stone in the building, as it does other living stones (1 Peter 2. 4,5).

But, besides that, he gets the keys of *the kingdom*, and special authority to bind, or loose: and so he lets some in, both Jews and Gentiles, while he shuts others out, as Ananias and Sapphira, and Simon Magus (Acts 2.-10.). This was in the exercise of the authority given to him. But this must not be confounded with building. The "key" is the symbol of administrative authority. We don't build with keys (*cf.* Isa. 22. 22; Rev. 1. 18, etc.); and what Peter did in

the exercise of this power was ratified in heaven. It was, in fact, the authority of the Lord Himself, by whom this power was delegated to Peter. Moreover, without this power, and the power to delegate it, "to whomsoever he would" (Dan. 4. 17, 25, 32), there would have been no possibility of prosecuting the kingdom. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews would have ended for ever the kingdom of God and of heaven, had there been no continuance of power in the Lord greater than the power that rejected Him.

Accordingly, He gives the keys of the kingdom to Peter, who, as the apostle of the circumcision, represents the continuity of the place occupied by Israel, in whom the principles of the government of God on earth were to be carried out. This position had been transferred to the Gentile monarchies; but the power belonging to it belongs in fact to Christ (Matt. 1. 11), and is so held by Him in the mystery of His present place in heaven. By and by He will "take to himself His great power and reign" (Rev. 11. 15-17); but meanwhile He delegates to Peter, for spiritual purposes, "the keys of the kingdom," with the sanction of heaven on what he does in conformity thereto.

But, as the Lord is no longer here in bodily presence, so neither is Peter still with us. What, then, has become of this authority? Has it ceased to be because there is no representative of it on earth? Not so. In Matthew 18. 15-20, the truth of it is maintained in the assembly, locally gathered in the Lord's name, even though it be represented in its weakness by only two or three. In this way the assembly occupies the place of the synagogue. It is not viewed here as the body of Christ, nor as the house of God; but as a structure, formed of individuals—built of living stones by Christ as a builder, not as Head. Now, as the judgment of the synagogue was valid for "all Israel," (*cf.* such passages as Deut. 13. 11; 17. 13; 19. 20; 21. 21, etc.), so the judgment of the assembly

gathered in Christ's name, is valid on earth, and ratified in heaven. Here plainly the emphasis is not on the gathering, as though any inherent authority was attached to it, but on "His name," which alone would sanction with His authority what was done according to His word; in fact, what He Himself would do were He present visibly.

Israel misused the power committed to them. Contrast what was ordered in Deuteronomy 16. 18-20, with what actually took place (Ps. 82., Isa. 58. 3-7). Their privileges were consequently repealed, and divine sanction ceased to be accorded to their judgments, which found their climax in unrighteousness in the crucifixion of Christ (see Acts 2. 23, 24); and to this the actual state of Christendom presents a striking analogy, as we see every section of it inveighing impotently against every other section, and, in so far, all against Christ.

How serious then is the assumption of being gathered to Christ's name. Let the mind move away for a moment from the sense that the authority thus exercised by the assembly is not its own, but delegated by the Lord for His purposes, and you are plunged forthwith into the pretensions of Rome, with its ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny. Lose sight of the fact that you are under the authority of the Lord, to "judge righteous judgment," without fear or favour, and your deliberations and judgments are the emanations of your own mind, subject to the dictation of particular fancy, and binding only on your own particular clique.

The name of Jesus speaks of One who was here for God, to do His will and glorify His holy name. Authority of the highest order was given Him here below, and now that same authority is confirmed to Him in heaven (Matt. 28. 18). In the exercise of it He never falsified it. He did always those things that were pleasing to the Father (John 8. 29); and now He is promoted to the highest heights above (1 Cor. 15. 20-28; Phil. 2; Eph. 4. 8-10). It is only as

keeping this in mind that the assembly can act consistently with His name, and so make proper use of the authority committed to it.

Matthew 16. is the continuation of kingdom powers already existing. John 20. is the formation of a company with a new *status*, dependent for its creation on the place the Lord now takes in resurrection. As "the Lord God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2. 7), and the whole human family stands in Him as head, so Christ breathed on His disciples the Spirit of life (*cf.* Ezek. 36. 25-27; 37. 5, etc.) and their Christian *status* was thereby determined. Life, peace, and sonship, known and enjoyed, were henceforth the characteristics of this company, which was in time to grow by the addition of others through their preaching. This has nothing to say to Peter specially, nor even to the apostles as such, but to the disciples. The word apostle does not occur in John's gospel at all. From Luke 24. 9, 13, we learn that the "company" included others besides the eleven, who in due course are sent out to preach "repentance and remission of sins to all nations" (Luke 24. 45 foll.), and in this way the Christian ranks were filled in. This is not "the keys of the kingdom," but the administration of the gospel.

Two things are to be noted here: first, the absolute and eternal forgiveness of sins, carried in the message of the gospel, and connecting the soul through faith with God Himself; and, second, the administration of the gospel by those sent out to preach it. The powers inherent in the first are divine, eternal, heavenly, indefectible; those of the latter are human, temporal, earthly, and subject to failure, or misuse. In the first instance, the forgiveness of sins is the forgiveness of God, requiring no ratification (*cf.* Rom. 4. 6, 7; Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; 2. 13); in the second instance, it is the forgiveness of man, "whose soever sins *ye* remit," etc. But this needs divine ratification.

Powers of discrimination are necessarily connected with this ministry; and so we find Peter remitting sins to some (Acts 2. 10) and retaining them for others (Acts 5.). As an instance of the latter, the case of Simon Magus (Acts 8.) is particularly striking; for though he passed muster with Philip the evangelist, he could not escape the detection of Peter.

Similarly we see Paul using the same power of discrimination both in the retention and remission of sins (Acts 13.): and a like power of discrimination, to a greater or lesser degree, remains with saints to-day.

In this way the exercise of the powers of Matthew 16. 18, and those of John 20. coalesce in some points; but always with this difference, that, while Matthew 16. 18 is the exercise of the powers of the kingdom in binding and loosing, John 20. is the creation of the new Christian *status* by the Lord; and, in the disciples, shows the power of discernment, whereby they can discriminate between true and false profession of faith and repentance, and remit or retain sin accordingly. In a general way, the former is more ecclesiastical, the latter evangelical.

Law and Grace.

THE error into which the Galatians allowed themselves to be drawn was the addition of something of nature to what Christ had already accomplished for them by the cross. The gospel which had been preached to them, and which they had received, was the simple presentation of God's absolute, unqualified, and unconditional grace.

"Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth crucified among them." This was not merely promise divinely made, but promise divinely and most gloriously accomplished. A crucified Christ settled everything in reference both to God's claims and man's necessities. But the false teachers upset all this, or sought to upset it, by saying, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." This, as the Apostle teaches them, was, in reality, making Christ "of none effect." Christ must either be a *whole* Saviour, or *no* Saviour at all. The moment a man says, "Except ye be this or that ye cannot be saved," he totally subverts Christianity; for in Christianity I find God coming down to me, just as I am, a guilty, self-destroyed sinner; and coming, moreover, with a full remission of *all* my

sins, and a full salvation from my lost estate, all perfectly wrought by Himself on the cross.

Hence, therefore, a man who tells me, "You must be so and so in order to be saved," robs the cross of all its glory, and robs me of all my peace. If salvation depends upon *our* being or doing ought, we shall inevitably be lost. Thank God, it does not; for the great fundamental principle of the gospel is that, God is ALL—man is NOTHING. It is not a mixture of God and man. It is all of God. The peace of the gospel does not repose in part on Christ's work and in part on man's work; it reposes wholly on Christ's work, because that work is perfect—perfect for ever; and it renders all who put their trust in it as perfect as itself. Under the law, God, as it were, stood still to see what man could do; but, in the gospel, God is seen acting; and, as for man, he has but to "stand still and see the salvation of God." This being so, the inspired Apostle hesitates not to say to the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you; whosoever of you are justified by law, ye are fallen from grace." C. H. Macintosh.

Cast your care on Him (1 Peter 5. 7). It is our work to *cast care*, it is God's work to *take care*.

God's Great Gifts, and the Devil's Snares. (EDITOR).

No. 2. The Object of the Gospel.

WE talked to a man at the close of a gospel preaching who had sunk as low and become as wretched as a life of sin could make him. Indeed, so low and wretched was he that he had only been kept back from suicide by the thought of the judgment that follows death. He was undoubtedly a fit subject for the grace of God, and he felt his need of it too. This, thank God, is all the fitness He requires in men, and the great sinner was saved that day. He was saved, for he yielded to the Saviour, looked up to Him as his only hope, and believed God's testimony concerning Him.

He told us the next evening that God was very good to him, for He had found suitable work early in the day, and at this he stuck well, and soon showed the result of his conversion in a decidedly changed appearance. Some time afterwards a friend of ours met him, but did not at first recognize him, so altered was he from the dissipated wreck that he was when first we made his acquaintance. "You see," he explained to our friend, "when the Lord took me in hand He made a good job of me. He not only saved my soul, but He washed and brushed me up." We were very glad to know that he had been washed and brushed up; we should not have believed in the reality of his conversion if these things had not accompanied it, but that was not the end that the Lord had in view when He took him in hand. God does not save men to make their lives more respectable, or their homes happier, though these things will surely be amongst the results produced by His grace wherever it is received, for the grace of God which brings salvation teaches men how to behave; but that is not *the great end* that He has in view when He saves them. He saves them that they might be a people separated from the world and ready for the coming again of Christ, that they might, as the Scripture says, "serve the living and true God; and wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.) The main purpose of the gospel is to gather out of this world a people for Christ, who in self-forgetful devotion to Him shall earnestly look for His coming again.

If the gospel does not separate those who receive it from the world and make Christ supreme in their affections it has failed in its present great purpose. We feel that we must press this upon our readers, for so many earnest Christians seem to have got the notion that the gospel is a philanthropic scheme for the betterment of the world, and for the uplifting of humanity. They make the benefit of men their sole object, and the glory of Christ is thereby obscured; and this, we believe, is a snare of the devil.

God's philanthropy is undoubtedly made manifest in the gospel, for He loves men and desires that they should be happy, but true and unalloyed happiness is not the result of the amelioration of the conditions of life, but of turning to Christ in complete surrender, and in making Him the supreme object of faith and love.

An infidel may seek the uplifting of humanity, and a Christ-hater may labour for easier conditions and cleaner lives for the masses, and they may attempt to prove to the Christian that their schemes are better adapted to this end than the gospel. We should not trouble to argue the point with them, but should go on preaching the gospel, for we know that nothing can uplift men more surely and lastingly than the gospel, and we would not make little of this, but rejoice in it. Yet we must always keep its great purpose in view.

Many Christians are working *only* for the betterment of the world, which is waxing "worse and worse" in spite of their efforts, and is fast ripening for the judgments of God. In order to accomplish their purpose they are adopting worldly methods, mixing world schemes with the gospel they preach, and associating with those who despise and reject the beloved Son of God. They have fallen into this snare of the enemy, and are disobedient to the Word, and grieving the Holy Ghost, and dishonouring Christ. "We do not war after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 3-5).

The gospel is concerning Christ (Rom. 1. 3), and those who are saved by it are saved for His praise, and that He might be glorified in them. They have professed to own His lordship over them, and if they reason rightly they will say, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, BUT UNTO HIM which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15).

We do not state these things as our opinion, and we have no special views to uphold; all we seek is that we, and all our readers, should read the Word of God intelligently and be governed by it. Here are some outstanding passages from its pages:—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1. 3, 4).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, and GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 11-14).

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME" (Acts 15. 14). And all, so taken out by the grace of God, are indwelt by the Holy Ghost; they are part of the church which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself.

He is waiting for the moment, plainly foretold in the Scriptures, when He shall catch up His blood-bought church to be His wife on the great marriage day (Rev. 19.). And while the world, grown hoary in its persistent rebellion against God, will remain in the power of the devil, ready for the wrath to come, the church, the Lamb's wife, all fair and glorious, will be seen in heaven, the true and mighty and final result of the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God in the world.

If we get a glimpse of this glorious future, by faith, we shall not be one less delighted to see the lives of men changed here, but we shall be looking the more earnestly for the consummation of God's eternal purpose by the gospel.

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22. 17, 20).

The Overcomer and His Reward.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 3.

IT was "The Lord's Day." What memories would rise before the lonely exile in Patmos as he recalled that first Lord's Day when a risen Saviour appeared to Mary, at early dawn, and sent that matchless message: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, My God and your God!" (John 20. 18). Also of its evening, when through closed doors the same Jesus whom he had known and loved so well came into the midst of the gathered disciples, breathing into them His risen life, and speaking peace to their troubled hearts! Also of that seventh Lord's day, when there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and the Holy Spirit descended, filling both the house and the assembled disciples. That Spirit remained, for on this Lord's day John was "in the Spirit," controlled in every part of his being, an instrument to convey the mind of God, when a trumpet-like voice bade him record "in a book" the glorious vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the golden candlesticks (chap. 1.); and the messages to seven Asiatic churches (chaps. 2. and 3.); also the visions which passed before him in heaven (chap. 4. to end).

"In these varied ways we read to-day's story, and to-morrow's apocalypse." Chapters 2. and 3. give us a consecutive history of the professing church from Pentecost to the end of her responsible history. Seven local assemblies are addressed whose conduct illustrates the prominent characteristics which have since marked the church's history in its successive stages. These have been so largely dwelt on in detail by others that we need only remark that *Ephesus*—where Paul planted, and John watered—is charged with having left her "first love." This is the root of all declension, individually and collectively; it is keenly felt by the blessed

Lord, who has never left His first love; for having loved His own He loves them fully, unchangeably, to the end.

Smyrna depicts the violent persecutions which raged for three or four centuries, when Christians were cast to the lions, or banished like John, or tarred and pitched to make bonfires to light the Emperor's gardens. *Pergamos*—which means marriage—indicates the time when Constantine patronized the church, and allured her into worldly associations. In *Thyatira* all the elements of popery are depicted, a system which is a travesty of the true church, corrupt and corrupting. *Sardis* sets forth formal protestantism—cold, dead, with only a name to live, living on the traditions of the reformation, with no divine vitality. *Philadelphia* may be traced in the gracious revival of long-forgotten truths early last century, when many were awakened out of spiritual slumber, and with trimmed lamps went out to meet the Bridegroom. It is moral and not ecclesiastical, having nothing outward to boast in, just a little strength—Christ's word kept, His name not denied. The last churches run concurrently and culminate in *Laodicea*. All true Christians will be removed from the earth at the rapture of the saints, and nothing but the shell of profession left; *Laodicea*, nominal Christianity, spued out of Christ's mouth, becomes the Babylon of chapter 17. In its judgment at the hand of the beast with ten horns, we are shown the final doom of Christendom.

We look in vain in chapters 2. and 3. for the church as the body of Christ, composed of living members; or of the holy and spiritual house, composed of living stones. But the church is viewed as an outward and visible company of which the world can take note, a candlestick to give light in its olive-tree char-

acter—as in Romans 11. 16.—22.—whose continuance depends upon abiding in the truth. It is the church in its “servant” character, professing to know her Lord’s will, but proving eventually to be the wicked servant who did it not.

In the midst of this mass of profession there are the true saints, and the voice of the Spirit addresses them as those who have “an ear to hear.” To have “an ear” marks a divinely formed capacity to listen to God’s voice. It is the thing which distinguishes living saints from dead professors. These are exhorted to be overcomers, to surmount the obstacles which Satan raises during the successive stages of the church’s history.

With John an overcomer is a characteristic mark of every one born of God. “Whatsoever is *born of God overcometh the world*, and this is the victory that *overcometh the world*, even our *faith*” (1 John 5. 4). A Jew, accepting Peter’s testimony that Jesus is the Christ; or a Gentile, Paul’s, that He is the Son of God, were both born of God, and thus started their Christian course as “overcomers,” for their faith broke through, and ran counter to, an unbelieving world. In its primary use this term is true of all believers, but this initial victory is to be maintained, and the evil one overcome by the Word of God abiding in us (1 John 2. 14). It is not merely the first obstacle but the successive hindrances which confront us day by day which have to be conquered if we are to continue to be overcomers. To stimulate us encouragements are placed before us; but nowhere in Scripture do we learn that it is by overcoming we *earn* a title to be “caught up” when the Lord comes, or to be found *in* the “Kingdom” by and by.

These chapters show the minute cognizance the Lord takes of His servants; seven times He repeats “I know thy works.” To animate those who have “an ear to hear,” and inspire them to continue in a path of

fidelity, encouragements and rewards are set before them. Some of these are of a private nature and will be enjoyed eternally. Others are of a more public nature, and are connected with the kingdom. These will cease when Christ gives it up to the Father (1 Cor. 15. 28).

To the overcomer in EPHESUS the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God, is promised. Eden was the brightest spot in man’s world, the tree of life the chiefest of its trees; but man never ate of it. The Paradise of God is the brightest spot in God’s universe; it is the synonym for all that is blessed, a garden of delights, a scene of fullness of joy and pleasures never ceasing. The tree of life in its midst, no longer guarded by the flaming sword of the Cherubim, will be the food on which the overcomer feeds. Its ever-new fruit will be ministered by Christ’s gracious hand—He will serve those who watch for His return (Luke 12. 38). He will discover to them fresh glories in His person, new unfoldings of that love which passeth knowledge. They will feed upon His perfections in ever new and blessed forms. Whilst the tree of life will be common to all saints, it is the special portion of the overcomer to receive its fruits from His Lord’s gracious hand. Blessed Master! Serving us now in grace, and serving us then in glory, may we know in a coming day this token of thine approval!

To SMYRNA, persecuted even to death itself, is promised a crown of life, and deliverance from the second death. When the martyr’s body was destroyed all that man and Satan could do was done; the sufferer passed from a persecuting world to join his Lord who had Himself tasted the pangs of a martyr’s death. Life everlasting is the common portion of every true saint, of all who believe in the Son of God, but this “crown” is a mark of approval, given personally by the Lord, indicating His appreciation of the devotedness to death of His faithful witnesses. It is an added blessing to the life already possessed. A similar reward is promised to the

man who endures trial, so that others beside martyred servants may gain this crown. It is given as a reward of patient continuance in well doing (see James 1. 12).

To the overcomer in PERGAMOS, a "white stone," a "new name," and "hidden manna" are promised. The manna which had fallen visibly for over twelve thousand days ceased when Israel had been five days in Canaan. A golden pot filled with it was placed in the Ark where no eye but God's could see it. This "treasured store" told of the graces and perfections of the lowly Jesus. It also speaks of the providential care of God during His people's wilderness journey. "What is it?" Israel exclaimed when they first beheld it—hence its name—but its true nature is only seen in the antitype—it is in Jesus we see what it really is. From the lips of that glorified Man, whose weary feet once traversed this sin-stained earth, the overcomer will learn how suited grace met him at each step, how he was nurtured and ministered to, day by day—and what a "right way" it was—which led to the city of habitation. How all this will endear that blessed One who is the Bread of God—the true manna—to our hearts. What grace and patience, what mercy and forbearance, what tenderness and compassion in all their depths shall be discovered in Jesus and in His ways with us! What holy food this "Hidden Manna" will be in that day! To receive it from the gracious hand once pierced for us is the special reward promised.

Favoured guests at Eastern feasts, whom the host specially desired to honour, were presented with a white stone with an inscription on it intended solely for the recipient; it indicated a particular mark of favour. The overcomer is promised a white stone and a new name. Christ has a name given which no one knows but He Himself (Rev. 19.). It expresses the secret delight of God His Father in Him; in like manner a secret name—its meaning known only to the Giver and the reci-

plent—will be the portion of the overcomer in Pergamos. Heaven has its common joys; the Father's love is the portion of all; the privileges of sons belong to every child of God. Every one in glory will help to swell the song of redemption and celebrate the glories of the slain Lamb, faithful and unfaithful alike owning the virtues of His blood as their common title to be there: but heaven also has individual joys, personal delights, added drops to the already full cup of blessing. Every lamb in the flock, every son in the house, has a name. Personality and individuality will not be merged in our common blessing; be we vessels of tiny measure, like the thief on the cross, or of larger capacity, like Paul or John, each one will find enough in Christ to fill them to the full; but with those who have cultivated intimacy with Christ here, a name will be given which no man knoweth but He that receiveth it. What an incentive to lean on His bosom, like John; sit at His feet, like Mary; seek to know Him, like Paul; be absorbed with His glory, like Stephen! Who does not covet that "secret name of undisclosed delight?"

In THYATIRA—the Jezebel of our days—we see true saints persecuted mercilessly by that which arrogates to itself exclusive claims to be the true church, and at the same time seeks universal rule over the Kings of the earth. What more suitable as a reward than that these persecuted saints, who were not ensnared by the "depths of Satan" to pander to this evil system, should be promised power over the nations, and in a coming day should wield an iron sceptre?

But this is not all; a heavenly portion should be theirs, and ere the day of glory dawns on the earth they shall be found in the region where the bright and morning Star shines in all its brilliancy.

SARDIS has not sought to rule the world, like Jezebel, but she has sunk to its level, courted its patronage, and

allowed the world to rule the church. Moral and spiritual death have resulted from these defiling associations. A few walk with undefiled garments, kept separate from abounding evil, and whilst other names may be blotted out of the book of profession, theirs will remain and be confessed before the Father and His holy angels. All in heaven will be clothed in white—the emphasis here is on the pronoun “ME.” “They shall walk with *Me* in white; for they are worthy.” What an honour to be conducted by the One “who holds the seven spirits and the seven stars”; singled out as worthy of having their name mentioned to God the Father in the presence of His angels! What had they done? They had kept clear of the evil in the midst of which their lot was cast. This is surely open to every saint.

In PHILADELPHIA, with its little strength, its non-denial of Christ's name, its faithfulness to His Word, the overcomer is promised the honour of being a pillar, like those called Jachin and Boaz in Solomon's temple. He might have been refused a place in the earthly temples of worship, but recognizing that when the church had failed to maintain the truth collectively he was responsible to maintain it individually, he stood for the faith in the face of opposition as a pillar, and hence his reward. He is also connected with the City. Whilst on earth he avowed his heavenly citizenship, refused the world's politics as well as the world's religion; now he finds himself an openly acknowledged citizen of the new Jerusalem, as

well as a pillar in the temple. More than this; the name which tells he belongs to the household of God is also his, and Christ's new name written upon him. He is connected with the temple as a worshipper, with the Father's name as a son brought to glory, and with the City as an integral part of that glorious structure in which Christ will be admired when the City descends from God out of heaven.

To the overcomer in LAODICEA a seat with Christ on His throne is promised. Seeing that according to Romans 8. 17 all the “children of God” are “joint heirs with Christ,” we may inquire what is there special in this promise? It is found in the words “with Me.” To sit *with*, “walk *with*,” “sup *with*” indicates personal association and individual nearness to Christ in His glorious reign.

We cannot overestimate the importance of these incentives to the overcomer. “The reward is not the motive power; but it sustains and encourages the heart that is acting by faith, in view of the object which God presents to us.”

On the other hand, we must entirely disabuse our minds of the legal teaching—so largely abroad to-day—that entrance into heaven, or the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, depends on the “measure in which we overcome.” Grace is grace, and work is work. The boundless goodness of God saves us wholly of His grace, and then rewards us for all labour in the varied ways depicted in these chapters.

Circumstances arise to make manifest what is in ourselves, and when we see it at home we are taken by surprise. We could condemn the act in another, judge the sin in the action and so far it is right; but to judge ourselves as having the seed of that sin in us, and to use the occasion of its manifestation in another for the bewailing our own liability to it is a moral safeguard against falling into it, and puts the soul right before the God of all grace in pleading with Him on behalf of any who have gone astray.

The Salvation of the Soul—*continued.*

(J. BOVD).

In these papers, written in the form of a dialogue, views put forward in a book recently published, entitled "God's Pilgrims," are reviewed in the light of Scripture.—Ed.

E. But the salvation of the soul is not that which is preached to sinners in the gospel. What the gospel offers to every believing sinner is the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of eternal life as the free gift of God. Hence the saving of the soul is never spoken of in connection with the gospel.

T. I think you will find that what you have advanced will not stand examination in the light of Scripture. You say the salvation of the soul is not that which is preached to sinners. To whom was this preached? "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Or this, "To you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13. 26). And what had Paul in his mind when he said, "The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they shall hear it" (Acts 28. 28)? And to whom does the righteousness which is of faith address itself, that righteousness to which the great mass of the Jews would not submit themselves? It says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9).

And you tell me that what the gospel offers to every believing sinner is the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of eternal life. Not a word of truth in it. The believing sinner *possesses* both these blessings. They are *offered* to unbelieving sinners. "Through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins." To whom is that addressed? And when these people refused the message, what does he say? "Ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13.). Evidently eternal life is involved in the preaching of forgiveness. So also is salvation, for the Apostle lets these Jews know that, as

they had by their rejection of the gospel judged themselves to be unworthy of everlasting life, he would now turn to the Gentiles, for God had set Christ to be a light of the Gentiles that He should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.

E. Oh, but I am speaking of the salvation of the *soul*.

T. And what other salvation is there in Christ? Besides, you were referring to "so great salvation," in Hebrews 2.; and there is not a word about the soul in that passage.

E. There is though in chapter 10.

T. Yes, but what is referred to there is not the *Word* of salvation, but the endurance of the believer.

E. Then do you wish me to understand that you consider forgiveness, or justification, to be the same thing as salvation?

T. I do not. There is a difference, and the difference is easily understood. If you could justify a murderer you would save him from the gallows. His salvation would be a consequence of his justification. Now the gospel is said to be the power of God unto salvation, just because that in it God's righteousness is held out to man as a free gift, on the principle of faith. And this is just that which saves us from the wrath which has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness (Rom. 1.). In Ephesians 2. we have salvation, as the effect of the quickening power of God, exercised on our behalf when we lay dead in sins. Twice over we have in this connection, "*By grace ye are saved.*" And the object in saying this does not seem to be merely to occupy us with the grace as the principle upon which we are saved, but rather to cause us to take account of ourselves as in salvation by being in the life of the

risen Christ. And so certain is this salvation our present portion that we are exhorted to take the helmet of salvation for the defence of our heads in our warfare with the powers of darkness. In Thessalonians, where salvation is from coming wrath, and therefore in hope, we are told to take as a helmet the *hope of salvation* (1 Thess. 5. 8). James asks if faith can *save*, and then begins to show it cannot by reference to Abraham and Rahab who were *justified* by works. In Titus we read that He *saved* us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost in order that being *justified* by His grace we should be heirs according to the hope of *eternal life*. That the soul who is justified is saved, and that the soul who is saved is justified, Scripture leaves no room for question. And both of these blessings belong to the true believer.

E. I do not think you have right thoughts regarding the salvation of the soul. You think—do you not?—that to lose one's soul is to be eternally damned. But Scripture will not support such a thought. Conclusive proof that it does not mean incurring the wrath of God is furnished by the Lord's words to His disciples in which He urged them, for their own advantage, to lose their own souls, and to hate their own souls in this world. I need hardly say the Lord did not exhort His disciples to be damned in this world. If losing the soul in this world does not mean damnation, then losing it in the world to come does not mean damnation.

T. But you might just as rightly say that as a man's condemnation of himself as a sinner in this world is not the lake of fire, neither is the Lord's condemnation of a sinner at the judgment throne the lake of fire. But really you are very loose in your dealings with Scripture. I know of no place in which the Lord urges His disciples to lose their souls in this world. He states a principle, which will abide true through the whole period of his rejection, but He does not apply it to His disciples. The

truth is, it was in a large measure already true of them. They had given up for Him all that was really dear to living men in this world. Through their connection with Him they had brought down upon their heads the wrath of the leaders of earth, and tribulation was now to be their portion here. Therefore He seeks to encourage them by setting before them the eternal consequences of their act, in contrast with the consequences of rejecting Him and living a life of self-indulgence in this evil world. Hating your soul (or life) in this world is the judgment you pass upon yourself as a living man in an environment of evil and rebellion against God. It is practically crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5. 24). But losing your soul in the world to come is to lose it with eternal life in sight, at which you never arrive. He that hates it in this world keeps it unto life eternal. If one does not lose his life in this world by his own act, he will lose it in the next by the judgment of God.

E. I am glad you admit, at any rate, that though justification and the receiving of eternal life do not depend upon *what we do*, the salvation of the soul does depend upon the believer's walk, and upon the heed paid by him to his Lord's commands.

T. I admit it no more with regard to salvation than I do with regard to justification or eternal life, except in so far as the difficulties incident to our journey through this world are concerned.

E. You do not mean, surely, that every believer will save his soul, regardless of his conduct?

T. That is not an ill-balanced question. The believer *is* saved. "God, who hath saved us" (2 Tim. 1. 9). But let me ask you another question: Do you think a man can be justified altogether regardless of his conduct? Supposing that when he hears the gospel he refuses to repent and turn to God, is he forgiven all the same? If so, why does the Apostle tell them to beware lest

they perish (Acts 13. 41) ? And again, " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you " (John 6. 53). And why does the Lord say, " He that is not subject to the Son shall not see life " (John 3. 36) ? And why is the first resurrection composed of those who *do good*; and the last, the resurrection of judgment, composed of those who *do evil* ? (John 5. 29). And I might also ask why Paul declares that, in the day in which God shall judge the secrets of men, wrath shall be the portion of all who obey unrighteousness; and eternal life shall be rewarded to all who seek for glory, honour and incorruptibility ? (Rom. 2.). *You* see no " *doing* " on our part connected with anything but salvation; not so Scripture.

E. I never hear saints exhorted to " work out their own justification."

T. Nor *salvation* either in the sense of either acquiring or maintaining their position in relationship with God. Working out our own salvation is so walking in the energy of faith and of the Spirit that we come out down here as overcomers of the world in every form in which it lays itself out to turn us aside from faithfulness to a rejected Christ. But let us keep this in mind, and let us hold it fast, refusing to allow ourselves to be robbed of it: that we begin Christianity, or our pathway through this world to glory, with righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, and with the certainty that nothing we may meet in the desert can separate us from the love of Christ; neither can anything in the whole universe separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; neither can anything with which we meet prevent us having our part with Christ in His kingdom and glory.

E. I think the difference between us comes from the fact that you do not seem to apprehend the distinction between salvation from eternal condemnation, and *the salvation of the soul*, for the losing of which in this world the Lord promises a great reward.

T. As great a reward as that is the

portion of the one who confesses Christ before men: " Him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God " (Luke 12. 8). You build everything on a word which has a variety of meanings in Scripture. It is plain enough that the word translated " *soul* " means in some cases the person himself (Acts 27. 37), sometimes one's life (ver. 22), sometimes for that part of man which stands in contrast with the *body*, through which the body lives, and by means of which man is in contact with, and in the enjoyment of, things here; while the spirit, is that by which he is in relationship with God, and responsible to Him.

But soul and spirit seem to me to be often used in the word interchangeably for the same thing. James says, " The body without the spirit is dead." The Lord speaks of men, who are able to kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but God can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10. 28). The Lord on the cross dismissed His spirit, but spoke of His soul not being left in Hades, and tells the dying robber that he would be with Him that day in Paradise. The Word of God is said to have such penetrative power that it can separate between soul and spirit; but it does not say that *we* can. In every instance in which the blessed Lord speaks of our parting with our life or soul here, we should read *life* and not *soul*. It simply means life in a moral way, life in its fallen condition and estrangement from God. This must be abandoned even for forgiveness, for this cannot be had apart from repentance, and repentance is the judgment one passes upon one's former life of sin. You can have no blessing at all apart from turning from all that in which you found your enjoyment as one away from God. To possess eternal life, and in that life to find the salvation of your soul, the life in which you have gratified your fleshly appetites away from God must be hated; and though things are as dear to you as your right hand or eye they must be cast from you if you are to enter into life.

Christian Obedience and the Obedience of Christ.

(PHILIP WILLIS.)

IT has been said that, "Happiness lies in OBEDIENCE"—obedience to the will of God. Obedience to the commands of God is the proof of our love to Him. Love is the real spring and power of obedience; where love is not in activity, obedience becomes irksome drudgery. The law commanded obedience but did not give the least power to accomplish its holy precepts, nor did it direct those who were under it to any power other than their own by which to fulfil it. It exposes and oppresses all who put themselves under its moral obligations. The more earnest and sincere the person is who tries to meet its inexorable demands, the more its exactions are felt. The law makes no excuse on the ground of weakness or inability to meet it. It shuts all up under the curse, and shows no pity. Alas! for the happiness of man if his blessing depends upon his fulfilment of its just requirements.

Love is the complete fulfilment of the law. But when an honest and exercised man feels in himself hatred, lust, and pride, instead of love, unselfishness and humility, he is plunged into the quagmire of despair. The more thoroughly sincere he is the more earnest will be his cry: "Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The law is not set aside or ignored in Christianity. Christ who is the true pattern of Christian obedience went beyond it, He upheld all its precepts, He magnified and exalted it in every way. He came not to destroy it, but to fulfil it. He loved God with all His heart, mind, and strength, and His neighbour more than Himself; He gave up His life in faithfulness to God, and laid down His life for His neighbour—yea, for His enemies.

The law never demanded the giving up of one's life as the proof of fidelity;

it promised long life as the result of obedience and faithful service rendered, but nowhere did it demand the sacrifice of one's life. Yet Jesus, the Holy Son of the Father's love, as the faithful Servant of His will, gave up His life in proof of obedience to that will, "Not my will but Thine be done." "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

The cross of Christ was the witness to all created intelligences of His entire perfection as Man; it was His highest honour to sacrifice His life in obedience to the will of the Father. This made the cross with all its intense suffering and shame a sweet-smelling savour to the Father; for the obedience of love displayed there was perfect. Nothing less than that is the model of Christian obedience. We may fail, and indeed do fail, and that greatly and often, but that does not alter the standard of holy perfectness set before us in the obedience of the Son of the Father in manhood here. His life was the display of what man ought to be.

In Peter we are said to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit unto the obedience of Jesus Christ that is, we, as Christians; or followers of Christ, are set apart to obey after the same manner of His obedience. The supreme and absorbing thought of His holy mind, not only in going to the cross but at all times, was what would give the Father delight: "I delight to do Thy will, O God; Thy law is within My heart." How testing for us to look at that life as it is portrayed for us in the Scriptures. No heart of man can conceive, nor can the tongue of archangel declare, what a perfect delight that self-sacrificing obedience was to the heart of God.

He was truly the Antitype of the Burnt-offering—the sweet savour offering. We are exhorted to be imitators of God, and we see God expressed in

Him; His love is set before us as the pattern: "Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

This whole-hearted obedience went far beyond that obedience claimed by the law, and it gave the Father a fresh motive for loving Him. What a wonderful mystery. It is altogether too profound to explain, but it calls for the adoration of our hearts. He Himself has said, "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" (John 10. 17, 18).

It was the voluntary act of His holy perfect will, because He loved the Father supremely, beyond all else. No power on earth could take His life from Him, death had no claim on Him as the holy Son of God. The difference between Him and every other man was infinite. No other man could say, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself," for every other life was forfeited because of sin.

This was His perfection. The Father's will being His constant study and delight, became the governing power of His life. And because of this obedience by which His moral glory was declared, He was able to claim the right to take His place as Man in the same glory that He ever had with the Father before the world came into being. "Glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Admiration of His matchless moral beauty leads to adoration, to **WORSHIP!** In worship we are lost to everything

but Himself; it is the adoring homage of the soul in the presence of love and perfection which far exceeds our highest thought, and it is only in the spirit of worship that we shall imitate Him.

When, by the Father's just and unalterable decree, heavenly and earthly and infernal beings bow before Him, owning His sovereignty, it will all be because of His perfect obedience to the Father's will, even to the cross (Phil. 2.). The cross stands alone in all its perfect glory, the mighty monument of an obedience that none were capable of rendering to the Father but the Son as Man.

If such marvellous moral perfectness shown out in implicit obedience puts us into the dust with shame we are glad. How completely it does so! We love to look at such perfection in the midst of such utter imperfection; we admire such obedience where disobedience brought moral ruin, death, sorrow and suffering, and put the whole world into such disorder and moral chaos; we love to think that on the ground of that work—that one obedience—the universe will be brought into subjection, into reconciliation, or perfect harmony with the will of God. We love to think that the Son who stooped so low will yet be exalted so high, and shall be the centre and head of a new world of delight for the Father's heart. We love to think how He has delighted the Father's heart, and earned the gratitude of untold millions besides, who shall ever bow before Him as the centre of that vast throng of Heaven's redeemed. We love to think that all honour, praise, and power shall be ascribed to Him as Redeemer for ever.

"Praise the Lamb the chorus waking,
All in Heaven together throng;
Loud and far each tongue partaking,
Rolls around the endless song."

Numbers 7.—All the instruments used in the tabernacle were according to the shekel of the sanctuary. How differently actions, thoughts, and motives appear when weighed in the presence of God; and to be fitted for His service outwardly we need to be much in His presence inwardly, that all may there be weighed according to His holiness. The result is humbling but blessed.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 8.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 30. to 34.

THE title of Psalm 30. has given rise to much questioning. Is the reference to David's own house (2 Sam. 5. 11), or to the site of the temple (1 Chron. 22. 1), or, again, to the tent which David prepared for the ark (2 Sam. 6. 17)? The last seems to suit best the language of the Psalm, and gives point to a personal application. The king's prosperity (ver. 6) was assured in the allegiance of all Israel to him (2 Sam. 5. 12). It was really and evidently Jehovah's favour which had made His servant's mountain to stand strong. In this moment of elevation he rightly thinks of the ark, and desires to honour God by placing it in the central fortress of his newly-acquired kingdom, but the breach on Uzzah makes him afraid (2 Sam. 6. 7). "How shall the ark of Jehovah come unto me?" So in verse 7 of our Psalm: "Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled," and in view of the fate of Uzzah, death seemed very near to himself. Through David's knowledge of the blessing of the house of Obadedom, and possibly by his victories over the Philistines, which the writer of Chronicles places between the unfortunate and the successful journeys of the ark, he learns his needed lesson, and the last two verses are his own account of what is told us in 2 Samuel 6. 13, 14. The lesson of the Psalm, given us briefly in, verses 1-5, is plain enough, that "my prosperity" may become a serious menace to true spiritual prosperity, though the Lord Himself is acknowledged as the author of it. The thought, "I shall never be moved" is really confidence in the prosperity rather than in God. This, in the case of David, led him, though right in his purpose and desires, to act without regard to the order of Jehovah's house. Then when God, true to His own holiness, breaks in on this self-sufficiency, he is afraid, and deprecates the nearness to Him which had previously been desired and sought for. Finally, David is led to see that life is not in *my* success nor *my* possessions, but in Jehovah's favour (ver. 5). It is little realized what a hold over souls the fallacy has, which is exposed in the Psalm, wherever man makes himself a

centre, and as such, in his own thoughts, attaches God to himself, the divine order for the relations of man with God is subverted in the soul. This is so general in the ecclesiastical sphere that anything else is scarcely thought of. David-like, men make their own arrangements and assume to attach to them all the value of Christ's name. God rebuked this corruption in the death of Uzzah, and reveals His own way in the two earliest types of the church: "He brought her to the man" (Gen. 2. 12), and "Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again" (Gen. 24). This point is further illustrated in the case of Jacob; he buys a piece of land, thus departing from the divine calling, and seeks to attach the name of God to himself in his defection, by his altar El-elohe-Israel, God, the God of Israel (Gen. 33, 20); disaster follows in chapter 34. as it did to David in his time and to many a dissenter since.

The great subject of PSALM 31., so important to the Jews in the future crisis of their history, is deliverance from enemies. This trouble is told out in an address to Jehovah in verses 9-13. This should serve to remind us of the need of a detailed presentation to God—to us known as Father—of the burden on our hearts (*cf.* Phil. 4. 6, etc). But the New Testament adds what the Psalm could not give: "And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus."

The sudden alternation from joy in deliverance (vers. 7-8) to the deep distress of the succeeding verse is a little puzzling, but shows how truly prophetic are these Psalms. The Spirit writes to encourage faith in God's *end* (James 5. 11) before that end is reached, and while it may seem to the sufferer very far off. When the servant of the Lord can in faith connect his deliverance, or that of the saints, with the display of the divine attributes "in Thy righteousness" (ver. 1), "For Thy Name's sake" (ver. 3), "in Thy lovingkindness" (ver. 16), as

did Moses and David in their day, his prayer brings in all that God is in omnipotence on the side of His people. Under divine government there may be a terrible reaping on account of sin, but in the end grace triumphs, as in the case of Israel, who ultimately take up the song of mercy and of judgment to the God they have learned to know (Ps. 101).

In verse 5 we may hear the voice of Messiah, "into Thy hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23, 46), but the rest of the verse clearly shows how limited is the application to Him. The Redeemer could not Himself be the subject of redemption, nevertheless His deliverance out of death (it was not possible that He should be holden of it) is the witness of the final salvation of all His own, as it is also of their present justification (Rom. 4. 25). In verse 10 present suffering is felt to be punishment for iniquity, but the soul is taught to trust in Jehovah, and wait for Him. "My times [of deliverance] are in Thy hands" (14. 15). In the meantime courage is ministered in the last verse: "Be strong and let your heart take courage all ye that hope in Jehovah."

PSALM 32. is the first of the Maschil Psalms, of which there are twelve others, 42., 44., 45., 52., 53., 54., 55., 74., 78., 88., 89., 142. The word is derived from a verb meaning to be prudent or intelligent, and has been explained as marking "a didactic poem" (*Thirtle*). A study of their contents shows that they contain God's testimonies to Israel in grace, judgment, and prophecy; they thus form a suitable collection for the wise of Daniel 12. 3 to instruct many in righteousness. Verses 1, 2 form the thesis of the Psalm, the pronouncement of God Himself to encourage the sinner to seek the forgiveness of which he experiences the need. The importance of this subject may be learned by the quotation in Romans 4. 7, and also from the central place this Psalm occupies in the series 25-39 in which it is found, which serves to indicate that the knowledge of God's pardon is the centre on which all further spiritual progress hinges. The teaching of the following verses is better appreciated by reading them in connection with the history of the writer whose experience is described. David recounts, what we should not have learned from the history in 2 Samuel, how his soul was in distress

day and night, when in faithfulness to His guilty servant, seeking to lead him to repentance, God's hand was heavy upon him. Nevertheless, it needed not only the parable of Nathan (2 Sam. 12.), but also the solemn denunciation of the prophet—"Thou art the man"—to bring about the confession of verses 5, 6. Forgiveness in grace follows immediately, but the penalty in government is never removed, and the remaining years of the king's life are shadowed by sore trials, the bitterness of which must have been aggravated by the knowledge that his own sin lay at the root of all his accumulated afflictions. The son of David and Bathsheba tells us the reproach of the adulterer shall not be wiped away (Prov. 6. 33).

Attachment to God in true dependence, the proper sequel to the knowledge of His grace, follows in verse 6, and in result, He, from whom the guilty flees, becomes a hiding-place; and the song of salvation is raised, though the flood of great waters reminds us that the way to be passed may be no easy travelling. In verse 8 Jehovah Himself speaks, assuring the one who has found rest in Him of His instruction and guidance all the way, and that by means of His eye upon him (R. v.). On our side, in order to obtain the guidance so graciously promised, the restfulness of knowing God as our hiding-place is needed in order that no personal questions may remain unsettled. It is these personal questions that make us like horse and mule that want their own way and need the bit and bridle to draw them near their master (R.v.). The last two verses give the moral conclusion with the exhortation to tell out the joy of our hearts in praise to the God we have learned to love.

The first three verses of PSALM 33. are a continuation of the strain of praise which closes the preceding Psalm. The righteous are specially addressed in both cases, for those who obtain the righteousness of faith, become the subjects of a work of the Spirit, in order that they should become righteous in character; they are then properly addressed as such, and are here called by the Spirit to rejoice in and give thanks to Jehovah. The song of praise, moreover, obtains a fresh distinction; it is a *new* song, suitable to a new order of things brought to pass, by the grace and power of God. The

new song is mentioned in six other places in the Old Testament: Psalms 40. 3; 96. 1; 98. 1; 144. 9; 149. 1; Isaiah 42. 10. There is thus a sevenfold witness to the blessing of the day of Christ, when a redeemed assembly will sing His praise. This Psalm celebrates Jehovah's work in creation, and also His grace in delivering the souls of His saints from death (ver. 19). That pathway has been trodden by Messiah, and guilty Israel will learn in a future day to trust in Him who has taken the sting from death and the victory from the grave. In this way He becomes a sure ground of confidence for the mercy sought in the last verses (*cf.* Micah 2. 12, 13).

The title of PSALM 34. affords clear evidence that these Psalms are not grouped in historical order, for in David's history the circumstances here referred to preceded by many years the experiences of Psalm 32. The outburst of praise in Psalm 34, illustrates the restoration of the soul of David, after a serious defection most unworthy of Jehovah's anointed. Yet it is not so much the escape from danger that occupies him, that he acknowledges gratefully in verses 4-7. But he exults in a deeper

knowledge of Jehovah, and the praise rising from his heart is a distinct advance on Psalm 33. The Spirit of Christ in David longs for associates in this blessed knowledge. "O magnify Jehovah with me, and let us exalt His Name together." And again, "O taste and see that Jehovah is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." And again, "O fear Jehovah, ye His saints." It is as if he would say, "I have so learned Him in my trouble, I must find some to share my joys and my praise." This is the way the child of grace learns grace, and, as may be seen in similar passages (Isa. 1. 18, 19; Zech. 3. 7), it is when grace is known that we come under God's holy government (vers. 11, etc). The sense of obligation when grace is known steadies the soul and gives character and firmness to the life. But in the Lord's gracious ways, for His ways in the government of His people are always combined with grace, there is a certain state of soul to which He has respect; He is "nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (ver. 18). Precious compensation for the suffering of a sorrow that works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted! (2 Cor. 7. 10.)

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 18.

(H. J. VINE)

The Trumpet's Awakening Calls.

IN the preceding chapter the resurrection of the Lord is foretold, and, following upon this, seven awakening calls ring out from the silver trumpet of redemption. If Christ is risen, redemption is secured and the joyful results are told to the remnant who shall in a future day seek righteousness; who shall harken to the voice of God's Servant (50. 10); and shall trust in Him; they are to move confidently forward to full blessing; they are to gain the glory; God is with them.

Had we space and time, it would be interesting to consider the splendid music which sounds forth for the remnant of Israel, and for us also, in these seven glorious calls from chapter 51. 1 to 52. 12. We may briefly note them.

1. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" Small in numbers though you be, a remnant seeking righteousness, be encouraged;

remember Abraham was but one individual when I called him alone; I blessed him and increased him; so will I bless you; "joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of song" shall be yours (51. 1-3).

2. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" You are My people, My nation; Light also shall be established for the peoples; others too shall trust on Mine arm; My righteousness and My salvation shall be abiding; because of Christ, "My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished" (vers. 4-6).

3. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" Ye know righteousness now; My law is in your hearts; fear neither the reproach nor the revilings of men; once again be divinely assured, "My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation" (vers. 7-8).

4. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" The remnant now cry to the arm of the Lord; put on strength and make a way for us as of old: "I, even I, am He that comforteth you," Jehovah replies; I will plant the very heavens, as well as "lay the foundations of the earth"; that is why I have preserved you with and in Christ; "thou art My people" (vers. 9-16).

5. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" The call now reaches their true metropolis—Jerusalem; she had drunken deeply of the cup of bewilderment; desolation and destruction, destitution and dire distress had been hers; consolation and comfort shall now cheer her heart; the goblet of bewilderment is now taken out of her hand, and with fury added, given to her enemies (vers. 17-23).

6. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" Put on thy strength, O Zion; adorn thyself with beauty, O Jerusalem, the holy city; see the beautiful feet upon the mountains; hear the tidings of good, "Thy God reigneth!" break forth into joy; sing aloud together; "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," through Christ Jesus (52. 1-10).

7. "DEPART, DEPART!" This is the final call. Holy separation is to mark those who are called to such distinguished eminence; separation not only *from* what is "unclean," but separation *to* the Lord Himself. He will go before you; and God shall be your Reward (11-12).

* * * *

The silvery notes cease. The joyful sound has been heard. The ringing music, however, has scarcely died away, before the Holy Spirit of God, with immediate directness, proceeds to point us to the One to whom all the blessing spoken of is due; and we shall see that the remnant learn and respond in chapter 53. They then understand that all the rejoicing, the redemption, the righteousness, the salvation, and the glory of God seen by all is the outcome of the atoning sufferings of Jesus.

The Prudent Servant.

Verse 13 really begins the subject of chapter 53: "*Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.*" The wisdom and prudence of Jehovah's Servant, treading His way to glory through scenes of suffering service, so as to bring blessing for others, is before

the mind of the Spirit. We see "the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow."

And such were His sufferings—so real, so intense—that His whole form, as well as His visage, was visibly marred. It is well known that even the representations of Him showed this before Constantine's time, but not afterwards. However prudent Jehovah's Servant was, however wisely He acted, yet deep and distressful sorrows were His, shame and stripes and afflictions untold came upon Him before His exaltation. But if "many were astonished" (ver. 14) at *His humiliated appearance*, likewise "shall He astonish [not sprinkle] many nations" and Kings (ver. 15) by *His exalted majesty*. He is truly the Sign in the depth of humiliation and in the height of glory. Powerful potentates, princes, rulers, shall stand and see with amazement. Kings shall shut their mouths before His royal majesty. "What they had not heard shall they consider" (vers. 15), when He, who was once treated so shamefully, is shown to be Israel's king and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

But who are those that have believed this report? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Few they were, indeed, amongst Israel. *Are there many who truly believe and receive this revelation now?* Thank God, beloved reader, if through grace divine you are one. Great indeed is the favour bestowed upon you; esteem it highly; praise God for it.

Many who profess to believe seek to make the nation the prudent servant here, so as to shut out our Lord Jesus Christ. Was it a nation or an individual who had "His grave" appointed with the wicked? Were even the godly of a nation ever "numbered with the transgressors?" Could it be said of the nation suffering for its own sins, "for the transgression of My people was He stricken?" No; none but our blessed Saviour ever answered, or could answer, to this prophecy, spoken over seven centuries before He came. But all was foreknown of God, and we praise Him for the grace which has given us to believe the report, and to see in CHRIST "THE ARM OF THE LORD REVEALED." He and none other is the prudent servant to "BE EXALTED AND EXTOLLED AND BE VERY HIGH."

“About a Stone’s Cast.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

“He went a little farther.”—(Matt. 26. 39).

“He was withdrawn from them about a Stone’s Cast.”—(Luke 22. 14).

A GREAT crisis had been reached in the life of the Lord Jesus. He had not separated Himself from His disciples in this way before, nor had they ever parted company with Him. They would not leave Him, for they could not do without Him. When others turned their backs upon Him, they said: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And so bound to Him had they been that He said to them: “Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations.” They were His lovers and friends, and though they did not understand much of the sorrow that filled His soul, yet there was the sympathy of love in their hearts towards Him, and this was very precious to Him.

But now the parting time had come, if He was to fulfil the will of God. They follow Him to Gethsemane; they had done so many times before, for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples, and in the past they had watched with Him in the silence of the night beneath those olive trees while He held communion with His Father. But now it was different, and He says to them: “Sit ye here, while I go and pray *yonder*.” Who can tell what that “*yonder*” meant to Him?

He was about to enter the great conflict, and He “looked for comforters,” and as Peter and the sons of Zebedee seemed to enter more fully into His thoughts than the other disciples, He takes them with Him. Surely these three could give Him what He looked for, and watch with Him through that terrible hour. But no! He must leave them also; He must go “a little farther,” and, alone—or, as we read in Luke, He must be “withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast.” In

Matthew He is King, and it is the prerogative of David’s royal Son to act in His own right; so there He went “a little farther.” It is there His own act. In Luke He is the obedient and dependent Man, filled and anointed by the Spirit to do the Father’s business. He was completely subject to the leading of the Spirit, and so there He is, “withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast,” He is withdrawn by the Spirit and the Father’s will.

His disciples could not travel with Him now, for though it was but a stone’s cast that He was removed from them, in reality the distance was immeasurable, and the road was one which had never been, nor could be trodden by any other human foot. They were never to be associated with Him again in the old way; that was a chapter that was now closed for ever, the links were broken, and keenly He felt it.

Three times in the midst of His own great conflict in that garden He went back to them; for though they were unable to tread the path that He was treading or watch with Him in it, His love towards them could not change; and they were also to pass through a stern sifting, and He wanted them for their own sakes to watch and pray; but there was no response now to His earnest desire, the comforters He looked for failed Him, “*He found them asleep*.” Then, when they did awaken from that strange sleep, terror-stricken at the sight of His sorrow, “they all forsook Him and fled.”

Lover and friend were put far from Him, for mere human sympathy could not help Him now, for no human heart could understand His exceeding sorrow; none had ever known it, it was super-human, it was the sorrow of the Holy Son of God going to bear our sins in His

own body on the tree—to be made sin for us there, and to endure the hiding of God's face until the work was done.

“Alone He bear the Cross,
Alone its grief sustained.”

He had told them that this break would be for “a little while.” As a tender mother on leaving her fearful child assures it that she will “soon come back,” so He assured them that they should see Him again. “A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me: because I go to the Father” (John 16. 16). That little while passed; it included that time of sorrow to which we have alluded, and those three days and three nights in which He lay dead in the grave; but it passed, and ere the sun was up on the first day of the week the grave was empty and the Lord was risen indeed. What triumph must have filled those mighty spirits, those ministers of His that do His pleasure, when the great enemy DEATH lay crushed and defeated at His victorious feet! How gladly would they have celebrated His glorious power and sang His praise to men as once they sang His lowly birth! But this was not the Lord's way. Unattended by angelic host, He went after His broken-hearted and despairing sheep, and gathered them together in one flock in the evening of that day. We are not surprised to read that “the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord”; for the time of separation was passed, and He was with them again—not on the old footing, however,

for He breathed into them, as the last Adam, the life-giving Spirit—and they were bound up with Him in the eternal bonds of a new life. And so are we.

He will never again be removed about a stone's cast from his well-beloved flock, for as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, the Leader of their salvation, He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” And they can say, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Moreover, He is the Head of His body, every member of which is united to Him in life, and by the Holy Ghost, completely and for ever. He is the Firstborn among many brethren, and they are one with Him in His Father's thoughts and love. He is the Sanctifier and they are the sanctified, and they are one with Him, and for this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

We look back to that “little while” when He went “a little farther” in deepest gratitude of heart; for we could not have sung “No separation, O my soul,” but for the sorrow that He passed through then. Now, like the disciples, we are glad; for no dark clouds can now obscure Him from the eyes of faith, and He is near us, a living glorious Saviour, greater than every trial through which His flock may pass. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil: for He is with us; and it is but a little while and we shall be with Him to whom we are united, in the Father's house on high.

God's thought of completeness is Christ.

Not only have I all I want in Christ, but I have all *I need to be* in Him.

There is no advance out of Christ. You begin with the forgiveness of sins in Him, and every other thought of God's heart for you is in Him also.

You cannot add to His fulness; all the majesty of God is there.

In order to be careful for nothing you unbosom yourself to God, pouring out all your requests to Him in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. The effect of this will be that the very peace which dwells in God, and in which God dwells, will keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus, as a military guard keeps the fort in which it is set.

The Priestly Race.

(H. P. BARKER).

(A BIBLE STUDY).

IT was God's gracious intention that the people whom He had borne on eagles' wings and brought to Himself should be a kingdom of priests. This we are told in Exodus 19. 6 : "*Ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation.*" God desired to have them, as a people, near to Himself, in known and enjoyed relationship, that He might dwell among them and find His pleasure in them.

This gracious desire on the part of God met with no appreciation or response. They had no wish to know Him or to dwell in nearness to Him. Seven centuries passed since the day He delivered them from the house of bondage. They had definitely refused the proffered favour, and now God definitely withdraws the privilege that they had esteemed so lightly. "*Thou hast rejected knowledge : I also will reject thee that thou shalt be NO PRIEST TO ME*" (Hosea 4. 6).

But God never gives up His purposes. He will not allow the folly and faithlessness of men to turn Him from His original design. Where Israel so utterly failed, the purpose of God will find its fulfilment in CHRIST. David, and the kings of his royal line, miserably failed to answer to God's mind, but the throne of David will be filled by One who will indeed be God's King, answering in full perfection to His mind. In like manner, Aaron and the priests of his chosen line utterly failed in their charge; but in Christ will be fulfilled all that a priest should be according to God's mind. "*He shall build the temple of the Lord : and He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne ; and HE SHALL BE A PRIEST upon His throne*" (Zech. 6. 13).

Associated with Him in His priestly office will be those of Israel's favoured race "that mourn in Zion," those that

have sighed over the backsliding of the nation, and have feared Jehovah's name, and clung, amid reproach and suffering to his Word. To them will be given the priestly place; in them will be fulfilled God's intention for Israel. "*Ye shall be named THE PRIESTS OF THE LORD : men shall call you the ministers of our God*" (Isa. 61. 6).

Faithful amid trial and unspeakable suffering these godly souls will stand. When all the world wonders after the Beast, and none may buy or sell save those that bear His mark, or name, or number, these undaunted witnesses for God will die rather than be untrue to His Word. But beheaded though many of them will be for their faithfulness, they shall have part in the first resurrection, and "*they shall be PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST and shall reign with Him a thousand years*" (Rev. 20. 6).

But a leading truth of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that the Lord Jesus Christ is *now* a Priest. The day of His public manifestation as such is yet to come, but in His present place of exaltation at the right hand of God He is constituted our great High Priest. And just as He will associate with Himself in His future kingly and priestly offices the godly remnant of Israel, even so He has His associates to-day—a priestly company, linked with Himself in His present place of glory and exaltation in heaven. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of these associates, Christ's "fellows," or companions (chap. 1. 9); the "many sons" He is bringing to glory (chap. 2. 10); those He is not ashamed to own as His "brethren," who are "all of one" with Himself (chap. 2. 11), those who, while bearing His reproach, may yet "by Him . . . offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually"; and may so represent God in their actions among men that of such actions it may be said,

“with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (chap. 13. 15, 16). Truly a priestly race !

And who are the people so highly favoured? You and I, dear Christian reader, are amongst the number. While kings and priests of Israel’s chosen seed will be associated with their King-Priest in the day of His kingdom, we can join in the song of praise which ascribes glory and dominion “*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and* **PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER**” (Rev. 1. 5, 6).

We, then, have been brought to God that we might be His priests. On the one hand we are constituted “an *holy* priesthood” that we may be for God’s praise and pleasure, offering up spiritual sacrifices. On the other hand we are made “a *royal* priesthood,” that we may suitably represent Him before men, showing forth His praises (1 Pet. 2. 5 and 9).

Closely connected with the truth of our priesthood is the truth of our *sonship*. The two things go together; the former is based on the latter. We are made priests *because we are sons*. We see the connection of the two things in Christ. “Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son” (Heb. 5. 5). “The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (chap. 7. 28).

With Israel, too, the same thing is seen. Did Jehovah desire His people to be free from the oppressor’s power that as a nation of priests they might serve Him? His message to Pharaoh was “Let *My son* go, that he may serve Me” (Exod. 4. 23). If in the glorious day that is coming the redeemed of Israel will be Jehovah’s priests, it will be because they will be “*sons*” of the living God” (Hosea 1. 10).

Priestly service, therefore, is based on sonship, whether we speak of Christ’s

priestly service, or Israel’s in the future, or our own. It is as sons that we are brought near to God, associated with Him who ever was His beloved Son, but who has taken that place as Man that He might have companions, brethren, with Himself, in all the joys that belong to the relationship. To us He has declared the Father’s name; He discloses that in which He finds His own deep joy, that we may share it with Him. He puts upon our lips the song which only sons can sing, the song which He Himself sings in the midst of His assembly. And what can be a greater delight to the Father’s ear than that His own beloved Son, who knows so well all that is in His bosom, should have others, His brethren, taught by Him to know, enjoy, and respond to those divine affections of which He is Himself the object (but to which we too are brought as “all of one” with Him), and should in their midst, sing praise to Him?

This is priestly privilege indeed ! Who can tell the blessedness of it: nearness to God, knowledge of the Father’s love, enjoyment of it in companionship with the Son of His love, and joining in the song of worship which is an adequate and infinitely acceptable response to all the Father’s delight in His Son, because it is the Son who sings it. Marvellous song ! Marvellous love ! Marvellous privilege for us—even us—to know the love and participate in the song ! Marvellous favour for us, God’s sons, to be His priests in this way !

The world, our walk and ways in it, and the ordinary concerns of everyday life have no part in this place of priestly privilege. They belong to a different sphere. But while we are actually in the world and have to do with the affairs of life here we need to know how to behave ourselves as those who are God’s priests. It will help us to note the traits of a priest after God’s own mind as given in Malachi 2. 5-7. The first thing to observe is that he was marked by the fear of God: “*the fear wherewith he feared Me.*” In the days of declension and apostasy, when Malachi lived and

prophesied, the fear of God was largely lost, even among the priests. "*Where is My fear?*" saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests" (1. 6). Swift judgment was foretold upon the sinners who *feared not God* (3. 5). On the other hand, the Lord's eye rested with approval upon the few *who feared Him* and thought upon His Name (3. 16). And finally, to them *that feared His Name* the rising of the Sun of righteousness was promised (4. 2). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and it must necessarily lie at the basis of our walk with God. It must be a distinguishing mark of those who seek to be for His pleasure in days like these.

Because of the fear which marked him, God gave His servant Levi His covenant of life and peace. These things too must mark the priest. Peace with God will be his present portion, and his soul will be in life in a world over which death lies like a dark pall. Truth and equity characterize the priest in his walk, and he is evangelistic. Mark this! *He turns many away from iniquity.* Mistrust the man who professes to enjoy his place of priestly privilege as a worshipper, and yet lacks sympathy with the work of the gospel and shows no desire to win men from the paths of iniquity for Christ. Such a Christian is lacking in one of the most lovely traits of the true priest.

But, on the other hand, evangelistic zeal without knowledge is no mark of God's priests, any more than knowledge without zeal is. "*The priest's lips should keep knowledge.*"

All this should mark him, because "*he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts,*" He is to represent God amongst men. Not only is he privileged to draw near to God, his face Godward, as a worshipper. He is also to approach men, his face manward, on God's behalf, his mouth filled with messages of grace and forgiveness, God's messenger and spokesman.

Oh, that in standing up to proclaim the glad tidings we might do it as God's priests, in the spirit of priesthood. Is it not to this that the Apostle refers when he says: "God is my witness, *whom I serve with my spirit* in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. 1. 9)? We are more than servants; we are sons. We are not merely to run on errands and deliver messages. We are privileged to render sonship-service; to serve as sons, rejoicing in the grace of which we speak, and serving God with our spirits, in the service of men on His behalf.

Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable privilege of being His priests, not only in position and constitution, but in function and service!

The Value of the Word.

THE Christian who reads and studies everything else but his Bible is like the soldier who exercises with everything else but his gun or his sword; when the enemy comes he is of no avail.

The Christian who cannot give a reasonable answer for the hope that is within him—and he cannot if he does not give heed to the written Word—the Christian who cannot give that answer by a "thus it is written" is defeated before he begins.

Let a Christian study the written Word and it will be a test to his own heart; it will tell him how much spiritual life he has in him by the response he makes to the Word.

Christ or Antichrist: for whom do we wait? (W. T. P. WOLSTON.)

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT EDINBURGH.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from [out of] the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the [habitable] world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

(Rev. 3. 10, 11).

THIS scripture presents the church's proper and proximate hope on the one hand, and, on the other, gives us the Lord's solemn warning as to an immense danger to which we are subject; viz. the giving up of that hope, and thus losing our crown. The church as a whole has lost the sense of the Lord's speedy coming, but let us not forget that the Lord's coming is the true hope of the church.

We all know how, by God's grace, this precious truth has been recovered in the last century, and some of us for a time—longer or shorter—have been glorying in the blessed truth that we shall soon see the One who has loved us with a love deeper and stronger than death, and it is the joy of our hearts to know that at any moment He may come.

I have been meeting lately the fatal doctrine—by no means new, though now pressed in most unexpected quarters—that the church, instead of waiting for the heavenly Bridegroom hour by hour, has, forsooth, to wait for the appearing of Antichrist, and then go through "the great tribulation." I sound a warning note regarding this error. The very foundations of Christianity are being undermined on every hand, and it is no wonder that the top-stones are being attacked as well. The foundation truths of the virgin birth of the Lord, His holy life, His blessed Manhood, and His death and resurrection are being set aside boldly. If you don't know these things it is well that you should be told; and now the rapture of the church—the crown of all our blessing—is being attacked also.

God has warned us of that which is now before our eyes in very striking

language. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrines; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). We live in the day of fables, and one of the fables that Satan is promulgating now among the children of God is that we are *not* to wait momentarily for the coming of the Lord, but that we are first to await "the man of sin"—"the son of perdition,"—and then go through the time of terrible tribulation of which several scriptures speak so very clearly.

We shall see, however, that all these scriptures connect the tribulation with an earthly people; not with the church of God, which is heavenly in its origin and destiny.

I would draw your attention to the peculiar way in which the blessed Lord speaks to the Philadelphian church: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee *out of* the hour of trial, which shall come upon all the habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth." She shall be kept out of the hour of trial, *i.e.* the period during which the trial will affect them that "dwell upon the earth." They will taste the trial, but not so the church. She shall be kept out of it, *i.e.* never go through it. The class of people whose hopes and hearts are down here in this earth are often spoken of as earth-dwellers in the Book of Revelation (see 6. 10; 8. 13; 11. 10; 12. 12; 13. 8, 14; 17. 8).

Now let us inquire what is meant by this "hour of trial" or "trouble." It is frequently alluded to in the Old

Testament Scriptures. Jeremiah 30. gives us the moment the Lord alludes to (read vers. 1-7). It is God's earthly people—Israel—manifestly, who are in view. The very expression, "time of Jacob's trouble" shows this. Verse 3 tells us that it is the time when God's ancient people—Israel—are gathered back again to their own land—Palestine. The two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, will be purged in the land. That we learn from Zechariah 13. 8, 9; and so the time of "trouble" in Jeremiah 30. manifestly has no relation to the church of God, but to His ancient, earthly people.

Now turn to Daniel 12., which should remove all doubt as to this matter.

"At that time . . . there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time *thy people* shall be delivered" (ver. 1). The term "thy people" means the Jew; it is an earthly people—Daniel's folk. I do not say that such are those of whom the Lord speaks as "dwelling on the earth" in Revelation 3., but it is clearly an *earthly* company, and "*Jacob's trouble*" indicates those who will pass through it. Coming now to the New Testament, we pass to Matthew 24. There the Lord alludes to this time of trouble in that wonderful discourse given two days before He died. He says, "there should be wars and rumours of wars." Then, that the dwellers in Palestine "shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place" (ver. 15). This contemplates the Jews gathered again in their own land, the temple rebuilt, and idolatry again established in their midst. What a sad prospect!

Intimately coupled with "the abomination of desolation," is the history of a purely earthly people, who dwell in Judea. And "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be" (ver. 21). This tribulation is God's righteous retributive,

governmental answer to their ways because they have murdered their Messiah, resisted the Holy Ghost, spurned a heavenly Saviour; and further, again lapsed into idolatry. Because of all this one can easily see why judgment purely earthly falls on an earthly people; but for "the elect's sake" those days shall be shortened.

Again, in Mark 13. 19, 20, we have the same moment alluded to. But in every case it is Jacob or Israel, Judea or Jerusalem, who are in view. I believe that we—the church—will have been raptured to glory some time ere that moment comes. Alas! that to-day the vigorous effort should be made to get the saints—a heavenly company—lured to think that she has to go through this terrible tribulation. What is the inevitable result? The eye is taken off Christ and the attention of the saints rivetted on earthly scenes. Instead of expecting Him we are told to give this blessed hope up, and wait, instead, to see the Devil's christ, and then pass through great tribulation upon the earth. This is only Satan's way of drawing the heart from Christ in heaven and, practically speaking, link us with the "evil servant" in our pathway here. This is not of God—you may be assured.

But let us look at another scripture—Revelation 7. 9-17. Please carefully read this portion. Notice that the twenty-four elders here are intelligent. The twenty-four elders are the figures of the heavenly saints, who are in the sweetest association with Christ in glory. We find in chapters 4. and 5. the position of these twenty-four elders. They represent the double course of priesthood—twice twelve—symbolical of Old Testament saints and New Testament saints, who equally are partakers of the *heavenly* calling and share heavenly blessings with Christ. We ought to be intelligent as to the ways and purposes of God. He expects us to be intelligent. In the fifth chapter we find the question raised, "Who is worthy to loose the seven seals?" (ver. 3), and the answer comes in verse 5. There one of the

elders steps forth and says to John, "Weep not, for the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the book." We must not confound the twenty-four elders with the sealed one hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel, or with the great multitude of chapter 7. Each company is distinct. As to the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, what is that? Measured grace. The faithful grace of God to Israel is absolute: it is perfect: all His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are fulfilled, and their seed are blessed; but after all, it is what I may call *measured grace*. But "that great multitude which no man can number" tells of unmeasured and immeasurable grace. Its very largeness is refreshing. The grace of God, flowing out to the Gentile nations by and by is what is seen here. Uncountable multitudes, *to whom no promise was made* are blessed, and will enjoy millennial blessing under the sway of the Lord. They are the earthly company which will come "out of the great tribulation."

Notice again that it is one of the twenty-four elders—one of the heavenly saints—who inquires, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" and John said, "Sir, thou knowest? The elders understand who the earthly companies are. Manifestly *not* the church, which the elders signify. Further, this must be an earthly scene, for the temple is there (ver. 15), whereas in Revelation 21. where the church is seen in glory there is "no temple" (Rev. 21. 22).

But though the company and scene of Revelation 7. is earthly, it is blessed to see the position they occupy. Serving God as they will, in His temple, they have a priestly place and priestly functions. They praise God. Observe, these people are priests. They are connected with the temple and it cannot be heavenly. It is a wonderful unfolding of what the earth's future will be. The church is not in view, but in the midst of a book of judgment we see how Israel and the Gentiles get blessing on the earth when

the Lord comes back. "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (ver. 17). It is a great thing to find out that God has wondrous blessing for others besides the church. It will help you if you see that Revelation 7. has no relation to us at all, and that we are not in it. Our portion, the portion of the church, is heaven not earth.

Go to chapter 21., and there you may see yourself, and thank God for the wonderful place you have got. Don't forget, there is *no* temple THERE. Why? Because it is *all* temple. The idea of a temple is a peculiar shrine into which certain favoured people can come and there worship. But the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife, is *all* temple. There God and the Lamb are fully made known and enjoyed.

There is only one more scripture I would refer to. It is Revelation 12. The "Man child" in this passage is Christ, but I greatly question if it means Christ only. I believe it embraces more than the blessed Lord Himself, because Christ shares everything with His beloved bride, and on the ground of this I apprehend that the Man child is Christ and the church. The woman—Israel—brought forth a "man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (ver. 5). Now to rule the nations with a rod of iron is the promise made to the overcomer, Thyatira (see Rev. 2. 24). That is, the Lord associates His saints with Himself in the day when He takes His power and will rule and reign. When He does that, dear fellow-believer, you and I will be with Him, and therefore I apprehend that the taking up of the "man child" includes the church. The Lord has Himself gone up already. His bride—His church, who is one with Him—waits to be caught up to Him. This must take place before He can reign over the kingdoms of this world (11. 15).

Not till the church has gone up is the devil cast down, knowing that his time is short. It is then—I repeat, after the church has gone up—that “the great tribulation” will begin.

How precious, and how important also, is it, in view of all this, to get hold of the Lord’s word to Philadelphia—“I will keep thee out of the hour of trial . . . which shall try them that dwell on the earth.” The expression “dwell on the earth,” evidently means a class of people whose whole heart and thought and mind and object, will be *here on earth*. To dwell in heaven should surely be the characteristic of the saints at the present moment, and I am persuaded in the main your hearts are in heaven, dear fellow-saints, because your treasure is there. “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” Heavenly hopes and aspirations are ours, thank God; and we are waiting for the moment when the Lord will take us thither. If I have to wait for Antichrist to be manifested, and for the “tribulation” to set in, then I cannot be waiting for the Lord to come at any moment. But some may say: “That is only one scripture.” Is not one enough? One scripture tells me on the authority of the Lord Himself that the church shall not go through the tribulation. That one word from the blessed Lord Himself in glory is quite enough for me. I hope it is for you.

Now mark His next injunction. “I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3. 11). Beloved brethren, to lose the hope of the church is fatal. I once heard a servant of God say: “If you cut off the top shoot of a tree it will arrest its growth, and if you give up the hope of the church—the immediate coming of the Lord, the return of the blessed Lord and Saviour at any moment—you will become worldly, and will incur spiritual death.” A true testimony that. God, in His grace, keep us from losing our crown. Hold fast what you

have got. Don’t give it up; and, more than that, may it be a living power in our souls, that we might be “like unto men that wait for their Lord.”

How sweet is it to hear Him thrice say in the closing page of Scripture, “I come quickly” (Rev. 22. 7, 12, 20. In verse 7, He adds: “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” If you see the world doomed to judgment you will keep clear of it. In verse 12 He adds: “My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” This reward for little bits of service which He will then give to us should stimulate us now to serve Him till He come.

Lastly, He presents Himself as the coming One—the “Morning Star.” As soon as He presents Himself in this way, the Spirit and the bride with all affection respond. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him that heareth say ‘Come!’” and then, in the meantime, while waiting for Him, both Spirit and bride say to the thirsty world around, “Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” (Rev. 22. 17).

I believe the more earnestly we are waiting for the coming of the Lord, the more fervent and energetic we shall be in our service, and the more desirous we shall be to win hearts for Him. We shall want to tell out the charming message of His love, and what joy is it to see the living water drunk. With this gospel invitation the testimony of love closes, while His last words are, “Surely, I come quickly.” But there is a voice on earth that replies. It is the voice of the bride who loves Him, and she says, “Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.” God’s Book closes with that cry of affection from the bride on earth to the Bridegroom in heaven to come. Brethren, He is coming, and very soon. Let us all really look for Him day by day.

Your Sin Will Surely Find You Out.

THE strength or reliability of a chain depends on its weakest link. If there be one weak link, though all the rest be good and strong, yet when the pull comes, the weak one is the measure of its strength. In every one there is some tendency or passion stronger than another, and in it the force or wilfulness of one's nature is betrayed. Many do not know what it is, and in general, without intention, it is systematically concealed. In the transparency of childhood it is seen, but few in mature years candidly admit their ruling passion: of course it is selfishness in some form or another. In it lies the most of one's will, and the strength of nature; and hence, while it is there that it is most necessary there should be "suffering in the flesh," yet it is there that naturally every effort is used to preserve it. Hence, there is on the one hand the purpose of God through grace to mortify it, and on the other hand the energy of the flesh to save it. Nay more: everything will often be attempted, or even suffered, in order to screen or excuse this idol, for idol it is, as is everything which commands the heart and energies more than God.

With every one there is something that is as dear to him as his own life; it may be his reputation, his position, his money, some self-gratification; and he strains every nerve to secure it.

Now the discipline to which every saint walking with the Lord is subjected, would best teach him what his ruling passion or idol is; for on that particular thing the Lord is always bringing death in one form or another. On the one side, there is the energy of the flesh, striving to preserve as it were its sovereign; as on the other hand there is the Lord, dealing in one way after another in order to check, weaken, and suppress this strong hold of the flesh. Many a one might suppose that he had no particular wilfulness, and possibly from his nature and habits you might never discover it. But, if we observe the nature

and character of God's dealings with us, we shall surely find it out; and if we were truly to submit to the correction and what it aims to effect, there would be a happy sense of deliverance, or at least a sure conviction of why it was sent (which saints often know nothing of), and there would therefore be a guarding against it. If there be a desire in the corner of my heart which I have not ventured even to acknowledge to myself, the nearer I am to the Lord the sooner I shall find it out: but as we see with Paul on his return from the third heaven, he does not know the tendency or lurking desire in his own nature until he is awakened to inquiry because of the thorn in the flesh. The ruling passion though often suppressed and almost mortified in one set of circumstances is sure to spring up in a new set, which in some way favours its recurrence. So that in every set of circumstances there must be mortification in order to preserve one from loss and damage. It is where the flesh is most active that it is most necessary that death should first supervene; and to this, God's dealings with the soul are always directed. Now if His dealings be resisted, and though there be, for years even, a disguising of the taste and will, yet if it has not been mortified, and the chastening of the Lord not bowed to, it will find its opportunity; and that man's sin finds him out. See Moses' warning to the two and a half tribes (Numb. 32. 23).

There is not a sufficient sense in souls of the present righteousness of God, and that by Him actions are weighed. There is too much the feeling that if they escape at the time with impunity, there is an end of it. Now if we observe our own histories, and know that of others well, we shall find that now He judgeth according to man's work. If I am screening my flesh, and despising the rebuking of the Lord, I shall suddenly be cast down, and that without remedy.

The first thing that a saint learns, though he may not always be able to define it, is, that there is in him that which lusts against the Spirit. He may not be able to discern the peculiar form of the flesh as to desire; but the moment he is in any way sensible of a new nature, he is also made sensible that he has no power in himself to act according to its instincts. Good desires are not effectual; that is, they cannot subdue the flesh, nor can they make it yield to them. The Spirit of God is the only power to render good desires effectual. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The resistance or inability which the saint first finds in himself to act as the new nature desires shows him the strength of the flesh—its idol or ruling passion. It necessarily fears to be dislodged, and it at once, when a new mind is implanted, seeks to resist and to continue its own sway. The plague of one's own heart is the hardest to subdue and to be relieved from, and therefore it is the first and foremost in asserting its claim. As I have said, I do not think a saint can say at first what it is, but he is painfully aware that there is something which resists; and if this covetousness or idolatry were mortified, there would be relief. I do not say that he at once comes to this conclusion, but I say that when he does, he finds relief. Seeing then that on my own side there is the consciousness of opposition, though I may not be able to state definitely what particular form of selfishness it is, I find that God in His dealings and discipline with me is ever and anon checking me in some way that I feel very much. Of course, I feel most where I have most flesh. Now there are two things which indicate what the ruling passion is. One is the resistance in myself to the grace of God; and the other the pain I suffer from the discipline to which I am subjected. Now the Spirit of God would always prove His power, and teach me how to walk under this twofold schooling. He first lusts against the flesh; that is, He would give it no tolerance, would act right in opposition to it, and would

use the chastening to break down the flesh, so that His victory might be complete. A saint walking in the Spirit would set himself to resist that which was gratifying to his flesh. The fact of its being self-gratification would be enough to make him refuse it, for that is evidence enough of its danger and of its nature. He would not seek occasions of self-suffering; but when selfish considerations were presented to him, this would be enough to show that it was to be opposed, and that wherever any dealing of God was most felt, whether as to one's feelings, or in any other way, there one would lay it to heart, and see that the flesh was working there, and that the chastening was sent for this end. Now if the saint walks in the Spirit, he will be kept in this healthful exercise; but if, on the other hand, he, like Peter, refuses the counsel of the word, he at length will be exposed to circumstances for which he was unprepared; and then on warming himself at the fire (Mark 14. 54, 67) his sin will find him out. Peter liked to lead and was called on to lead, but he must be broken down in nature before he is fit to be Christ's vessel.

It is only as we walk in the Spirit that we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The Spirit is the only power to save us from the inroads of the flesh. In every step and in every new circumstance (and every day there is quite a new set of circumstances) I shall be unprepared unless I am walking in the Spirit, and my sin will find me out if I do not depend on God in my weakness. Abram finds out that he has no faith to stay in the land when there is a famine there; but in his weakness he learns to depend, and when he is restored and returns there, he gives Lot his choice of the whole land. Now Lot, on the contrary, has not judged himself for his weakness, and therefore he seeks what gratifies himself—the green fields—and though he was chastened, and affliction had come upon him from the very place where he settled—for he was taken captive and his goods carried away—yet he

will not bow to the rebuke, but hardens his neck, and in the long run his sin finds him out.

We have little idea how we despise the chastening of the Lord, how we refuse to drop the idol that is set up in our hearts; and it is often years afterwards that the exposure comes, and always to the penitent heart, with this conviction, "I was warned of this before, I have been rebuked and chastened with respect to this very thing long before." The word, as at the first in Eden, is always surrendered for self-gratification; and if in an innocent state, how much more when there is a will and an evil spirit to support one in an evil path. Peter disregarded the word, not intentionally, but he did not think of it. Lot was heedless of his calling, it was not before his heart and mind, but his present advantage.

There are three classes of saints. One class who never attempted or intended to give up the world; another class, who, like Abram, have, though failing, persistently and faithfully pursued a path of separation, and a heavenly walk: and a third, those who began well, but, like Lot, were drawn away by some present gain. With this latter class I am chiefly concerned in this paper. As to the first, their whole ways declare what they are. It is no excuse for a saint to say: I never gave up the world in its refinements, its dress, its arts, etc. Such an one's sin has found him out: he has not faith to enter the land, to walk as a heavenly man. The second class are kept by the power of God—"faint, yet pursuing": and as to the third, however fair or promising their start, like a hunted hare, they return to the field from which they were driven; they get back

to the worldliness, the dress, or whatever it be, which they had never truly condemned, and which had always a shrine in their hearts, and their sin finds them out. Thus we can account for ill-assorted marriages, unsuitable companions, and all such things. The tendency of our nature is ministered to and countenanced. The link is formed through that which gratifies us selfishly, and not with that which would really aid us. Thus people find themselves in association and circumstances that at one time they had vehemently denounced. The fullest knowledge of our standing, and the deepest exercise of soul as to it, will not preserve us if the word of our calling be overlooked. Jacob returned to the land; he was right as to his standing; he passed through the night of wrestling and received the name Israel; and yet, because he had not judged his ruling passion, to think and provide for himself contrary to his calling, he settled at Shalem, and sorrow and evil overtake him (Gen. 34.).

The real measure of a man's strength, that is of his dependence on God, comes out some day: and it often happens, sad though it be, that it is not brought to light till his death-bed, and then a controversy takes place before the unclouded light of the Lord's presence fills and gladdens the soul.

The Lord teach us to watch unto prayer, quietly waiting on Him, assured in heart that His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men, and that in due season we shall reap if we faint not. But on the other hand, it will be manifested on every side, and with regard to every one, that he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

"There are minds so constituted that the fall of a superior when they have themselves stood firm inspires them with a sense of self-satisfaction, and such persons do not spare the man whom they suppose to have sunk below their own level from any pity for his lost greatness."—*Meyrick*.

It is infinitely better, happier, and holier to sit down to a crust of bread and cup of water paid for than to roast meat for which you are in debt.

Science and the Word.

WHAT can science do for you? It cannot minister to a mind diseased. It has no formula by which it can dissolve the sorrow in a tear, no power by which it can lift the burden of the heart. When you stand by the grave of the dead it has no voice with which to speak the words of comfort to the listening soul. It has no light that will penetrate the gloom of death. It has no vision of the gates of life—it dare not bid you hope. It stands with its theorems and postulates and sees all its wisdom turned to folly in the presence of the great silence and the endless reach which, for want of a better name, we call eternity.

No. Science can do nothing for you. There is no light or hope in anything but the written Word of God. This Word that has outlived the men who denied it. This Word that flings the sunlight of hope through the tear of despair and turns the night of weeping into the morning of joy. This Word that has sung its glad songs when all the world was out of tune: this is the Word you must hear. Hear the Word! It is calling unto you in the rarest and clearest speech that ever was heard. It is bidding you turn to Him who is saying, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (J. Haldeman).

The Spirit.

(R. Cross.)

THERE is abundant testimony in the Old Testament that the medium of intelligent relationship with God is by the Spirit, but in the New Testament this comes more distinctly into view. In the Old Testament it is immanent; in the New Testament it is prominent. In the Old Testament it existed as a necessity; in the New Testament it is pronouncedly so. So far as Scripture teaches us, God has never acted but by His Spirit; nor can we conceive how it could be otherwise. Creation owes its being to this power, operated by the Word. So we read, "by His Spirit He garnished the heavens" in all the beauty that belongs to them (Job 26. 13); and again when the cataclysm of Genesis 1. 2 befell the earth, it was the Spirit of God, His breath, that moved upon the surface of the deep, and transformed the chaos into shapefulness and order; as it is written, "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104. 30). It was by His Spirit through Moses that "He redeemed His people out of Egypt, and led them through the wilderness to give them rest, to make for Himself a glorious and an everlasting name." "He gave them also His good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh.

9. 20); and the sum of their rebellions in after years was that "they vexed His Holy Spirit" (Isa. 63. 10-14), as Stephen reminds them later on, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye" (Acts 7. 51). It was the same in the antediluvian world when the Spirit of God was "striving" with the wickedness of man (Gen. 6. 3).

By His Spirit He will quicken again His people, and restore them to the blessings laid up in store for them, to be alienated from them no more (Ezek. 36. 26; 37. 14; 39. 29). Yea, "He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh," as already fulfilled, in the earnest of it, at Pentecost; (Joel 2. 28, 29; Acts 2. 16-18). And to embrace all this, and much more, in the very nature of it, the Lord says to the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 24).

When we come to the Gospel of Luke, and the writings of Paul, we see the prominence given to the Spirit in the *energy* that attaches to His presence in power; in John, He gives *character and consistency* to the relationships of the family of God in eternal life.

(To follow.)

Christ in Isaiah—No. 19.

(H. J. VINE).

A Man of Sorrows (chap. 53).

THIS chapter of chapters is divided into five parts:—

1st, *Isaiah speaks* to and of the nation with regard to Christ in verses 1 to 3.

2nd, *The remnant responds*, owning that His sufferings were for them, 4 to 6.

3rd, *Jehovah replies* pointing out His perfections, 7 to 9.

4th, *The remnant respond* again as to His sufferings and His glory, 10.

5th, *Jehovah replies* once more as to the satisfaction, success, and service of His righteous Servant, 11 and 12.

A Tender Plant.

1. "As a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (ver. 2), He was to grow up before God. Isaiah speaks in a similar way in chapter 11. The royal tree of David had been brought low. All hope seemed to be gone, but "a tender plant," a small shoot, shows itself. It is destined to bear all the royal glory. It grows up before God. He watches over it; protecting and caring for it. "Before Him" it grows; a prophecy fulfilled in Luke 2., where we read: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit . . . and the grace of God was upon Him . . . and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature."

Not only had the royal family been brought low; but the nation was in a degraded condition; it had become like the "dry ground" spoken of: when, lo, "a root," or rather a *sprout*—a root-sprout—appears in the midst of it. What a garden of glory the nation is consequently destined to become through our Lord Jesus Christ. The "dry ground" will become fruitful; it will blossom as the rose, for Israel will be the national head of all the nations of the earth, and no longer "the tail" as at present.

When they saw Him, however, He bore no royal appearance in their eyes; there was "no beauty that we should desire Him"; there was "no form nor lordliness." Had one come with the towering height of Saul, or the attrac-

tiveness of Absalom, Israel would have followed Him; so utterly unable is fallen man to learn. Physical and outward show he esteems: moral and inward perfection he despises.

Shining with every moral perfection, yea, Himself the effulgence of God's glory, the very expression of all that God is, the Son of God thus stood before them. How was He received? "*Despised and rejected of men!*" What an exposure of the debased condition of man.

A Man of Sorrows.

Feeling as He did the degraded state of man, it could not be otherwise than that He should be "*A Man of Sorrows*"; yea, the "*Grief-Acquainted One*." The very perfection and holiness of His own being would make Him feel the terrible-ness of sin as no fallen man could feel it. But to the nation He was One to be shunned; "like one from whom men hide their faces" (ver. 3). They despised Him; they esteemed Him not.

The Smitten of God.

2. A believing remnant, however, respond in a most beautiful manner in the next three verses (4-6). They stand with afflicted souls before God, in the truth of the day of atonement; and by faith they understand the atoning sufferings of Christ; He suffered for them. Although they have a deep sense of their sinfulness—"We have gone astray" they cry;—yet, they look away in faith to Him who bore their sins. It is a wonderful time when a sin-sick soul comes to this; and it is the only way into peace with God. The believing remnant of Israel will learn this.

Not only did He bear "our griefs" and carry "our sorrows" in *His precious sympathy*, when the nation considered, contrariwise, that the weight which lay upon Him was because He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"—because God was against Him; but faith now sees "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." *In sympathy* He bore our

grievings: *in atonement* He bore the punishment due to our sins. Blessed Saviour! "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." There was no other way; but thanks be to God, we can now say, "by His stripes we are healed." The stripes were His: the healing is ours.

It is thus that the remnant of Israel will enter into the meaning of the cross. They confess, "All we like sheep have gone astray": but they appropriate in faith His work for them, and continue: "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." They consequently stand before God clear of every charge; Christ having borne all for them. It is the same with those who believe now.

The Perfect One.

3. To this, Jehovah replies in the next three verses (7-9); not by speaking of them, but by still pointing to His blessed Son; pointing to His perfectness in the midst of His deep, deep distress, when oppressed and afflicted He opened not His mouth; when brought to be slaughtered, and shorn of His rights; as Messiah to be cut off; as a sheep He was silent; He murmured not. Yea, continues Jehovah, "He was taken from oppression and judgment: and *who shall declare His generation?*" Had that been declared, all present would have had to own that the true Messiah stood before them—the Son of David, the King of Israel. A converted publican, Levi by name, however, was used of the Holy Spirit to declare it afterwards, in Matthew 1. God will have it owned, and owned publicly soon. Meanwhile He is still rejected, "He was cut off out of the land of the living"; but He was not stricken for any wrong of His own; Jehovah says, "for the transgression of *My people* was He stricken."

"Men appointed [not, He made] His grave with the wicked"; but God saw to it that this Perfect One "was with the rich in His death"; because He was sinless. "*Violence*" and "*deceit*," the two things that characterize sin, were both entirely absent from Him. Violence characterizes those that are strong, and deceit those that are weak; but He did "no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." Jehovah points to Him—the Perfect One. † He seems to say to the believing remnant: It is true He suffered

for you, but go on to know Him in *His own perfectness* amidst those sufferings.

The Prosperous One.

4. Again a response is heard from the remnant (ver. 10). Perfect though He was, "yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath subjected Him to suffering." They still dwell upon what He went through, though not so much for them; they rise rather to see the prosperous results in glory for Himself and for Jehovah. Truly His soul was made "an offering for sin," to settle for God's glory that great question; but rich results in resurrection shall follow, "He shall see a seed, He shall prolong His days." The Corn of Wheat fell into the ground and died, but much fruit in resurrection follows; His days are prolonged there, "even length of days for ever and ever." Prosperity now marks Him! What tongue or pen can express that which is involved in these words, "*The pleasure of the Lord*"? But this we know: it shall be prosperously carried into its gloriously complete result by the Perfect One who suffered. "THE PLEASURE OF THE LORD SHALL PROSPER IN HIS HAND" (ver. 10). In a fuller sense than the remnant thought of, the assembly can now sing:

"His counsels all fulfilled in Thee;
His work of love complete:
And heavenly hosts shall rest to see
Earth blest beneath Thy feet."

God's Righteous Servant.

5. And now Jehovah replies finally, with a divine pronouncement as to the satisfaction and successful service of His "*Righteous Servant*." If the three final verses of chapter 52, had been put into chapter 53., as they should have been, the number of our divisions would have been exactly seven; for 52. 13 is Jehovah's utterance, as we have seen; and verses 14 and 15 give Isaiah's response to it.

This is the last time Christ is called the "Servant" (53. 11) in Isaiah: afterwards we read of "servants." It is because His atoning work is looked upon as complete; others therefore are justified. Verse 11 tells us of these two things; He justifies or instructs others in righteousness: He bore their iniquities. No one could be righteous before God, apart from atonement; so we read, "by His know-

ledge shall *My righteous Servant* instruct many in *righteousness*, and [not 'for'] He shall bear their iniquities." The next mention of "servants" is in 54. 17, where we read, "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and *their righteousness is of Me*"; not of the law, nor of their own works, but of God.

The blessed Saviour will have no regrets for all His toil and His suffering; deep and eternal satisfaction shall be His: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and SHALL BE SATISFIED." Success has attended His service, though it once looked otherwise. "A portion with the great" is assigned to Him. Spoil of untold wealth shall come into His well-filled treasuries. Heaps upon heaps, glory upon glory, riches and honour and blessing shall be seen to belong to Him; but, Jehovah reminds the heart of the remnant in His final word,

that it was "because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and was reckoned with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine;
And blessings more than we can give,
Be, Lord, for ever Thine."

"And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain* to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 11, 12).

"THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON, AND HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND" (John 3. 35).

HE IS WORTHY.

Home.

(JOHN R. STEPHEN).

O HOME of Rest! As pilgrims here awaiting
The glory of the never-ending day,
With steady pace, thy bliss anticipating,
We tread in hope and peace the rugged way.

O Home of Glory! Jesus calls us thither,
Whose blessed feet once trod earth's desert sand;
We haste to meet the Lord, to praise Him ever
And sing amidst the splendour of that land.

O Home of Light! no gloom can e'er surround thee,
No scourge of earth defile thy balmy air,
No darkening sun shall ever set upon thee,
No curse, no sorrow, finds an entrance there.

O Home of Love! the love of Him who suffered
The holy judgment there on Calvary's tree,
Who came from Heaven, His life to justice offered,
His co-heirs sought that they might with Him be.

O Home of Bliss! Thy gates are ever open
To every weary way-worn child of thine,
When here on earth all human ties are broken—
We view the prospects that so brightly shine.

O Home of Homes! To dwell for aye with Jesus,
Eternally far off from death and sin,
The vision of thy holy joy enchants us,
We look with faith undimmed the veil within.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 9.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 35. to 39.

THE last five of these experimental Psalms enter more deeply into the nature of the conflict with evil in this world than any of the preceding, and this is balanced by the revelation of a fuller measure of spiritual blessing in Psalm 36. In 38. and 39. the more complicated case of sin in the believer is taken up, and Jehovah's governmental ways in respect of sins committed; but taking them together, a pathway of victory is made known the secret of which we shall do well to consider carefully.

In PSALM 35. the man of God is viewed in fierce conflict with hostile powers. If it were a question of fighting in his own strength, defeat is certain (*cf.* Ps. 124.). The same is true in the Christian conflict, which we are expressly told is not with flesh and blood but with spiritual hosts of wickedness. What power have *we* to meet such foes? Hence the need, as our Psalm teaches us, to invoke the aid of Omnipotence. The call in verses 1-3 is urgent, not to say peremptory, and is the keynote of all that follows. But who has not experienced in an hour of danger and trial the need of something more than deliverance? So the Spirit teaches us here to seek a word from the Deliverer. "Say to my soul I am thy salvation." How this sweetens the victory and leads into intimacy with the Lord is evident.

Most of the petitions which follow are in the spirit of the widow in Luke 18. 3. This is not the spirit of Christianity. At the same time we should remember that the desire for the overthrow of wickedness is really righteous, although it would be contrary to the teaching of grace to seek for disaster to fall on any individually.

How Christ Himself entered into the circumstances of the Psalm and the way His personal grace found expression is shown in verses 7, 11, 12. His attitude in the hour of trial is true instruction. He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously, and at the same time He exhibited the truest sympathy

with the sorrows of those who became His implacable enemies. The causeless hatred and opposition He encountered is noticed in verse 7. This is ever the mark of the serpent's seed (1 John 3. 12), and necessitates judgment, for it is irremediable (Luke 19. 41-44). It would seem from the amended translation of verse 15 ("in my halting," not "in my adversity") as if David is expressing the pain he experienced when, on account of his own sin, he became the butt of the vilest of mankind. The wretched jesters for their food in the houses of the wealthy mocked him (*ver.* 16). In contrast with such, the saints obtain the distinction of the "quiet in the land" (*ver.* 20). Verses 17, 18 are like an echo from Psalm 22., but there is this difference: that in this Psalm praise and rejoicing are the consequence of the defeat and confusion of enemies, while in the earlier composition it is the blessing of man that calls forth worship. The Christian's lesson is the simple one of utter distrust of self while in entire dependence upon God, to whom the victory belongs. Our part then is to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6.).

In PSALM 36 the man of God receives the testimony of the Spirit as to the character of the foe; it comes to him as an oracle (such is the meaning of the word used); in his heart "there is no fear of God before his eyes." This evil further expresses itself in spending the hours of rest in plotting some fresh villainy, the perpetration of which, according to Proverbs 4. 16, proves the most successful hypnotic. This unrestrained character of evil tends to produce a yielding of the saint in fear. To meet this the Spirit turns us abruptly to contemplate those inviolable attributes of Jehovah on which faith can always count. The heavens, the clouds, the mountains, the deep sea are all used to teach that however desperately evil is the power of man, it cannot touch what God is pleased to effect in accordance with what He Himself is. It is interesting to note that it is by these very attributes that Jehovah betroths His

people to Himself—for ever (Hosea 2. 19, 20). What can the enemy effect against such bonds? That however is anticipative of the ministry of the church (Col. 1. 25); the Psalm is more on gospel lines, for after celebrating the loving-kindness of God, the Spirit points out a place of shelter under His wings for the children of men. The divine title is "God," and those who shelter under His wings are "children of men"; this indicates a wider sphere of blessing than is found in the relations of Israel with Jehovah their God (*cf.* Rom. 3. 29). In such a haven of safety and repose the soul has all the wealth of the house of God and all the delights of His heart to feast on. God's house is where He may be most intimately known, and the river of His pleasure suggests those purposes of grace, revealed in measure in connection with Israel in the Old Testament and more fully in the church in the New Testament. The Epistle to the Ephesians tells us of a people chosen in Christ before the world's foundation to be according to His *pleasure*, suited to Himself in nature and relationship; in whom, moreover, He can display, in all future ages, the exceeding riches of His grace. Thus the river of His pleasure is seen flowing from the very heart of Deity in a past eternity gathering into its glorious stream, on the sure basis of redemption Israel and the church and carrying them on its bosom into the future eternity in perpetuity of blessing. Surely with God is the *fountain* of life, and in His light—Himself revealed—we see light and there only (*cf.* Isa. 50. 10, 11). The Psalm closes with prayer in the assurance of the ultimate triumph of good, and the overthrow of all opposing forces.

PSALM 37. is the instruction of the Spirit to "the quiet in the land" (35. 20), in order that they may maintain their character and meet the subtlety and violence of the hostile power without that anxiety and irritation so natural in a conflict with evil. To this end the whole Psalm is one of exhortation and teaching, petition being entirely absent. The first and perhaps the most important word is in verse 1, "Fret not." How worry separates from God we all know; it provokes to sin (ver. 8), and hinders prayer. The soul has power to fulfil the exhortations, "trust in Jehovah," "delight in Jehovah," "commit thy way

unto Jehovah," "rest in Jehovah," just in proportion to the obedience rendered to verse 1. The teaching of the Psalm is that an active intervention of God on behalf of the righteous may be expected here. Five times the promise of the inheritance of the land is given to the tried believer (vers. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34), and in the last instance it is added, "when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it." Far different is the character of the deliverance of the Christian. We have our citizenship in heaven, and wait the Lord Jesus as Deliverer, who shall take us to heaven in bodies of glory, and not set us up on earth in manifest power and victory. Nevertheless there is a government of God in favour of the righteous now, so that He makes all things work together for good towards His children. Peter, whose Epistles are illustrative of this providential rule of God, quotes Psalm 34. in evidence of it, but stops in the middle of verse 17, which foretells the cutting off of the wicked, and adds instead, "but, and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake," (1 Peter 3. 14). This clearly shows that deliverance from the opposition of the wicked here cannot be looked for now, but will have its accomplishment when the kingdom comes in power. This difference being understood, we may read the Psalm with much profit and obtain instruction to walk in the true path for the saint of God through all the tangle which the permission of evil has made in this world. "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. He rescueth them from the wicked and saveth them because they have taken refuge in Him" (vers. 39, 40).

PSALMS 38., 39. are, as already stated, different in character from those which precede. We have hitherto seen the righteous man in the path of faith and uprightness, knowing the favour of God, though sins are confessed as in Psalm 25. But in the two now before us the believer is regarded as suffering under the governmental wrath of God on account of personal sins. The representation of the state of the remnant of Israel would not otherwise have been complete. Interpreters have made Christ personally the speaker in these two Psalms, but this is every way wrong. What is presented is His Spirit in the remnant giving them an utterance suited to their circumstances. This will enable

them to enter intelligently into the meaning of their sufferings, which they learn are on account of sin.

How the Lord Himself entered in pity and sympathy into their sufferings we may learn from His tears over guilty Jerusalem; but He was never in that state which made Him the object of wrath except vicariously on the cross. There and there alone He bore our sins, and knew in the forsaking of God what He was against sin. Christ having thus borne the sins of His people, their sufferings become to them a means of sanctification and blessing. These two Psalms should, then, be carefully distinguished from those which are fulfilled in Christ personally, such as 22. and 40. Their special value is for those under divine chastening; thus, in presence of the bitter hostility of enemies, we are taught to say, "I as a deaf man heard not, and I am as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth—Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God"—Grace is given not to retort, but to wait on Jehovah and count on Him. "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation."

In PSALM 39 there is even greater moral depth. The soul here feels the seriousness of being the object of Jehovah's contro-

versy (Micah 6. 2), as in verse 10, in which the word is literally, "I am consumed by the CONFLICT of Thine hand." Under such chastening and rebuke (verse 11) he is silent in the presence of the wicked, putting a muzzle on his mouth (verse 1). But instead of bursting into garrulous complaint like Job, when his heart is hot within him he turns in submission to Jehovah, confessing the frailty and vanity of man, "surely every man at his best estate is but a breath (ver. 5); "and now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee." Nothing can be expected from men. As the result of sin and God's chastisement of it, he was liable to the reproach of the wicked, yet for himself, "because Thou didst it," he would not complain, but in dependence upon Jehovah would pray for the remission of the consequences of his sin. This explains the last verse—literally "look away from me,"—that is, in government that Jehovah may be for him in grace; so that his course should not terminate under this divine displeasure. This prayer is seen to be answered in the closing chapters of Isaiah where the Lord repeatedly assures the godly remnant of the renewal of His favour and the judgment of the nation in league with Antichrist.

Christ is Lord.

HOW disappointing it is to hear people who have professed to trust in the Saviour for salvation talking entirely of themselves and their feelings in the matter, as though the sum total of all the results of redemption's mighty work was themselves. "I feel much happier now," and "I am very different from what I was." These and kindred expressions show how poorly God's glorious gospel has laid hold upon the heart.

It was refreshing—since there is so much of this of which we speak—to hear a Christian woman whose husband had been converted say, "It was a good day when he came home on Thursday. His first words were '*Christ must be the Head of this house.*'" The One who had saved him must be Lord, and not only Lord in his individual life but in his home as well. This is right, the true effect in the soul of the gospel of God concerning His Son.

Lord Jesus, all my sin and guilt love laid of old on Thee,
 Thy love the cross and sorrow willed, love undeserved by me.
 The victory over death and hell Thou, Lord, for me didst win;
 And Thou hast nailed upon Thy cross all, all my sin.

The Songs of the Elders.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 4.

THE waves of the Ægean sea laved the rock-bound coast of dreary Patmos, but the prisoner for the "testimony of Jesus Christ" is in another region, having been raptured—caught up—in the power of the Holy Spirit into heaven. There he beholds One like to a jasper and a sardine stone, sitting on a rainbow-circled throne, surrounded by a crowned and clothed company, peacefully sitting on four-and-twenty thrones; notwithstanding the lightnings and thunderings which proceed from the central throne.

Their number and occupation recalls the twenty-four priestly heads and temple singers appointed by David (see 1 Chron. 24. 35). They are called "Elders," and we will briefly trace the various places in Revelation where they are found.

As from this fourth chapter we hear no more of the church until she descends *out of heaven*, having the glory of God, the natural inference is that before the events foretold from chapter 4. to chapter 19., she has exchanged earth for heaven. The rapture, revealed to Paul and mystically set forth in the catching up of John, having taken place when Laodicea was rejected and spued out.

The Holy Spirit will accompany all the redeemed to meet the Lord in the air; only the empty shell of profession will be left in these so-called Christian lands. Those left are termed "earth dwellers," and they prove by their worship of Antichrist that they are apostates, who were never born of God, never rested for salvation in the atoning work of Christ.

All true saints, representatively viewed in the "elders," having exchanged earth for heaven, God will begin a work to recover scattered Israel, and fulfil the promises made to the Fathers, and

bless the heathen nations. Among both Jews and heathen will be found many who will refuse to bow to Antichrist; it is their consequent sorrows and sufferings which impart such a sorrowful note to these visions.

The "elders," deeply interested in all that concerns the glory and the interests of Christ, and intelligent in the mind of God, are cognizant of these sufferings, but are specially occupied with the varied glories of Christ.

In chapter 4. they rise from their seats, bow in adoration, and voice the worthiness of the glorious Creator. They not only ascribe "glory and honour and power," but having the mind of heaven they unfold to us the secret, the true reason for created things coming into being. They tell us they are for the pleasure of the Godhead. All created things owe their being to Christ. He has a threefold glory connected with them. First, by His rights as "CREATOR!" "All things were created by Him" (Col. 1. 16). Next, by inheritance. He is "HEIR" of all things (Heb. 1. 2). Then, by right of "redemption." He is both Redeemer and Reconciler (Col. 1. 20). The story unfolded in this book is the way in which the REDEEMER claims the inheritance, and the RECONCILER brings creation into accord, so that God can rest in it as an object for His abiding pleasure. Have we not somewhat overlooked this aspect of Christ's work? We have been delighted to celebrate Him as the Redeemer of our persons, and contemplate Him in His moral glories. May we learn from this utterance of the "elders" to delight in His glories as Creator and Reconciler. He upholds creation now by His word; He will free creation then by His power. What a different thing it makes of creation when we see the "pleasure"

of God connected with it. What a safeguard for us, even now, ever to remember, in connection with every created thing, "For THY PLEASURE they are and were created." This is the first subject calling forth praise from the "elders." Their theme is the way God made His glory known in creation, and the ultimate condition in which it will be found under the hand of Christ for His pleasure.

In chapter 5. we get another view of heaven. There we see the book of judgment—discriminating, yet ever increasing judgment. The besom of destruction will sweep the earth and clear out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity. John weeps because he sees no one able to open the book; the "elders" in their reply show that they have the mind of God; they have learned that the Redeemer and the Judge are one. Power to save and power to judge are vested in the same Person; "all judgment is committed to the Son" (John 5. 22). All power is given to the Son now (see John 17. 2), but He uses His power at present to confer life and blessing, but it is the right and title of the Lion of Judah to put down all enemies. The worthiness of Christ to judge becomes the theme of the "elders'" praise. It is the prerogative of the Lamb of God to bear all sin out of the world; this He does in two ways: one is by SACRIFICE; the other by the SWORD. One is connected with His atoning work, the other with His royal power.

At the very moment when this scene is being enacted in heaven, the man of sin, the lawless one, is culminating the rebellion of man against his Creator. Sin is lawlessness—man walking in his own will in opposition to God.

In chapters 6. to 19. we have the details of the preliminary judgments, and in chapter 20. the final act by which man is completely subjugated and Satan's power broken. Christ must reign until every enemy is put under His feet. The worth of the Lamb who was to remove

sin by the hand of judgment becomes the theme of the "elders'" praise: how fully they have the mind of heaven as to His work as the Lion, and His worth as the Lamb! We may also note that they are marked by two things—one is a "harp," the other a "vial." The harp we are familiar with; we can well understand that praise—unceasing praise—to Christ as Lord, Lion, Lamb, and other glories connected with His person shall be the blessed occupation of the redeemed; but what are the "vials"—these golden vials full of odours which we are told contain the prayers of the saints? What saints? The redeemed from Adam to Christ are already in glory, raised at the first resurrection. The church, with every saint from Pentecost to the "rapture," has already left the earth to be for ever with the Lord. Who, then, are these saints?

This very book teaches us that, after we are gone, an elect remnant shall be gathered out of Israel and the Gentiles, and these shall pass through a storm of fierce persecution. The burden of their cry shall be, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" These vials surely tell us the heavens and the earth are connected, for the sorrows of this company of earthly saints are taken up and entered into by the heavenly company. They, like Abraham of old, as to Lot, are in the secret of that which is taking place on earth, but they do not add *any value* to the golden bowls full of incenses; *only Christ can do that,*

In chapter 8. we find Christ, under the figure of an angel, mingling the incense of His own worth to these cries.

We thus see that heaven is not a selfish place; hearts are free there to enter into the sorrows of those left battling with the oppressor on earth. We must, however, guard against the thought that this describes the heaven of to-day. Only the spirits of the departed are there now; saints are not yet there in glorified bodies. They are

WITH Christ, but not LIKE Him yet. This scene is after that wonderful moment when the dead shall have "come forth" in the first resurrection, and shall be glorified. Prayer for themselves is over; praise is their everlasting sweet employ. But the Lamb has other subjects of His redeeming power and love; and He will fully enter into the sorrows of the remnant in their day of distress, and the "elders" are in the secret of His mind; but He alone can add the incense which brings down an answer to their prayers.

In chapter 7. the "elders" are again introduced. Here they are showing the glorious results in store for those whose prayers fill the vials in chapter 5. The great tribulation which wrung the bitter cry, "How long?" will end in their coming out in blood-washed robes to find themselves at home with God and the Lamb. Fed from His blessed hand, led by the Lamb to living fountains of waters; every tear gone—wiped away by the blessed God Himself—they have left their sorrows behind and are the nucleus of the redeemed who enter into blessing under Messiah on earth.

Chapter 11. again speaks of the "elders." This time their ascription of praise is in connection with the kingdom. Great voices in heaven announce that the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ has come. Immediately the "elders" leave their seats, fall upon their faces, and worship God, saying, "We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned."

That kingdom, they tell us, will mean judgment on the one hand and blessing on the other. The second Psalm will be fulfilled: "He will dash the angry nations in pieces like a potter's vessel." Man, who would not bow to the sceptre of peace—the name of Jesus as Saviour—will now be made to feel His rod of iron. The eighteenth Psalm will also be fulfilled: "Thou hast given Me the

necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate Me. . . . I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets." Thus the kingdom is purged from all them that do iniquity. When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness; these things become the subject-matter of worship. On the other hand, they celebrate the dawn of that day when conflict is over for both saints and servants; the day looked forward to in the prison cell and at the martyr's stake. The labourer is to enter into rest, his service in a hostile world ended. Satan, his relentless adversary, bound; Christ, the rejected One, now the exalted One; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, has at length got His rightful place. It is now His delight to acknowledge the work of His servants who have sought to serve Him in the day of His rejection.

Labour is labour, and grace is grace. All labour will have its due reward in that day. This the "elders" celebrate as they salute the One who sits on the throne by all the names and titles by which He has revealed Himself in other days, "Lord, God Almighty, Jehovah, the self-existing One, who is, and was, and is to come"; this is the One whom they thank for having taken His great power and reigned.

In chapter 19. we have the last mention of the "elders." They are again bowed in worship. This time it is not the celebration of the kingdom glories of the Redeemer, but their deep "Amen" and their loud "Alleluia," as they hear of the judgments which had fallen upon the "whore"—the false professing church—which had pretended to be the true and only bride of the Lamb. She is now removed. Righteous, holy judgment has fallen upon her. The tares have at length been severed from amongst the wheat, and the field is clear for the marriage of the Lamb to take place, and the true bride to be united to the Bridegroom. He had loved and cared for her during the days of her sorrow, whilst persecuted by the false bride. His joy

henceforth would be to publicly own her as the one supreme object of His affections—His fair and spotless bride.

We see in these glimpses of that transition time, the interval between our ascent into the Father's house and our descent with the Son of Man in the glory of His kingdom, what will occupy us. WE are included in those "four-and-twenty elders." It is a mystic number expressing the circle of the redeemed up to that moment. Christ, in one or other of His personal or official glories, occupies their thoughts, and is the burden of their praise. They celebrate God's glorious power as Creator; they extol the worth of Christ as Redeemer and Judge; they enter into the sorrows of another less-favoured company, and delight to recount how the day of their deliverance is at hand and their time of sorrow over. The kingly rights and royal glories of the Lamb then draw forth their triumphal notes, as they celebrate the moment when His rights are owned. Their pæan of praise at the utter destruction of the false professing church closes all. Surely all this has a voice for us.

The burden of these songs and the occupation of the "elders" should be ours now. Creation should ever direct us to the One who brought it into being, and ever remind us that it is for His pleasure (not ours) all things are, and were created. It is His glory which is there declared.

Redemption had not only to do with ourselves, but embraces many wide circles, patriarchs and prophets, Jews and Gentiles, the church, and the remnant; all will add lustre, and impart fresh glories to the Redeemer. Every kindred, nation, tongue and people shall celebrate His atoning work.

Then judgment—holy, righteous judgment. The first mark of repentance is self-judgment. Heaven joys over one who looks at himself from God's standpoint and judges himself. In his whole

after course, the one who has thus come to repentance in order to walk with God, has to judge himself, and condemn what is morally unsuitable to God. **JUDGMENT IS NOT A MERE ACT OF DESTRUCTIVE POWER.** It is the putting down of all that is opposed to God and His Christ. That is why praise, loud and long, issues forth when the Lamb takes the book. All that is offensive to God will then be dealt with, and in the measure in which a saint now exercises this toward himself, he acquires a moral suitability to rejoice in judgment by and by.

Then, again, the wants and woes of others should occupy us. If we have our "harp," let us not forget our "vial." There are always saints in need. Spiritual destitution and bodily ills are on every hand. Would not our prayers be different if we entered into the mind of Christ about all saints? Do we seek them out and make ourselves acquainted with their needs? There would be plenty to pray for in public and in private if this were so. Instead of our public re-unions being dull, heavy, and profitless, how changed, if we only entered into the varied need of God's people; not merely any little company we may specially know, but "ALL SAINTS"—everywhere!

Then how blessed to anticipate the time when the wilderness will be over, when every tear shall be wiped away, when the kingly rights and royal glories of our blessed Lord shall be owned from pole to pole; when there shall be one Lord and His Name one, and the glory of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. The day, too, when the false church shall be gone, and the true one associated with her eternal Lover.

All these things will be very real to us by and by. We shall actually be in the scenes here described, and take our part in these very occupations. Oh, that they might affect us now in the grace and power of the Spirit!

Changed Circumstances.—John 14.

(HUDSON BROOK).

SORROW and trouble lay immediately in the path of the Lord; Judas the betrayer had already gone out to sell his Master to those who hated Him, and the time was at hand when the Lord should taste the bitterness of what it was to be forsaken of God.

But His thoughts were not of Himself, they were engaged with the effect of His departure upon those weak disciples whom He had hitherto kept in the Father's name, and whom He loved with a self-forgetting and changeless love. This love led him to prepare their minds for His absence from them.

He had made God known to them and they had received His words, so that He could say to them "ye believe in God," and in His separation from them, when He should be no longer visible to their natural sight, there was the danger that their faith in Him personally might break down, so He says "believe also in Me." He would also instruct them as to the change of prospects which His going away involved. At the mention of it sorrow had filled their hearts, nor could they understand how they were to be gainers and not losers by His going away; yet such was the fact, strange though it might seem to them. In the meantime they were to be tested by the sorrow of losing Him.

Their changed circumstances on the side of the loss of His company would pass them through the fiery crucible, and every heart professing allegiance to the crucified Nazarene would be tested and searched by such trial.

Before this came to pass He declared the gain to them of His departure to the Father's house. He had made known to them the wondrous relationship of Father and Son which existed between Himself—"the Sent One"—and God who in love had sent Him. The sweetness of the name of Father had been declared to them, dull of comprehension though they were; and instead of the death of the Lord putting an end to such heavenly

communications, it was the way by which He would go back to the Father's house that they might have a place with Him there. Further, on His arrival there, the Father, in answer to the prayer of the Son, would send the "other Comforter," the "Holy Ghost," to abide with them, and to confirm them in the enjoyment of the new and heavenly relationship into which He Himself would bring them in resurrection. For it is by the Spirit, as we learn in the later Scriptures, that the believer can cry, "Abba, Father."

The Father must have His house filled. The Son was raised from the dead by "the glory of the Father," and given the highest place there, and His presence prepares the place for those who belong to Him, and His love will not be satisfied until we are with Him where He is (ver. 3). And He who has died for us and overthrown the forces of evil on our behalf will accomplish this further service of power for His own satisfaction and our complete and eternal happiness. Wonderful outlook for us. How it comforts the heart and stays the mind in this world of sorrow to dwell upon the outlook these "changed circumstances" bring before us. In the meantime, we, like the disciples, are tested by present circumstances. How prone we are to dwell upon what we may have lost in the way of circumstances which perhaps made earth a comfortable place for us. Mary said, "*I know not where they have laid Him.*" The two disciples said, "*We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.*" The women "*found not His body.*" Certain of them went to the sepulchre "*but Him they saw not.*" "The disciples went away again unto their own home." What poignant sorrow is here! What bright hopes dashed to the ground! What a void the world must have been! And yet the Lord was mindful of it all. He had known how it would affect them, and it is most blessed to trace Him in His activities upon that resurrection day. Instead of the world being filled with the

news of His victory over death, as it might well have been, and of multitudes of people attending Him to proclaim His triumph, as was His due, He, in secret, passed unattended from place to place, occupied only with ministrations of grace so sorely needed by the broken hearts of His dearly loved disciples. There was Peter: added to the sorrow of his loss of the Lord was the remembrance of his own denial of Him; but the grace of the Lord was equal to this; and in secret the Lord "appeared unto Simon" (Luke 24. 34), and at that interview the lesson of the weakness which the season of trouble and loss had revealed in Peter was learned, confessed, and forgiven. There were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: they were evidently dwelling with great sadness upon the blasting of all their hopes as to Israel being "redeemed." They had thought that her sun was to ride resplendent in the heavens, and that the fetters of Roman servitude were to be broken. But He who alone could do this had died on Calvary's cross as a malefactor, and the sorrow of blighted hopes lay heavy upon their spirits. But He had something better for them which He made known to them on that selfsame day, as He did also their folly and unbelief.

We find that the history of these disciples during the three days of the Lord's absence in the grave is repeated in ourselves. The same boastful confidence which was in them is often laid bare in us. Hopes cherished, some perhaps right in themselves, but in the realization of which we were to be distinguished. Others which have been less or other than the purpose of God for the glory of Christ have been blighted; circumstances in which we rested have been changed, and as a result of these changed circumstances we have in spirit journeyed to "Emmaus" instead of "Jerusalem." We, like the disciples, may have been guilty in our folly and unbelief of impetuous weeping over the sepulchre of cherished hopes, instead of turning in steadfast faith to Him who lives supreme over every calamity, and

in whom every true hope finds its realization.

The Lord well knew the disciples' wanderings, as He knows ours, and such is the marvellous character of His grace that the very circumstances which reveal our rest in something short of Himself only quicken His footsteps towards us in restoring grace.

He did not rest until He had made Himself known to them, and cheered their hearts by the sight of His dear face. Wonderful Master! How great Thy grace! How patient Thou art! It was good for the disciples, as it is for us, that their weakness was made manifest. What if pride be humbled in the dust and unworthy motives be brought to light by such humbling! What if "changed circumstances" bring a season of darkness and weakness, complainings and of open denial on our part! This will be but the disclosure of what we are, that we might have no confidence in the flesh but rejoice in Christ Jesus. It is good to pass thus through His hands, and to have Him search and challenge us until we, like Peter, falling back upon His divine ability to see below the surface, say "Thou knowest that I love Thee." "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake," and out of circumstances which have evidenced our weakness and caused us to weep in bitter shame and sorrow He will in restoring grace teach a lesson that shall never be forgotten. The paramount impression left upon our minds will not be one of mere righteousness dealing with sin and failure, but of "mercy glorying against judgment."

These dealings are not after the manner of men, and how often even our brethren act only in rigid righteousness and readily part company with those who have failed when the Lord finds in the failure an occasion for the exercise of His restoring grace, and so sets us right, and free to follow Him as He unfolds for us what God's purposes are and what our proper portion is in connection therewith.

The Salvation of the Soul—*continued.*

(J. Boyd).

In these papers, written in the form of a dialogue, views put forward in a book recently published, entitled "God's Pilgrims," are reviewed in the light of Scripture.—Ed.

E. You have mentioned the rest of God, how is it that saints are warned against coming short of it?

T. The rest of God is a rest into which all who *believe* shall enter. This is plain from Hebrews 3. and 4. The rest is before us. For Israel and all earthly saints it will be mount Zion; but for the heavenly saints it will be the heavenly City, the New Jerusalem. In this dispensation saints have a heavenly calling. There was no rest for man under the old covenant; hence none under that covenant ever entered into the rest of God. Canaan was not that rest, for had it been so we never would have heard anything of the danger of not entering into it from David. But David addresses the same people who were called out of Egypt to inherit it. They could sing about it on the wilderness banks of the Red Sea. There we have the boasting of the hope, but that boasting was not held fast to the end. The day of provocation set in almost the moment they began their march through the wilderness. That day of provocation lasted the whole forty years. Moses speaks of them as "children in whom is no faith" (Deut. 32. 20). Therefore in His wrath God swore they should not enter into His rest. They had sung at the beginning of their journey, or rather before they had entered upon that journey: "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." They had also boasted: "Thou shalt bring them in, Thou shalt plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exod. 15. 13-17). But the day of provocation began when they went three days without water,

and it continued the whole forty years, where, as Moses says, their days were "passed away in Thy wrath" (Ps. 90. 9).

E. But those addressed in the Psalm to which you refer (Ps. 95) are "the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand," and this is why we are to fear lest we fall after the same example of unbelief.

T. Yes, the Jews were ostensibly the sheep of Jehovah. They had that place all through the past dispensation. But when the true Shepherd came it became manifest that not all who had that place were true sheep. The true sheep knew the voice of the Shepherd and followed Him. To-day these sheep are in the church where there is neither Jew nor Greek, as such, but where all are one in Christ; but when the church has been caught up to heaven at the coming of Christ these sheep, the Israel of God, will once more take up their place in connection with the nation. But all along the line it is these people who are in the mind of the Spirit on the way to the rest of God. It is not the church, *as such*, that is addressed, but those who had an ear to hear in Israel.

E. Has the Epistle no reference to us?

T. It has every reference to us, for we come in for blessing along with the Jewish remnant; that is, when it is a question of the promises made to the fathers. Romans II. makes this very plain. The church of God is on the line of eternal purpose, and does not wait for the coming age as the fulfilment of all its hopes. In the past the calling of God was to an earthly inheritance, and it will be so in the future; but in the present time the calling is heavenly. We are partakers of the heavenly calling. There will be both an earthly and a heavenly side to "the world to come," and we shall occupy the

heavenly. But the whole sphere will be that of the rest of God, only that the rest of God will be eternal, whereas "the world to come" is limited to a thousand years.

Now all the Epistles are written to the profession, all supposed, of course, to be real, unless found other wise. The Epistle to the Ephesians may be an exception to this. The words of the Lord to His disciples are also addressed to them with the same supposition, and without any exception, until Judas came to be manifested. Then He says "I speak not of you all." But previous to that it is, "Blessed are ye poor," and "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and "In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." To the whole twelve the same words were spoken, the same blessings administered, and the same privileges opened out. There are no exceptions. All are treated as being true and faithful disciples of the Lord, and so little is Judas made any exception of, that when the Lord speaks of his treasonable intentions the others cannot tell to whom He refers.

E. But I think we must view the Hebrews to whom the Epistle is written as not only Jews, but as *converted* Jews; they are called "holy brethren."

T. But why should there be any exception to others? Sanctification in Hebrews is everywhere positional, and has nothing to do with *heart* separation to God. At the beginning of the gospel vast multitudes of Jews embraced Christianity, but went on with their temple worship as usual. They were all zealous of the law, and with them Christians were no more than a sect of the Jews. They are said to have been sanctified by "the blood of the covenant," and "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ," but never by the Spirit of God. Their sanctification was outward and positional. But even if they

were viewed as converted people—that is, as born again, and in new and eternal relationships with God as sealed with the Holy Ghost—this would not prove that it was so of every one of them. Their continuance in the confession, and in the boast of hope, or their going back to what they had left, would manifest their inward state of soul. If they turned back it would be the proof that they had no faith, for it is the *believer*, and no other, who enters into the rest of God. Those who are denied entrance into the rest of God are those who come under wrath. He says, "I swear in My wrath if they shall enter into my rest." They could not enter in because of unbelief; and without faith it is impossible to please God; and not to reach the rest of God is to be lost forever.

E. But no true believer can be lost for ever.

T. Neither can any true believer come short of the rest of God. The word says, "We which have *believed* do enter into rest," and "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Do you expect unbelievers to be saved?

E. Not at all; but I have thought that the faith spoken of here is not the same as that which is said in other places to justify. It seems to me to connect more with the world to come than with merely forgiveness. It leads out of chapter 10., where we have "faith to the saving of the soul," into chapter 11., which is given to the people of God for the very purpose of instructing them as to the character or nature of that "faith" that is effectual to *saving the soul*.

T. That there is such a thing as the mere assent of the mind to the gospel is recognized by Scripture. James speaks of such faith as *dead*. But this is not what you refer to. You seem to hint that the faith that saves the soul is of another quality than that which justifies the sinner. Now Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing, or *report*; and report by the Word of God (Rom. 10. 17). Faith then—living faith, the faith that

works by love, the faith of God's elect, the only faith that is of the least value to any human being—comes by the Word of God. It is the submission of the whole moral being to the testimony of God, whatever testimony that may be. The Word that called Israel out of Egypt that they might inherit Canaan was the gospel to them, just as the Word which calls men out of this world to heaven where Christ is is the gospel which is preached to us. But we are told that "The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Had they believed the gospel they would have come into the rest of God, for it was because of unbelief they were prohibited entrance. "Let us therefore fear," says the writer of this Epistle.

E. But why should believers fear, if they cannot fail of entering in?

T. Believers have to be kept. And it is by the power of God they are kept. But it is through faith, which keeps the unseen things in view so that they become more real to the soul than things visible; and it is the visible things that are our real danger, for we are so ready to settle down in them, and give up as an object of faith that to which we have been called. There is always danger on *our* side, not on the side of God's care and unfailing grace. Had Peter had a better knowledge of himself, he would have hearkened to the warning of the Lord, and his fall might have been avoided. But on the Lord's side—"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"—secures the restoration of the self-confident disciple. Then again, as I have said, the Epistle being written to the profession, the possibility of there being a mixed multitude in that profession has to be considered. *If's* are found in all the Epistles, except Ephesians. There we could not have an "*if*," for we are seated in the heavenly places. That Epistle, concerning itself with the counsels of God, shuts out the possibility of apostasy from Christ on account of the difficulties of the pathway. In Romans 11. we read, "If God spared

not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." In 1 Corinthians 10. we have, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." In Galatians 4. 11, we read, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." In Colossians 1. 23, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." But I need not quote more passages of Scripture. These will suffice to show that the warnings of Scripture are not inconsistent with the assurance ministered to those who profess Christ as partakers of the blessings of the gospel.

E. But in Hebrews we have not only these general warnings, but we have the kind of persons to whom they are said to be specially applicable; and I think you will have to admit that such must be true children of God.

T. To whom do you refer?

E. I refer specially to those spoken of in the beginning of chapter 6. There everyone who has accepted the "first principles" of the doctrine of Christ, and experienced repentance from dead works and faith toward God, is in Christ, and is eternally saved from condemnation. These first principles, however, pertain to the state of spiritual infancy. Therefore the exhortation is to "go on" from them "to full growth."

T. But the writer of the Hebrews has said nothing about "accepting principles," and "experiencing repentance". He is talking about *teaching*, and about that with which people may occupy themselves, apart from the question of their vital relationships with God. He is speaking of the contrast between two great systems of doctrine: that which belonged to the infancy of souls under "tutors and governors," the law and the ordinances connected therewith. "Infancy" was the condition of souls under the law; "*full growth*" connects the soul with a glorified Christ, and with the relationships of the believer with Him, according to

the complete revelation of the will of God. And this is that which the writer is desirous to lead the Hebrews into. The relationships of the people with God in the past were according to the measure of the revelation of Christ, as they also are at this present time, only now He has been perfectly revealed. "*Full age*" has now come to pass. We have the same thing referred to in Galatians 3. 23-26, only in another connection. The writer exhorts them to "go on to perfection," namely, that which is set forth regarding Christ glorified, and that in the power of the Holy Spirit.

E. But you see he says he will do this "if God permit." Now this is not a mere pious sentiment. The acquisition of the knowledge of the Son of God as High Priest of the coming good things carries with it such grave responsibilities, and involves the possessor thereof in such serious dangers that God, who knows our hearts, may not "permit" all who are on the foundation of the first principles of Christ to come to that knowledge. It is far better to enter the kingdom as a "babe" in Christ than having become enlightened as to the truth now under consideration to be put to shame before Him at His coming.

T. So, then, you think it is the people He has little regard for who are allowed to go on to *perfection*! Even to accept your theory that the point in the passage is that the first principles of the doctrine of Christ refer to what "babes in Christ" occupy themselves with, in contrast with spiritual maturity, which it is not, or that what refers to full growth is "the knowledge of the Son of God as High Priest of coming good things," which it is not—I say to accept such a theory would be to accept that which is the contradiction of almost all hortatory Scripture. The anxiety of the apostles for the spiritual growth and advancement of those to whom they ministered the Word comes out in almost every line of their writings, and their desire for those to whom they ministered was only a faint echo of the

heart of Christ; and now to be told that after all it may not have been the mind of God that all His people should be led on to advanced things is certainly a little startling.

E. But, surely, it is better far not to know these things than knowing them not to do them.

T. But gifts have been given from the ascended Christ for the building up of the body of Christ, "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 fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4.). And you tell me it may not be His will that we *all* should come to this measure. Which am I to believe—the Bible or you? And to think that the Lord in His mercy to us does not permit us to get on to the knowledge of His will! And the supplications of the apostles to that very end, and their exhortations, and their reproaches—all goes for nothing!

E. Well, what is meant by His use of the expression, "If God permit?"

T. His desire was to lead them to where he and they might together partake of a little solid food, for that is what belongs to full growth; and this he would do by the permission of God. But it is quite a mistake to suppose that "The knowledge of the Son of God as High Priest of the coming good things" is very advanced teaching. It is, on the contrary, most elementary. No people on earth ever had, or ever will have, such an exalted position in relationship with God as saints of this dispensation have; and "such a High Priest became us." The Priest on High is to maintain us on earth in consistency with our heavenly position in Him. Will anything like that be wanted in the world to come? Nothing like that has ever been, or ever will be, required. My anxiety is not to become better acquainted with Him as High Priest of *good things to come*, but to know Him better in His *present place as before the face of God for us*. It is here we find "*perfection*." Let us go on to it.

Answers to Correspondents.

Have we a command to preach the gospel in the New Testament?

F.A.G.—You ask if we have any command to preach the gospel in the New Testament other than that given to the apostles in Matthew 28. and Mark 16. (which may be entirely apostolic).

We should entirely dissent from the view that the commission in Matthew 26. 19 was exclusively for the apostles. That it was primarily for them we do not doubt, and we believe it will be taken up again and carried out literally by the servants of God from amongst the Jewish remnant, after the catching away of the church, according to chap. 24. 14. But neither the fulfilment of the commission in the past nor the future can relieve us in the present from our responsibility with regard to it.

But we have no need to refrain from preaching the gospel until it can be proved that that command was given to us as well as to the apostles, for then would much time be lost. We have Luke 24. 46, 47. Now while Matthew is characteristically a Jewish Gospel, and while the commission given there may be in entire keeping with the Gospel in which it is given, there is nothing of the sort about the Gospel of Luke. It was written by a Gentile to a Gentile, and in it is presented the grace of God in Christ come down to lost men. And the announcement made by the Lord after His resurrection is of this character. The great point is *what must be preached*—repentance and remission of sins—and not *who must preach it*. It is there for any one to take up who in himself is a witness to the grace of God in these two things.

There is no mention of preaching the gospel in the gifts given in 1 Corinthians 12., and prophecy for the edification of the church seems there to be the most desirable gift. Is IT A GREATER GIFT THAN THAT OF AN APOSTLE?

There is no mention of gift of the evangelist in this passage, because the Apostle is dealing with the gifts in the local assembly, which was Christ's body, and for the edification of which they were given. The work of the evangelist does not lie within the assembly, though it is

by the preaching of the gospel in the world—which is his work—that the assembly is gathered. And this comes out in the list of gifts in Ephesians 4. 11. Without the preaching of the gospel, the body of Christ could not be built up, for the members of it would never be gathered, so that the evangelist is necessary to it.

With the edification of the assembly in view, the Apostle urges them to covet the best gifts, and shows that to prophesy—that is to minister the Word of God for the need of the moment—is greater by far than speaking with tongues, for five words of the former were better than ten thousand of the later. It would have been no use to urge them to covet the gift of an apostle, for these were men personally and directly commissioned by the Lord to lay the foundation of the church. This had already been done (see chap. 3. 10).

“Butter and Honey shall he eat.”

“Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good” (Isa. 7. 15).

H.E.S.—This passage certainly presents some difficulty, as you say. It is clear, however, that verse 14 refers to the Lord Jesus—Immanuel,—Matthew 1. 23 removes all doubt as to this; and it is equally clear that verse 16 refers to Shear-jashub, the son of Isaiah, who stood with his father when the prophecy was made. To which of these two verse 15 refers, and what is the meaning of it is the difficulty. Perhaps the following may help:

“It is clear enough that verses 14 and 15 refer to Christ, and I suppose that eating ‘butter and honey’ indicates that he was to be brought up in adversity. The tendency of this is to cast the faithful heart wholly upon God.” J. N. D. has a footnote to his translation, “until he know” [instead of “that he may know”].

The Assyrian was to overflow the land and turn it into a wilderness, and butter and honey only would be left for food in the land. But this must not be regarded as mean food. The land would be

desolated and cattle would roam where they would in its rich pastures, so that if a man had but a cow and two sheep, he would have sufficient (verses 21, 22).

J. Boyd.

We think that it is most probable that verse 15 has reference to the Lord. The explanation which we give herewith commends itself to us, for we know that He was brought up as a child in circumstances of adversity and poverty, but there may be this further thought lying behind these words, which we submit to your consideration. "Butter [or cream] and honey" were the natural product of the land—that which it brought forth apart from the sweat of man's face or his skill as an agriculturist; for it was a land flowing with milk and honey at the beginning. These things flowed from the abundance of God's supplies; and a time was coming when those who dwelt in the land would be entirely dependent upon God's supplies for their sustenance, for it would no longer be cultivated by man; and it seems to us that "butter and honey shall He eat" simply means He shall be entirely dependent upon God. This was the life the Lord Jesus lived from His lowly birth, for He said, "I was cast upon Thee from the womb" (Ps. 22. 10).

He was entirely independent of men, and derived nothing from the results of their labours or wisdom. In *Luke's Gospel*, in which Gospel He is presented as the Man wholly dependent upon God, we read of Him, "They found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." Yet He had not learned this wisdom in the schools of men, for afterwards they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He was at the age of twelve when this incident occurred, the age at which a child has probably just begun to discern good and evil, and to definitely choose or refuse for himself. What His choice was comes out clearly in His words to His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2. 45-49).

This life of entire dependence was altogether natural to Him; in it "He learned obedience by the things that He suffered." And as we behold Him in it how it makes us wonder and worship,

for that lowly, dependent and obedient child was none less than the great Immanuel—God with us.

Fasting.

W.D. In answer to your question we give the following quotation:

"The exercise of fasting is distinctly recognized in the following passages: Matthew 17. 21; Acts 13. 2; 1 Corinthians 7. 5. It stands in immediate connection with prayer, and we think the connection is most instructive. Fasting implies abstraction from things natural and earthly; prayer implies occupation with things spiritual and heavenly. The former closes the channel of communication between nature and the scene around; the latter opens the channel between the spiritual man and the scene above. That involves the wholesome denial of the old man; this the complete dependence of the new. We must, however, guard carefully against anything like monasticism, asceticism, or legality, which would only tend to puff up that which ought to be kept down. Our own impression has long been that the moral effect of 'fasting' is realized by *a constant habit of self-control in all things*" (C. H. Mackintosh).

In your own case, being frail in body, you must remember that your body is the Lord's, and you must not lay a burden upon it that it cannot bear; and being a busy mother, you have your duty to your family, which you must not neglect. We must walk wisely, and have our zeal tempered with knowledge, and we do not think that it would be wisdom on your part to go in for long abstinence from food.

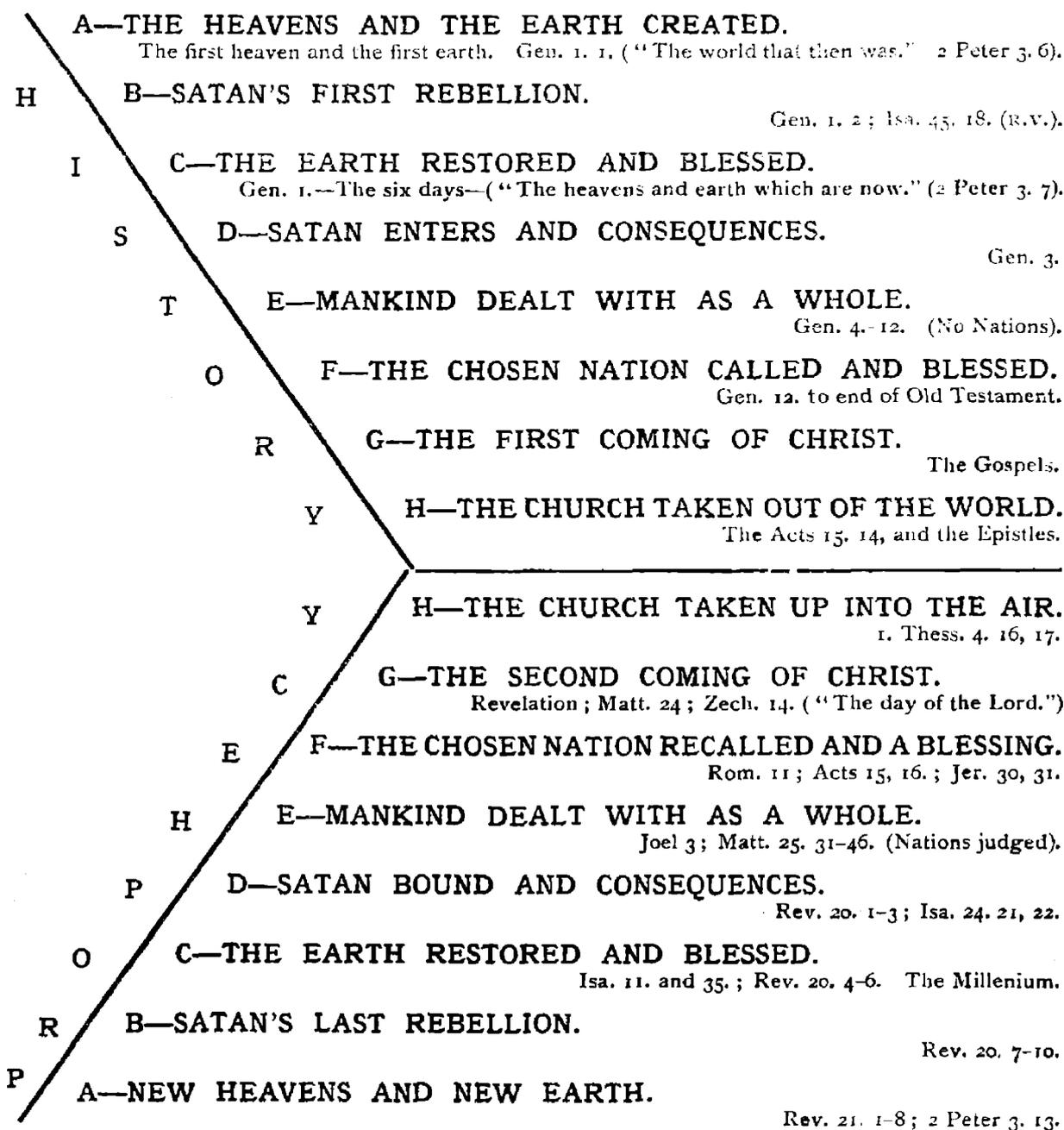
But special matters are burdening your heart which you must tell to God in prayer. You have found relief in "heart prayer," as you call it, as you fulfil the duties of the day; that is well. But suppose you have an hour's leisure—when you can do exactly as you please—and instead of taking up something that would naturally please you—some favourite book or pastime—you devote that hour to prayer. That would be fasting as truly as if you spent the dinner-hour upon your knees. But let not this be done as something meritorious, something that will incline God to be more favourable to

your petition, for that would be to exalt the creature and spoil the grace of the Creator. Let it rather be the result of the consciousness that that favour which you seek of God is of greater importance to you than the gratification of your

natural desires, and that His presence is more to you than earthly things.

You need not doubt that God will in due time answer your prayers. "Ye shall reap if ye faint not."

The Eternal Purpose.



The Church : the Bride of Christ.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

A DIALOGUE HELD IN THE TENT, LEITH, OCTOBER, 1913.

QUESTIONS BY ROBERT WHYTE.

Q. What is the meaning of the word "church" in the New Testament ?

The church is the aggregate of those who belong to Christ, viewed not as a multitude of individuals, but as one company, one indivisible whole, the assembly of God. The Greek word translated "church" means "that which is called out." The church is composed of those who have been separated from the world by the call of God, and who are not of the world, even as Christ is not of it.

Q. When did the church begin ? Did it exist in Old Testament times ?

In Old Testament times the nation of Israel is spoken of as the congregation of the Lord, and is referred to by Stephen as "the church in the wilderness." But this is quite a different thing from the church of the New Testament, of which we read first in Matthew 16. 18. The Lord speaks of it there as something yet to be formed. "I will build My church," He says, looking on to the future. So we must search for the church's birthday at a time subsequent to the lifetime of the Lord Jesus on earth. In Acts 2. we find it. In chapter 1. we read of a meeting of 120 disciples, but no mention is made of the church. It had not yet been formed. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, indwelling every disciple, and thus linking all together as members of one body, and uniting all with their exalted Head. In this way the church began. So at the close of the chapter which records this, we find that those that were saved were added daily not to the number of disciples merely, but to *the church* (Acts 2. 47).

Q. What is the qualification for being a member of the church ?

I fear I must find fault with your question, for two reasons. First, it would seem to imply that it is optional for us to belong to the church or not, as we please. Now when any one believes the gospel, he receives the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. He thereby becomes a part of the church. He is not asked to join it. He has no option. *God* sets the members, every one of them, in the body, as He pleases (1 Cor. 12. 18).

Secondly, Scripture does not speak of membership quite as your question does. We do not read of membership either of *a church* or of *the church*. The church is spoken of in various ways and under different figures. Only in connection with the figure of the *body* do we read of members. We are members of the one body—the body of Christ; just as my eyes and ears, my fingers and feet, are members of my body. Happy is he who wants no other membership than this!

Q. On what Scripture do you base the thought that the church is the BRIDE of Christ ?

We read of the bride in Revelation 21. 2, and again in chapter 22. 17. A study of these passages makes it clear that it is the church that is referred to. But Ephesians 5. speaks of the relation of Christ and the church finding its counterpart and illustration in the human relationship of husband and wife. "*Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. . . . He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of His body; and [we are] of His flesh and of His bones.*"

Q. Is not Israel also spoken of as a bride ?

Not in the same way. The figure is used to set forth the truth as to Jehovah's relationship with the chosen nation, as in Psalm 45. God will rejoice over Jerusalem "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride." In Isaiah 64. Israel is spoken of as a widow, to be re-married to Jehovah. In Jeremiah 3. she is likened to a divorced wife. But this is a very different thing to what we are considering as to the church, which as the bride of Christ is to be the sharer of His throne of glory.

Q. The heading of the Bible page above Psalm 45. is "The privileges of THE CHURCH." Why, then, do you refer it to Israel ?

The headings of the pages and the headings of the chapters are no part of the Word of God; they were added by well-meaning but uninspired men who did not sufficiently distinguish between things that differ. These headings are often most misleading, as in the instance to which you call our attention.

Q. Is not the church set forth under the figure of a devoted bride in the Song of Solomon ?

Not the church, I think. Look at chapter 5. The bridegroom there withdraws himself, and the bride wanders about the city, smitten, wounded, put to shame, and calling for the bridegroom but meeting with no response. Surely it is not hard to recognize here a picture of Israel, from whom the Lord has withdrawn Himself on account of His rejection at their hands. Israel now wanders about the earth, smitten, persecuted, and mocked, until the time when she will be restored and blessed.

But in saying this I do not deny, of course, that there is much in the Song of Solomon that can be used in connection with the church, or with the souls of individual believers. But this is *application*, not *interpretation*—two things between which we must ever distinguish.

Q. Do we find in the Old Testament any type or illustration of the church as the bride of Christ ?

We do indeed. The time had not come for the revelation of this great truth. But with all reverence we may say that the heart of God was so full of His wonderful plan to have a bride for His Son, that even from earliest times He drew aside the curtain and gave in type and picture a glimpse of His purpose. There are several brides in the Old Testament which seem to be foreshadowings of the bride of Christ: Eve, Rebekah, Asenath, Zipporah, Ruth, and Abigail and others.

Q. In what way is Eve a type of the church ?

Adam was put into a deep sleep. Eve was formed from his bone, and when he awoke was presented to him by God to be his helpmeet. She was to share with him his world-wide dominion (Gen. 1. 28). So Christ went down into the deep sleep of death. In resurrection God gives Him His bride, the fruit of His soul's deep travail, formed of Himself as it were, to be His "helpmeet," His companion, the sharer of His glory and universal dominion. Thus is fulfilled the counsel of God when He said: "It is not good that the man should be alone." God was not only thinking of Adam, but of Christ, when He spoke these words.

Q. What of Rebekah ? (Genesis 24.).

The story of her call and of her journey is one of the most complete types in Scripture (see Gen. 24.). The father, Abraham, sends his servant to find a wife for

his son Isaac. The Holy Spirit has come down here as the great Servant, to carry out the purpose of the Father, and to take out of the world a bride for the Son.

Three things the servant took with him, by means of which he would win Rebekah:—

(1) A glowing report of Isaac's greatness and glory. "Unto him," he says, "hath he given all that he hath." The Holy Ghost is here with a wonderful report of Christ's glory: how He is exalted at God's right hand, with all things put beneath His feet.

(2) Jewels of silver and of gold, and raiment, to be presented to Rebekah as the bridegroom's gifts, setting forth that which the Lord has given to His church, the dowry, the peculiar blessings which are the portion of His bride.

(3) Ten camels, which were to convey Rebekah to Isaac, foreshadowing the power by which the Holy Ghost conducts the bride of Christ through the rough wilderness journey to her glorious goal.

Rebekah was nearing the end of the weary journey when she espied the bridegroom. Isaac himself had come to meet her and claim her as his own, just as Christ will come Himself to claim His bride and take her to His home.

Q. Is there not a striking significance in the fact that in the story of Isaac we have the first and the second mention in the Bible of LOVE?

Indeed there is. Isaac is spoken of as loved by his father (Gen. 22. 2), and Rebekah is spoken of as loved by her bridegroom (24. 67). The love of the Father to the Son, and the love of the Bridegroom to the bride: this is the love which it will be ours to share through the golden years that will have no end.

Q. Is there any further lesson to be learned from the story of Isaac and Rebekah?

The whole story is full of instruction. In chapter 22. Isaac, in figure, dies and rises again. He is, in type, a man in resurrection. In chapter 23. Sarah dies. No doubt she represents Israel. The Lord loved Israel truly, tenderly, and deeply. But those links of love had to be severed. Israel, disobedient and sinful, had to be set aside. This is set forth in Sarah's death. Isaac was bereaved, and needed comfort. This comfort he found in Rebekah (24. 67). He was comforted after his mother's death in having a new object for his love. In the same way we may say that the church is given to Christ to be His comfort during this period of Israel's suspension. He finds His comfort and joy, not in *our* love to Him, but in having us, His church, His bride, as the object of His own mighty and everlasting love.

Q. What of Asenath? (Genesis 41.).

She was Joseph's bride. Rejected of his brethren, he was exalted in the land of Egypt, and there he found his Gentile bride. The same truth is seen in Zipporah. Moses, rebelled against and refused by his brethren, flew to Midian, and there gets a Gentile bride. In Ruth, too, the same thing, with different details, is set forth. Herself a Gentile, she becomes the bride of a "mighty man of wealth" in Israel.

These types remind us of how Christ, rejected by His brethren after the flesh but exalted by God, has found His bride among the Gentiles.

Q. What of Abigail? (1 Samuel 25.).

Abigail looked away from all that was of the flesh and of the world and fixed her thoughts upon what David was according to God's counsels. He was still

in rejection and distress, but this woman entered into the spirit of God's purposes concerning him. She appreciated David, acknowledged his title as God's anointed, and as the one who fought the battles of the Lord. This gave her a great place in David's regard, and he communed with her that she might become his wife.

In like manner the church looks away from the things that engross the children of the world. She sees in Him who has been rejected and despised of men the One in whom God has found His pleasure. She enters into God's thoughts and purposes for Him, and appreciates all that He has done, and all that He is

Q. Turning now to the New Testament, is the pearl of great price, in the parable, a picture of the bride?

Most evidently. We must beware of the egotistical habit of regarding ourselves as the central figure of every prophecy and parable, type and allegory. The central figure of this parable in Matthew 13. is the merchantman, who seeks goodly pearls.

People have said, "Oh, I'm the merchantman, and I have found Christ, the Pearl of great price."

"Well," I ask, "how much did you give for Him?"

"Give!" they say. "Why, all the giving was on His side. He gave Himself for me at Calvary, and when I trusted Him, He gave Himself to me, to be My Saviour and my Lord."

"But," I remark, "in the parable the merchantman gives all that he has for it. Is it not *Christ* who has done this? He left His glory, and the joys of heaven. All that was His by right on earth—the throne of David, the crown and the sceptre—He gladly gave. More, His very life He laid down, in order to win the pearl which in His eye was of great price."

"Then am *I* the pearl?" some one may ask.

Oh, no! Otherwise there would be as many pearls as there are Christians. But there is only one—one lovely pearl of exceeding value—in the sight of Him who has purchased it. It represents His church, His bride, His joy and delight; that which is dearer to Him than aught besides. He gave His all to obtain her, and He loves her with a love that no human thought can ever compass.

Q. Has the church, as the bride of Christ, any responsibilities with regard to the world through which she is passing?

In Proverbs 31., in the description of what has been called "the model wife," one result of her various activities is that "her husband is known in the gates." Her manner of life tended to the glory and exaltation of her husband; she represented him in the things she set her hand to, and thus won honour for him.

The church is here to represent Christ, and in all that she does, whether caring for those of her own household, or stretching out her hand to the poor and needy, His glory is her great aim. In this direction lies her happy privilege, and the responsibility committed to her.

Q. When does the "marriage of the Lamb" take place?

The marriage of the Lamb, in Revelation 19. 7, is, I suppose, the definite presentation to Himself by Christ of His church. Compare Ephesians 5. 27. He will present it to Himself, a glorious church. Of course this takes place in heaven, after the Lord has taken us to be with Himself, and before He comes to set up His kingdom and reign with His saints for a thousand years.

Q. How does the bride make herself ready, according to Revelation 19. 7?

What makes her ready for this important occasion is what we may call her *wedding dress*, in contrast to her *home dress*. Turn to Psalm 45. for an explanation of what I mean, though the bride there is not the church. In verse 13 we have her home dress described: "*her clothing is of wrought gold.*" Verse 14 gives us her wedding dress, in which she is brought to the king: "*raiment of needlework.*"

Now the church's robe, that which will be our dress through eternal years, is the wrought gold of divine righteousness, that which is wholly of God and which He puts on us, fitting us thus in the most perfect way to dwell in His presence.

But on the wedding day the church is arrayed in fine linen, which is explained to be, not divine righteousness, but the righteousnesses (the word is plural) of saints. That is, I understand, that all that the Holy Spirit has wrought in us, all that by the grace of God has been produced in us for His glory, every little bit of Christ that has been displayed in us during our lives on earth, will be woven into that fair white robe of linen with which the bride will be arrayed on her wedding day. Both the gold and the fine linen speak of Christ. The former represents Christ as God's righteousness, put upon us; the latter Christ wrought in us by the Spirit. So here and now, while we are men and women on earth, the "making ready" for that bright marriage-day is going on. What a *reality* this imparts to our lives!

Q. How would you prove that the city, the new and holy Jerusalem, of Revelation 21. is the church?

By the fact that she is seen coming down out of heaven. Israel (like Noah, saved, but having passed through the flood) will be brought safely through the fiery trial of the Great Tribulation, and will pass in triumph and blessing to take her place in the kingdom. She does not descend from heaven! But the church (like Enoch, taken to heaven before the flood) disappears from the earth between chapters 3. and 4. of Revelation. In chapters 4. and 5. she is seen in heaven, and is there during the terrible outpourings of judgment. When all is over she descends from heaven to fill the place assigned to her, whether in the millennium or in eternity.

Q. Why is the bride seen as a city?

The idea of the city is that it is a centre of administration. We must not materialize it and imagine that it will be a real city. Nor must we regard the description of the city as portraying heaven, or the place where we shall dwell. The bride *is* the city.

In days gone by angels were largely employed in God's administration among men. He used them as His messengers. The law was given by disposition of angels. But "unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come" (Heb. 2. 5). The saints of the heavenly city, those who compose the bride, will be the means of administration in the coming day of glory.

Q. What is meant by the nations walking in the light of the city? (Rev. 21. 24).

I suppose it means that the bride of Christ will be the channel through which His light and love, His truth and glory, are spread abroad among the inhabitants of the happy earth.

Q. Why is there a double vision of the city in Revelation 21?

The first vision shows us the bride in eternity, when the new heaven and the new earth have taken the place of the old, and when "the former things are passed

away." The millennial reign will then be over. Observe, she is still a bride! Married a thousand years, and still in all the freshness and vigour of bridal affection, without "wrinkle" or sign of age or declining love. From verse 10 and onward the vision shows us the place of the bride in the millennium, when there are still "nations," and "kings of the earth." Time fails to say more. The study of all the traits of this city is a vast subject in itself. May God graciously apply to our souls the truths that have been before us that we may appreciate more than ever the true and tender love of the Bridegroom, and that responsive, bridal affection may spring up in our hearts towards Himself, and that we may eagerly join in the cry of the Spirit and the Bride, and say "Come" to Him who is indeed coming quickly. Until He come, may we occupy for Him, as a bride for her bridegroom in His absence!

Enoch and Noah ; or, Israel and the Church.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.

By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his home."—Heb. 11. 5, 7.

ERE the flood's engulfing billows
Desolation spread around,
Enoch to his rest was taken,
Enoch happy rest had found.
Noah, brought through all its dangers,
Found the ark his resting place;
Each secure, and each made happy,
By the Lord's abounding grace.

ENOCH, of the CHURCH a figure,
Taken ere the wrath was pour'd;
Knowing ere his blest translation,
He was pleasing to the Lord:
NOAH, representing ISRAEL'S
Remnant of the latter day,
Brought through all the tribulation,
Happy 'neath Messiah's sway.

Israel rests on earthly promise;
Israel's heart is on "*the Land*"
There—for God Himself hath said it—
Israel shall in triumph stand!

But the church, with eyes uplifted,
Views her all in heaven above,
Waits her blessed Bridegroom's coming,
As the object of *her* love.

What a portion, loved of Jesus,
What a portion blest have we?
Christ Himself—and all His glory;
Christ, who died to set us free;
He, who now in heaven's preparing
For His church her proper home,
Soon with shouts of triumph swelling,
For that church Himself will come.

Earthly goods are not *our* portion;
Heavenly things to us belong;
Resurrection and translation,
Are the burden of our song.
O that all our hearts' affections
Gathered round our Lord alone,
And that nought on earth engaged us,
But to make our Jesus known!

"A. M."

David saith, "My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31. 15). If our times were in our own hand we would have deliverance too soon; if they were in our enemies' hand we should have deliverance too late. But "my times are in Thy

hand," and God's time is ever best. Everything is beautiful in its season. When the mercy is ripe we shall have it. . . . When His people are low enough, and the enemy high enough, then appears the Lord to our help.

The Christian and the Trades Union.

(EDITOR).

R. W. W. writes asking whether he, a Christian man employed on the railway, ought to join the Trades Union in view of the pressure that it is threatened will be brought to bear upon him to make him do so. He appeals to us not to tell him that it is a case of individual responsibility, and so cast him back upon himself, but to help him.

THE importance and seriousness of this appeal for help cannot be exaggerated, and the question is whether the truth as to what God is as He has made Himself known to us in Christianity is of sufficient practical value to be of real help to one in our correspondent's position. We can only state what we believe to be the truth; the reception of it, and the acting upon it must be entirely a matter of individual faith; but in saying this *we would not cast our friend back upon himself, but UPON GOD*, who is more than able to maintain him in the difficult way of faithfulness to the truth.

Only a blind and foolish prejudice would deny that the working man has had in the past, and may still have, many grievous causes for complaint, and if he has nothing beyond and outside this world we do not wonder at his discontent and his endeavour to secure for himself better conditions of life. We know at the same time that if he could gain at once every advantage for which he has combined in Unions he would still be an unsatisfied man, for in Christ only is true life found, the life that satisfies, and makes a man rejoice with a joy that is not dependent upon his circumstances. We also know that selfishness and sin characterize this world out of which Christ has been cast, the only One who could have righted its wrongs, and turned its turmoil into rest and peace; and whether it be the Capitalist who grinds the workman to increase his gains, the agitator who exploits the workman to satisfy his own ambition, or the workman himself who rebels against present conditions and casts envious eyes upon those whom he thinks to be more fortunate than himself: all alike are

moved by the same motive and power—selfishness and sin.

But the question is, should the Christian working man, the man who has Christ as his Saviour, life, pattern, and hope, and who has God as his Father, join a Trades Union? The answer to the question will be very simple if we ascertain the aim and character of the Union.

Let us go to the Scriptures for our guidance: "And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God: and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, LITTLE FLOCK; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 29-31.)

Two classes are here brought into striking contrast: "the nations of the world," and "the little flock." And the things they pursue are equally striking in their contrast. "These things"—food, clothing, earthly things—and "the kingdom of God." "The nations of the world" are the unconverted, those that know not God, whose hopes and desires are bounded by things of the world and the present time; "the little flock" are they who can call God their Father, and He must be supreme with them; their faith and hope is in Him. His things are the things they seek, and while they follow after these, He will see that their earthly needs are met, for He careth for them.

What is the object that the Trades Unions have in view? There is but one answer. Trades Unionism avowedly seeks after the things of this life; it

seeks after them seven days in every week, for Sunday is the day for all its greatest demonstrations. Probably cold, dead orthodoxy and new theology are greatly to blame for this latter fact, and for much of the disgust in the working man's mind with religion; be that as it may, Trades Unionism's one great and all-absorbing pursuit is the things of this life, and if a movement is to be judged by its aims, then, without question, this one comes under the head of "the nations of this world," in which are also included every society and individual, whether rich or poor, that does not give the things of God the sovereign place. Consequently we do not see how the "little flock"—those who know God as their Father and rejoice in His care for them—can consistently and happily throw in their lot with Trades Unions.

No! Their motives and aims are different, their roads lie in opposite directions. How can they walk together? Will "the nations of the world" tread the heavenly way and seek the things of God? Unless they are converted they cannot. Then if the child of God walks with them at all he must go their way entirely.

It may be urged that unless a man does join the Union he will be prevented from earning his living. Well that is only the manifestation of the tyrannical intolerance of the world, in spite of its boasted progress and love of freedom, and it ought to make the Christian glad that he does not belong to it, and the more determined to keep clear of it; we cannot see that it makes a good argument for the Christian to surrender the dignity of his independence of it, and the path of faith, and throw himself into it. The spirit that animates it seems to be the earnest of that which is yet to come when that great and powerful personage called the beast, in Revelation 13, shall cause all, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand and in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the

mark of the beast, or the number of his name" (vers. 16, 17). We do not believe that any Christian living to-day would say that the people of God who shall be put to that severe trial ought to yield to the power of the beast and join his vast union of all classes of mankind; neither can we believe that any Christian should yield to that which bears so striking a resemblance to it now. That the refusal to receive the mark of the beast in the future day of trial receives God's full approval is evident from Revelation 20., where we read, "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (ver. 4). And we believe that those who, believing in the living God, stand clear of these present day movements will also be approved of Him; indeed, for our encouragement it is said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The prize and the reward are on before, and meanwhile, in the midst of the trial, God is the refuge and resource of His children.

If the Christian workman serves a hard master, the Scripture instructs him how to act: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if . . . when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" 1 Peter 2. 18-20. (See also Eph. 6. 5; Col. 3. 22; 1 Tim. 6. 1; Titus 2. 9). But the Trades Union says, "You must not be subject, but 'down tools.'" If the Christian's circumstances and conditions of life are hard, again the Scriptures instruct. "But GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6. 6-8) "Let your conversation be without

covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13. 5, 6). But Trades Unionism preaches discontent. This lies at the root of all its doctrines, and to men who are contented it has nothing to offer. In its doctrines and commands then it is opposed to the Word of God, and no man can serve two masters; if a Christian who is in a Trades Union obeys its commands, he will run many a time counter to the

Word of God; if he is subject to the Word of God he must often refuse to obey the commands of the Union. Let him choose then whether he will obey God or man.

But we must come back to that with which we began. The Christian workman must be cast upon God. If God is a living and present reality to his faith, his path will be clear and simple, but one Christian cannot dictate to another, and of every Christian it is true, "To his own Master (the Lord) he standeth or falleth."

Reward for Service.

DAVID drew to himself, in the cave of Adullam, the death-doomed priest, and those who were distressed and discontented and in debt under the rule of Saul; and they became his faithful servants in his day of rejection and scorn. These servants were not forgotten when the crown and throne became his. He owned them, and honoured them with suited rewards. Even so the true David. The time will come for Him to reward His servants. Look at the circle of those whom He owns as His servants (Rev. 11. 18). He starts with the prophets, He goes on to His saints, but He does not leave out

those who "fear Him, whether small or great." In that day the cup of cold water given in His name will be remembered, just as the distinguished service of a Paul will be. But every man will be rewarded according to his own labour. All the little unseen acts of devotion to Him will then be brought to light. His grace was magnified in their salvation; but of their service also it can be said, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is grace alone that allows a poor sinful creature to serve; and apart from the Holy Spirit no service can be rightly rendered. Divine power alone can produce true service. (H.N).

The True Worshippers.

LIBERTY of conscience is absolutely necessary for true worship, but not what is generally called liberty of conscience, but the ability to approach God without any sense of guilt upon the conscience.

Those alone who by faith rest on the one accepted and never-to-be-repeated offering of the body of Jesus Christ, are constituted God's worshipping people. This unchanging place of blessing is given to them by the express will of God.

Instead of the veil, as in the old tabernacle, being between God and us, hiding Him from our sight, we have Christ, not to hide and conceal God from us, but to bring out perfectly into view, and for our hearts' deep joy, all that may be known of God.

The weakest and youngest Christian may be a worshipper because he knows God as his Father.

The Spirit.

(E. CROSS)

IT is abundantly plain from the Old Testament, as we have seen in a former paper, that from the beginning, the operations of God were by His Spirit, and to be "filled with the Spirit" was the necessary qualification in the servant for the accomplishment of any work of more than ordinary importance. When the tabernacle was to be made—"a worldly sanctuary" (Heb. 9. 1)—*i.e.* one in which is set forth in figure the redemption glory of God in the universal order of creation—twice over we are told that Bezaleel, who was called to this service, was "filled . . . with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and understanding," for the accomplishment of this work (Exod. 31. 3; 35. 31). This same term we find repeatedly in the New Testament. To be "filled with the Spirit" is characteristic of the state in which man answers fully to the purpose for which God has called him. Accordingly we find it so used in Luke 1. of John Baptist (ver. 15), of Elizabeth (ver. 41), and of Zacharias (ver. 67). Then the same is said of the Lord (Luke 4. 1), when He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. It is plain that on such an occasion He needed the full power of the Spirit, as when, later on, He had to do with the question of sin, according to the holiness of the divine nature, He, "through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9. 14).

And here we must recognize the distinction between "being filled with the Spirit," which seems to comport with being energized thereby, and the descent of the Spirit Himself in person to "dwell with us, and in us." In Luke 3. 22, we read that the Spirit descended "in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him," reminding us of Noah's dove, which no doubt prefigured this (Gen. 8. 8-12; Isa. 1. 32-4); *i.e.* the Spirit of God Himself not only qualifies the in-

struments of His purpose, but finds here also a suited vessel in which He can take up His abode and dwell. It is this latter which gives its special character to Christianity. Because of it the Apostle says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and again, "in whom ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," *i.e.* while waiting for the day when He will formally take possession in power; He has already, as we might say, "entered into residence."

In Luke 11. 13 He instructs His disciples to pray for the Holy Spirit, *i.e.*, no doubt, for the operating power of the Spirit in them; and the moral import of this prayer abides the same now as then. The Spirit came at Pentecost, and abides with us to the end. This is a matter of fact, and not a subject of prayer. But the effects of the Spirit in His operations in the soul is the subject both of exhortation and supplication: "Be ye filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5. 18) is alike the exhortation of the Apostle, as it is the sincere desire of the Christian, costing him much exercise and earnest prayer for its realization. Accordingly the believer's prayer for the Spirit would be morally the same now as in Luke 11; though the request would be couched in other terms than would be used before redemption was, as it is now, an accomplished fact—what is moral remains unchanged through all times and dispensations—and the expression refers to the energy of the Spirit in action, not to the status of Christianity as ruled by the promise of His coming. And to this agrees Luke 24. 49, where the Lord bids His disciples "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

When we turn to Acts 2. 2, we see these two things set forth, "filling all the house," and energizing each mem

ber of the company. It was so promised in Joel 2. 28, and with this the subsequent prophecy of Isaiah 32. 15 agrees, that the Spirit would be poured out in large measure. Of this, Pentecost was a partial fulfilment. John 3. 34 leads on to the full glory of the Bridegroom and the Son, and tells us that God gives the Spirit without measure. And this must be so from the moment He has Christ before His mind. From this we can readily discern what it will be when the Spirit, through Him, will have full sway. Then the desert will blossom as the rose, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Here we read (Acts 2. 4) that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," and this expression recurs characteristically through the book, denoting the power and energy of the Spirit through His servants, until chapter 21., where Paul, with more zeal and devotedness than spiritual submission, refuses the direction of the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem; and from that point onwards to the end of the book, we read no more of the Spirit as in any way identified with his movements, or the perplexities into which his sanguine temperament had betrayed him.

The following are the passages in the Acts in which the expression occurs, besides Acts 2. 4:—

- Acts 4. 8. "Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said unto them . . ."
- „ 4. 31. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and

they were all *filled with the Holy Spirit*, and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

- Acts 6. 3. "... look ye out . . . seven men of honest report, *full of the Holy Spirit*. . ."
- „ 6. 5. "... and they chose Stephen, a man *full of faith and the Holy Spirit*. . ."
- „ 7. 55. "But he, being *full of the Holy Spirit*, looked up stedfastly into heaven . . ."
- „ 9. 17. "Brother Saul, the Lord . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be *filled with the Holy Spirit*."
- „ 11. 24. Barnabas "was a good man, and *full of the Holy Spirit*, and of faith. . ."
- „ 13. 9. "Then Saul, . . . *filled with the Holy Spirit* . . . said [to Elymas] . . . thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"
- „ 13. 52. "And the disciples were *filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit*."

These are a few of the passages connected with this subject; but the whole Book of the Acts is the record of the presence and power of the Spirit. In the Epistles the same subject is set forth, and expanded, in all the abundant wealth of His multiform operations and relationships.

When we put on Christ, it is not sackcloth we put on, nor is it the spirit of heaviness we enter into; but a wedding garment has clothed us, a garment of praise has arrayed our spirits.

A Christless sermon is a monstrous sham. What a charlatan without medicine, yet posing as a physician with a sovereign remedy, is to a dying man, so is a Christless sermon to a sinner. And what a dry well in the wilderness is to the traveller, so is a Christless sermon to a soul that is thirsting after God.

Studies in the Psalms.—No. 10.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 40. and 41.

WE may now turn from the sorrows and heart-exercises of the chastened remnant of Israel, who learn the sad but needful lesson that "man at his best estate is altogether vanity," to One who, truly Man, is yet of another order, and, standing on the sure rock of resurrection, can teach His saints "a new song"—"praise to OUR God." This is where Psalm 40. brings us, which with its companion composition concludes the first book of the Psalter—a glorious conclusion, for Jehovah is praised, and man in Christ (1 Cor. 15. 22) is established in everlasting favour before Him (Ps. 41. 12, 13).

PSALM 40. points out the path by which Messiah travels to reach this glorious consummation, and it is His voice we hear in verse 1—"Waiting, I waited for Jehovah." His prayer in this condition is given in the last five verses, and if in the expectancy of faith He says: "Make no tarrying, O my God," there is no restlessness nor attempt to extricate Himself out of the place where, according to Jehovah's love toward the children of Israel, He reached them in all the terrible consequences of their sin—"the pit of destruction and the miry clay." The result of His deliverance is told at large in the New Testament, and here it is said: "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in" Jehovah. To encourage faith the Spirit at this point interposes the declaration that the man who trusts is the one who is blessed or happy, and he finds a present moral deliverance from the proud and false unbelievers who outwardly are in power. Another character of deliverance has been already revealed, for the rock of resurrection where the feet of Messiah stood firm is also the sure resting-place for all His own. It is also from the holy vantage ground of such association the soul can view what God has wrought, and in a spirit of worship take up the words: "Many, O Jehovah my God, are the wonderful works Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts . . . more than can be numbered." As we read these words of heart-delight we are reminded of the

happy boast of the great Apostle: "To me less than the least of all saints is this grace given to preach as glad tidings among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of the Christ." How our souls should covet this appreciation of spiritual wealth that could so express itself!

In verse 6, on the authority of Hebrews 10. 5, we hear again the voice of Christ declaring the abolition of the Levitical system with its entire lack of power to effect anything in which God could rest. David had to learn that these sacrifices could in no way meet his need (see Ps. 51. 16, 17). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." In Psalm 40. it seems more from God's side, their inutility is declared, but the councils of the Godhead had already determined the coming of the Son, and we hear His voice again: "Mine ears Thou hast opened." The word is not the same as in Exodus 21. There it is attaching the ear with an awl to the door-post; the man thus became a servant for ever. Nor is it the same as in Isaiah 50., where it has the signification of being so completely a servant to His Master's will that He received His commands morning by morning. Here it is "digged ears" (that is, took the place of a servant). But this He did as may be seen in Philippians 2. by becoming a man. Hence the Spirit (in Heb. 10.) accepts the interpretation of the lxx—"a body hast thou prepared me" (*J. N. Darby*, "Synopsis").

Let us listen again to the voice that speaks: "Behold, I am here [*ἦκω not ἔρχομαι*] to do Thy will, O God." Now at last, after long centuries of moral chaos, God was to be represented by One who is competent to recover all that had been lost, and lay the foundation by sacrifice of a new creation, where God's will is supreme and consequently no failure can come, such will be the result. The Psalm engages us with the moral perfection of Him who alone could bring it to pass, and we read of His perfect testimony in the nation: the

righteousness of Jehovah, His faithfulness, His salvation, His loving kindness, His truth, all perfectly known, for they were in His heart (ver. 10), are perfectly declared; but this character of testimony ceases and man's hour and the power of darkness comes on, hence the touching petition of verse 11, the terms of which we should take note of, for "thy lovingkindness and thy truth" publicly ministered become the means of preservation sought. This seems to illustrate a general principle of God's ways with His servants worthy of consideration, but which is outside our present scope. In verse 12 we find what none can share with his Master, for He who evidently, from the previous verses, had no sins of His own, is seen confessing the iniquities of others as though His: "Mine iniquities have taken hold of me—they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me." How should we ponder such an utterance! The spotless Victim so taken hold of by our sins that He confesses them His own! It was from this cup, which involved His knowing God's wrath, that He shrank in the hour of Gethsemane's agony, perfect there as always. If, in the volume of eternal purpose, that way must be traversed, He takes the cup from the *Father's* hand and exhausts the wrath that He may give to us a cup of salvation, as another Psalm (116.) declares. But this Psalm only shows us God's faithful witness in Israel making the sins of others His own; the suffering which wrought atonement is revealed in Psalm 22. 1-3. The last five verses occur in the next book, as Psalm 70., with a few verbal differences. This probably indicates that the petitions are not exclusively the Lord's own, but which His Spirit utters for the remnant to take up in the day of their trouble. It is for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (*cf.* verse 13, and Matt. 24. 22). These verses show clearly how the destinies of men are determined by their attitude towards God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself. "All those that seek *Thee* shall be joyful and glad in *Thee*; those that love Thy salvation shall say continually, Let Jehovah be magnified."

PSALM 41. forms a very interesting sequel to the great Messianic Psalms preceding it; there we learn, from the

last five verses, the condition in which the godly remnant of Israel will be found in the last days—persecuted, despised, poor and needy. This is precisely how Messiah Himself is revealed to us in the Gospels; accordingly, while we find there are conditions in Psalm 41. which could not be applied to the Lord personally, as verse 4, yet He does take up verse 9, and applies it to Himself and Judas (John 13. 18). It is this connection of Christ with the believing remnant that helps us to see the force of verse 1: "Blessed is he that considereth or regardeth the poor." Under this adjective the Spirit points to Christ, but the word is not the same as in 40. 17, and means "weak." He who was greater than the greatest came not in the pomp of earthly empire and power, like Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander, but as a poor, weak Man. God declares that man blessed who considers Him. This is much more than benevolence to poverty, suitable as that is in the people of God; and if we accept the deeper meaning we find how it harmonizes with many thoughts in the New Testament (see 2 Cor. 8. 9, Matt. 5. 3, and 11. 6). Other characters have received the same commendation as the separated man in Psalm 1, the pardoned sinner of Psalm 32., and the trusting saint of Psalm 2. 12, and 40. 4, but here he shall be blessed whose hearts appreciate, in the guise of a poor man, the worth of Jesus. The promises that follow have a Jewish character suitable to this connection. The Christian must appropriate them in a spiritual sense, and will find them none the less real.

In the next section of the Psalm we should note the terrible contrast to verse 1. Man finds in the lowly grace of Jesus only an occasion for the display of the hatred, falsehood, and malicious purpose of his heart. The treachery of Judas, the poor dupe of the devil and the tool of the religious leaders of the nation, is specially portrayed in verse 9. In order to meet this opposition the believer is taught to bring God into the conflict, with the necessary result that victory and ultimate blessing are secured, and the ascription of praise rises to the God of Israel.

May the moral glory of this poor Man shine ever more clearly before our souls and attract us after Him.

The Throne and the Four Living Creatures.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

No. 5.—John in Patmos.

HEAVEN is a home, a place of affection—the “Father’s House.” Heaven is a sanctuary, where priestly worship ascends. Heaven is a Paradise, a garden of unfailing delights, where there are pleasures for evermore; but heaven is also the seat of government, where “the Lord has prepared His throne” (Ps. 103. 19). It is this last aspect which is before us in the Book of Revelation. There we shall search in vain for our blessings as saints, or our privileges as sons. One of its objects is to teach us that the “heavens do rule.”

Instead of the Spirit-wrapt seer being shown the home of family joys which belong to the children of whom his first epistle speaks, he beheld in vision—what we shall soon behold in reality—a throne occupied by a glorious Being whose splendour surpasses human thought, comparable to sardine with its scarlet hue, and jasper, “a stone most precious.”

⚡ Lightnings flash, thunders roar, voices proceed “out of the throne,” whilst seven fiery lamps burn before it—“the seven spirits of God.” What a contrast to the throne of grace, which it is now our privilege to approach! and those “fiery lamps” to the Comforter who now comforts God’s people! Once the Holy Spirit wrought in creation (Gen. 1. 2), now He works in grace (1 Pet. 1. 12), then He will work in judgment.

But who are these “four beasts,” so intimately connected with the throne that they appear to be part of it, and yet can only be creatures, for they do not occupy it, but surround it? A “beast” is a brutish person (Ps. 94. 3), and is the symbol for insubjection, self-will, and lawlessness. The monarchs who ruled with despotic sway over the four great monarchies (Dan. 7. 23) did not rule in dependence on God, nor

did they regard themselves as responsible to Him as supreme head. They are, therefore, rightly called “beasts,” as also are the two men spoken of in Revelation 13. 6–11, who league themselves together to defy God, and claim that homage which is the rightful due of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe alone.

It is a relief to know that the Spirit who indited this book uses a totally different word in chapter 4. to describe these wonderful beings John beheld in heaven. It is a word which properly means “living ones” or “living creatures.” They are the same beings who guarded with flaming sword the tree of life, and debarred fallen man from entering an earthly paradise. We meet them later on looking down upon a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. When God set up His throne in Israel they were an integral part of the mercy-seat, being beaten out of the same piece of gold. On the great day of atonement the blood of a sacrificial victim was carried inside the veil—no eye saw it but God’s. This blood met all the claims of His throne. The cherubim beheld in it a righteous way by which sinful man could be brought back to God, and a way whereby God could be just, whilst justifying the ungodly. The fulfilment of this was at Calvary, where the “sword awoke” against the Man who was Jehovah’s fellow (Mich. 13. 7), and was sheathed for ever there for all who put their trust in Jesus.

In Solomon’s temple they look outwards “towards the house” (see margin 2 Chron. 3. 13), their enormous wings stretching from side to side. They thus remind us there is a day coming when Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the world, and from the city of the great King righteous rule shall emanate; then they will gaze complacently

outward upon a reconciled earth under the personal rule of Christ.

Ezekiel describes them very fully (chaps. 1.—10.). He beholds a whirlwind, a cloud, and a fire, and out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. Their faces were those of a man and a lion on the right side, of an ox and an eagle on the left. Burning coals of fire, flashing forth lightning, was their appearance as they moved, and their sixteen wings sounded like the noise of many waters, as a warlike host going forth to battle, as the voice of the Almighty. One spirit energized them; with irresistible power they moved on their mission, they turned not as they went. Over their heads was a sapphire throne, and a Man above upon it whose appearance was like "glowing brass" and fire from his loins upwards and downward, whilst round about the throne was a bow as in the day of rain. The appearance of the cherubims was of a wheel within a wheel, the rims being full of eyes, and their enormous height made them dreadful to behold. The wheel, energized by the Spirit, moved straight forward, "overturning, overturning, overturning, until He come whose right it is." These wheels within a wheel point to the rolling course of time, during which nations and individuals are all made subservient to the supreme end God has in view. All must obey the "decree of the watchers." Men and monarchs are not free agents, they all must bend and give place to this "dreadful" wheel which will move steadily on its course until every promise as to the exaltation of Christ is fulfilled, and the living know "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. 4. 17).

What rest it gives in the midst of the conflict of nations to know that God has a vast host of wonderful beings whose mission is to carry out His will and control those who govern and set bounds to monarchies. It is by God's

permission alone that kingdoms are either formed or destroyed.

The Seraphim — "burning" or "shining" ones—Isaiah beheld in the vision of chapter 6. have certain points of similarity. They also are connected with the throne and the temple. They celebrate the thrice-holy Lord of Hosts, and proclaim His glory in the whole earth. They purge the prophet's lips, ere he is sent forth with that oft-repeated message announcing judicial hardening from God in guilty Israel, if she repented not of her sinful ways. It is quoted by Matthew 13. 14, 15; Mark 4. 12; Luke 8. 10; John 12. 40; and finally by Paul (Acts 28. 26, 27).

From the description given by Isaiah, Ezekiel and John, we gather that the cherubims not only express such attributes of God as power, patience, swiftness, and discernment, but are the active agents in carrying out His judgments. Their service appears to be distinct from those angels whose mission is more connected with the care of God for individuals, and who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1. 14.).

The office of these "living ones" is more especially governmental. They tell us in symbolic language that God moves and controls the shifting scenes of this world. They are the "holy ones" or "watchers" of whom Daniel spoke to Nebuchadnezzar, by whose decree he was deposed. In Revelation 4. they are said to have "eyes before and behind" and are "full of eyes within." They look *behind*, conversant with the past ways of God; the look *onward*, knowing the goal to which His ways lead, and they have an inward spiritual perception of His governmental purposes, and are intelligent in carrying them out. The cherubims, carrying out the fiat of God, which excluded man from an earthly paradise, is the earliest record we have of them; whilst the last time they are mentioned is when they add their "Amen" and "Alleluia" at the judgment and downfall of Babylon the Great.

Ezekiel, when a captive by the river Chebar, beheld the "visions of God," and in the action of the "living creatures" we are reminded that the favoured Jewish nation, to whom earthly government was committed, had not walked in the fear of God. Consequently the glory departs from their city and the temple. Very reluctantly it moves from the inner court to the threshold, from thence to the east gate, finally from the east gate to the mountain. Jerusalem is left desolate. How their action reminds us of the time when the true King came to set up His throne, and make Israel the head of all nations! But they cried, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," so Jesus departed, and slowly and reluctantly ascending Mount Olivet, gazed upon the guilty city, and forty days after His resurrection ascended from the "east side."

Ezekiel is directed to prepare a "captive's" baggage and go as a captive from place to place, vivid forecast of Israel's present banishment from the land by the decree of the watchers, until she cries, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord."

In Revelation 4. the throne is not connected with the city of the great King, but heaven. The cherubims act from thence directly upon men on the earth. It is the purpose of God to enthrone Christ as "King of Kings," and "Lord of Lords."

They are portrayed under the symbols of the heads of creation. Man-like in intelligence, ox-like in patience, lion-like in strength, and when all God's forbearance has failed they are swift as eagles in executing His judgments. This book shows us the day of God's patience ended, the time of God's judgment commenced. In chapter 6. we are permitted to see how God will visit men in the day of His wrath by these "living ones" and the way and manner of their action. "Come!" the first living creature cries, and a mighty conqueror appears on the earth. At the bidding of

the second a blood-red horse follows, taking peace from the earth. "Come!" cries the third, and a black horse stalks through the land, turning it into a famine-stricken scene. "Come!" cries the fourth, and Death on his pale horse follows. Alas! who shall live when God doeth this? No Holy Spirit here to restrain, no members of Christ's body left, anarchy will prevail, and men in their mad passion to obtain what others possess will "kill one another." Instead of an Arcadia this world will be an awful spectacle of the lawless doings of men left to work out those Utopian visions of universal bliss which are now so freely indulged in by poets, preachers, and people, who forget while they dream and prophesy that unregenerate man *must be born again* to enter the Kingdom of God or enjoy true happiness.

These "living ones" minister Godward as well as manward. Over and over again they are associated with the elders in ascribing glory to Him that sat on the throne. They never sing the song of the redeeming blood or of the love of the Father and the Son. Their anthem is that which becomes unfallen creatures; they ascribe "glory, honour, thanks," to Him "who liveth for ever and ever." They tell us that "*He which was*"—existed before time began—"is"—abides in time—and, "*is to come*"—after time has ceased He will abide in the eternal future. How these tireless beings ceaselessly celebrate the *holiness of God!* Night brings no weariness; day and night they cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

Their ascription of praise has a loud voice to all of us. It tells us that the self-existing God, almighty in power, is intrinsically holy. Their thrice-repeated cry of "holy, holy, holy," has a loud voice to many who to-day preach the love of God and leave out the judgments which tell of His holiness. The prophetic utterance (Ps. 22. 3) unfolds the true reason why Christ had to die ere man could be saved. "Thou art

holy " is the key to the forsaking of Calvary. There mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. The judgments written in the "sealed" book proclaim with no uncertain sound that God is Light as well as Love, and should produce in all of us profound reverence and godly fear.

What a wonderful unfolding of the power, resources, wisdom, and holiness of God these "living creatures" set forth in their varied activities! In them we learn not only that God is behind all

the moving scenes of this world, but that He is the mover of them, and will have the last word, in spite of men and demons. The day is coming when the heavens shall rule. Jerusalem shall be the city of the great King, and the cherubims shall return to their place in the temple, and gaze upon a restored earth under the beneficent sway of the Son of Man (Acts 3. 21). The holiness of God, having first been demonstrated, by the vengeance wreaked in flaming fire on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Thess. 1. 8).

Eternity's Call.

(INGLIS FLEMING).

THE days in their coming and going,
A story repeat o'er and o'er ;
That life is a pilgrimage journey,
To Eternity's glorious shore.

Oh ! blessed unchanging "*For Ever*" !
My heart is enraptured with Thee ;
My home is with Christ in the glory—
The glory He purchased for me.

The beams from its glad open portals
Illumine my way as I go ;
Though the world lies enshrouded in darkness,
Life's light shines upon me below.

Old Time hastens on with his burden,
His sun will soon sink in the west ;
But mine is a portion unchanging,
For ever "in Christ" I am blest.

Time's tides in their ebbing and flowing,
Have wrought all the changes I've seen ;
But Christ is the Same and abideth,
And He ever with me has been.

The days in their coming and going,
Will sing but the Song of His love ;
I'll pillow my head on his bosom,
Till Eternity calls me above.

(Suggested by a German Stanza.)

Chastening and its Result.

A LETTER.

. . . I have been thinking about you, and praying for you that it might please our gracious Lord to comfort and strengthen you in your spirit: and to restore you soon to health and vigour of body, if it is His will. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," that is, they are the *special objects* of His care. God has "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son," and it is *here*, and *now*, that the process of moulding and fashioning, with that glorious end in view, is begun and carried on. The process, of necessity, must be painful and trying, because of what we are naturally; but this is just where the tender grace of our great High Priest comes in, with its timely succour, for "He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust."

Sometimes we allow the pressure to weigh us down, and then we become perplexed, and distressed, and disheartened, like the two disciples in Luke 24. But the Lord knows all about our troubles, and cares, and sorrows, and it is at such seasons that He draws very near to us. "He is *nigh to all* that call upon Him." How kindly He approached those two distressed ones on the way to Emmaus! He knew the cause of their sorrow and perplexity; nothing was hid from Him, and in His infinite wisdom He knew just how to deal with them, and so to touch the springs of their affections that they gladly opened their heart's door to Him, and freely told out all their sorrows into His ear.

What a wonderful Teacher is Jesus! And the hearts of the two disciples were made to "burn within them as He talked to them by the way of Himself, and opened to them the Scriptures."

How comforting to know that the Saviour is *still* carrying on this loving service towards His own. "His arm is not shortened, neither is His ear heavy. He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." All that is needed on our

part is to *appropriate* Him as our great High Priest, in the same way as we did when, as needy sinners, we came to Him as the Saviour. Every fresh need on *our* part means a fresh transaction with Jesus; we may rest assured that He will *never* fail us. Here we are passing through our schooling days, and if sometimes we feel the tasks to be hard, yet let us remember that every bit of advance we make is something of *ourselves* displaced, and something of *Christ* built into our souls.

What a patient considerate Teacher we have, and how blessed it is to look on to the end, and see the ultimate design of the great Artificer when the mallet and the chisel will be laid aside, when the pruning and the purging, and the sifting will no longer be needed; when the last piece of pure gold shall have passed through the refiner's crucible; and when He shall see His own glorious image reflected in the precious metal: when we shall have awakened in *His* likeness; when with bodies like His own we shall share His glories as eternal ages roll on—*then* we shall know why we have had the schooling days down here, why the pruning knife, and the hammer, and the chisel, the affliction, the trial. The preparation, to us, seems often slow and weary, but let us have our hearts and minds concentrated on the end that our Lord has in view. Let us quietly and thankfully submit ourselves to the wise ordering of Him who plans out the path for each one of His own. If we can take *everything* from a loving Father's hand:

"Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee—"

we shall be more than conquerors. What can Satan do with a believer in Jesus, who can take *all*, and *everything*, from "a gracious Father's loving hand"?

May God's richest blessing be with you, my dear sister, as also the rest of your household.

Affectionately yours in Christ,
F. G. EDINGTON.

Baruch—Jer. 45.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

BARUCH lived at the verge of the captivity; we are living at that of the Lord's coming. He could see nothing before him but chains and imprisonment; we anticipate the joys of the Father's House.

Baruch had nobly assisted the prophet Jeremiah in his bootless labours, and had shed tears as well. He felt the sore pressure of the day. Things had all gone, as we say, to the bad. The people, stiffnecked as ever, had turned a deaf ear to the calls of God through His servants. Remedy there was none. All that could have been done for the vineyard had been done; and now the curtain of longsuffering must fall, and the cup must be drained.

Longsuffering—even God's—has its limits. A greater and more tender servant of God than Jeremiah wept over that people ere He passed the terrible sentence—a sentence passed in sorrow and after long delay.

God was not, is not, in any hurry to judge, and never does He sit in judgment without giving plenty of warning; but doom comes at last, and meritedly.

When I said "we anticipate the joys of the Father's House," I referred, of course, to those who are His children, and only such. For them, through infinite grace, there can be no cup of judgment to drain. They are bought with a price; they are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Should they fail by the way they must reap in time the sad result of their folly, but they "shall not come into judgment, they are passed from death into life" (John 5. 24). Nonetheless "judgment begins at the house of God," because that house is directly under responsibility to Him. It is there He scrutinizes everything that professes His name; there is the privilege infinitely great and blessed; there, too, the obligation.

Baruch, associated as he was with the privilege and the responsibilities of his day, felt keenly the general decay. He was a weeper. He fainted in his sighing; he found no rest. He was the prototype of Timothy in a later day, and a good example, too, for all who feel, as they should, the general breakdown of the profession.

Tears may not cause the enemy to tremble, but, when truly shed in the sympathies of Christ they obtain the "mark" of God, and His preservation (see Ezek. 9.). They acquire God's blessing.

Baruch—the man who fainted in sighing—means "blessed," and such, spite of his sorrow, he was.

Timothy, too ("honoured of God"), cared naturally for the state of the saints of God, and was highly commended of the Apostle. Oh! for more of such men—men of that spirit—men who feel—men of hearts, and pity, and sympathy, and moral power, who see more than ecclesiastical conditions; men—not machines!

And so Baruch was to seek not great things for himself. Self might well be obscured and hidden. The common failure demanded that. He was to be consciously small; he should be marked by sorrow and sighing; he should be little in his own sight. The one thing on which he could always reckon was his life; that was secured. It should be a prey—ever safe. His own interests were safeguarded whatever might break down. He should be ever "blessed." May we not, in our day, trace some analogy between Baruch and those who "sigh and cry" for the condition of God's House to-day? I think so. "First work" will accompany such repentance, and they will be works which, if not specially brilliant in the estimation of men, will be genuine in that of the Lord. He will seal them with His approval.

God's Great Gifts.

(EDITOR).

No. 3.—The Word of God and Prayer.

THE WORD OF GOD.

WHAT a great gift is this to men! It is God's communication to them, expressing His solicitude, His compassion, His gracious intentions towards them. In it He declares to them, also, how all His thoughts for blessing towards them are made effectual for them in Christ; in such words as these this comes out: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16).

It is common in these loose days, in which God's thoughts are of small account, and in which the vain reasonings of men are exalted to the place of the oracle, to speak of the Bible as the product of the murky past: good men, no doubt, they were who wrote it, and well-meaning, but often mistaken, and who never in their most exalted moments conceived the advance that humanity would make. But the Book is the Word of God, and His servants were holy men of God *moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Peter 1. 21). God knows the thoughts and the imaginations of the hearts of men, and He saw the end from the beginning. He has declared in the Word that all the progress in which men boast, yea, all their glory, is but as the gaudy poppy of the summer fields. He has told us that the earth and all the works of men within it are to be burnt up, and He has also told us in the same Word of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away. This inheritance is in Christ for all who will believe the report of it, which report is given to us in the Bible.

With the Word of God, every jot and tittle of which must be fulfilled, in our possession we can ignore the critics; having its pure gold we can refuse their gilded dross; having it to feed upon, we may be well satisfied to pass by the husks of "science—falsely so called" without regret. But here we must beware, for the devil is subtle, and we may hold the Bible to be the Word of God, reverence it as such, search its pages and become conversant with every word of it, and yet miss its great purpose. We may become puffed up by our knowledge of it; we may be satisfied with the letter of it, and be utterly alien to its spirit; we may become so conscience-seared as to handle it deceitfully for place or gain; and, worse than all, we may use its unchanging truths as the sword of the executioner with which to destroy our brethren. We need to pray that God will preserve us in the right spirit while we read it; that our ears may be kept open and our hearts unhardened, so that what we hear may be mixed with faith and become profitable to us, being reduced to practice; for it is not the hearer only, nor yet the expounder, but the exponent, the doer, who is blest in his deed.

The Scriptures have been given to us, not to make us self-occupied or to put a halo about our own heads, but that we might learn of Christ, and that He might be great in our thoughts; they are to testify of Him. "Beginning at *Moses and all the prophets*, He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27). As He becomes better known to us, we shall grow in our appreciation of His preciousness. As we behold the glory of the Lord we shall be transformed into the same image; and as we learn of Him we shall become like Him—meek and lowly of heart. It is as we are in this attitude before God that we shall find His word to be our delight and our counsellor, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. By it we shall be kept from the snares of the destroyer, and in the right ways of the Lord.

In its own sphere the Word of God is all-sufficient ; given by inspiration of God it meets the dawning intelligence of the child and is able to make him wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3. 15) ; by taking heed to it he will cleanse his way as he grows up to manhood ; and by it he may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work as a man of God.

PRAYER.

We speak of prayer as a gift, for what an extraordinary favour it is that we insignificant and sinful men should be permitted to speak intimately with the almighty and eternal God ; and that we should be able to do this as children speaking to a father, by the Spirit of adoption that dwells within us ; knowing that He, the Father, Himself loveth us, because we love the Lord Jesus ; and that our prayers presented to Him in the name of Christ shall never meet refusal. The contemplation of this favour, this most wonderful gift of sovereign grace, should fill us with thanksgiving to God from whom it comes, and inspire us with a holy determination to be found earnestly and often in prayer to Him.

We, however, need watchfulness with our praying, for the devil may so deceive us by his subtlety, that the very best favours may become a snare to us, and, indeed, the higher the favour the more subtle the snare. It is easy for us, so foolish are we, to rest satisfied with the act of praying, to secretly congratulate ourselves upon a devotional exercise, and to think we have accomplished something because we have spent a certain time upon our knees or uttered certain words before God. It is true that the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much, but such a prayer is THE PRAYER OF FAITH, and faith must have an object ; it is not introspective, but looks outward to God, and while feeling the helplessness and nothingness of self, it glories in the all-sufficiency and power of the God to whom prayer is made. This is right, and if we so pray we shall be subjectively affected by it, for prayer puts us into the presence of God, and we shall as a result bear some trace, morally, of the glory of that presence. But to be satisfied with the means instead of the end, to rest in the mere exercise of prayer instead of in the God to whom the prayer is directed, will result in a self-satisfied state of mind, and in the exaltation of the flesh religiously, and nothing can bring about the paralysis of all true spirituality more completely than this.

How extraordinary is that grace on God's part which invites our confidence, which calls us to cast all our burden upon Him, to make known our every need to Him, and which gives us the assurance that no matter in our lives is too small for His notice, and none too great for His wisdom and power. How above all our thoughts is His thought that having relieved us of our burdens, and turned our sighing into thanksgiving, we should hold intercourse with Him, be made acquainted with His thoughts, and become intercessors before Him for others according to His will. The spirit of prayer, said John Bunyan, is worth more than thousands of gold and silver, and so say all who know the blessedness of it.

SECRET AND PUBLIC PRAYER.

The first lesson our Lord gives to His disciples on prayer in Matt. 6. 6. is one of the most remarkable things in the Holy Scriptures. Before this He had been teaching in the plural number, but in this verse he uses the singular, because He is teaching that meeting God in secret lies at the root of all spiritual attainment. Let us understand that if we have not met God in absolute secret we have not begun prayer. But when there has been the learning to pray in secret, we can come together and unite our prayers prevailing, because the individuals who have been with God in secret come in tune with the Holy Spirit, and so come together like the keys of an instrument in tune with each other, because each one is in tune with God. That is really the conception of Matthew 18. 19. "If two of you shall agree"—literally "symphonize," a musical term, and refers not to our agreement with each other, but to the agreement into which we are brought with God. (*Peirson*).

Chapters 54. to 57.

The Metropolis and Her Children.

"BREAK forth into singing!" is the call of God to those who had known sorrow and woe. The desolation and widowhood of Jerusalem, the metropolis, are here viewed. Consequent upon the truth of chapter 53., she is now to be the joyful mother of children, and God her Maker, her Redeemer, her Lord, is called "the God of the whole earth." What a day of liberty, enlargement, gladness, and glory that will be?

This will be true of Jerusalem on earth in the day of her restoration; but let us notice how beautifully the Holy Spirit applies all this to believers now in Galatians 4., that they may intelligently enjoy "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free"; and that they "be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage." The Galatians had heard and received the glad tidings, and for a while had run well; but legal teaching and principles had ensnared them; the metropolis—Jerusalem and her legal teachings—that then was "*in bondage*" herself "*with her children*," had drawn them into her entanglements; they had lost the true joy and liberty of redemption, though, thank God, not the redemption itself. How sadly true this is of numbers to-day: saved but not satisfied, redeemed but not rejoicing, saints but not singing. The Spirit's way of recovery is by the ministry of the positive truth. "Ye *are sons*," since redemption's work is complete (Gal. 4. 1-7), *no longer bondmen, but sons*, and heirs also! How inconsistent with its glorious dignity is bondage! *Freedom* marks our metropolis, "Jerusalem above is *free*, which is our mother" (ver. 26). Let those who have been "bewitched" by legality awake to this! Let them awake to the truth of God. They are "children of the promise," children of "*the free*" woman, after the pattern of Isaac. It is theirs to walk in the dignity and liberty of the sons and heirs of God; for "ye have been called to *liberty*, brethren: only do not turn liberty into

an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Peace, too, as well as *freedom* marks the metropolis of God and her children. To her He saith, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall *the covenant of My peace* be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee . . . *great shall be the peace* of thy children." How inconsistent therefore the Galatian strife; "If ye bite and devour one another, see that ye are not consumed one of another." Let our hearts be encouraged as the free woman's children. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy battlements of rubies, and thy gates carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones" (54. 11, 12). This is the beauty and perfection of Christ which is put upon us.

Taught of God.

Nor need we be anxious about our spiritual growth and prosperity as we abide in Christ, for it is said, "*All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established . . . thou shalt not fear" (13. 11). We see again, in the New Testament, how the Holy Spirit takes these truths which belong to Jerusalem and her children primarily, in the coming day, and applies them to us now. In 1 Thessalonians 4. 9, we read, "Ye yourselves are *taught of God* to love one another"; and again in John 6. 45 it is written, "And they shall be all *taught of God*. Everyone that has heard from the Father Himself, and has learned of Him, comes to Me." In the latter case the teaching of God turns the soul to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; in the former it instructs those who have come to Him to love one another. "And this is His

commandment, that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another." All the children of the free city, in a true, spiritual sense, are taught of God; and it is said to them, "Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake" (ver. 15).

All this when received in faith into the heart produces quiet confidence in God. We have little apprehension of the evil forces there are at work against those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ; nor need we seek a greater apprehension of them; for we are to be simple as to evil, and wise concerning what is good. God is nearer to us than every foe, more close, and greater and wiser than all; and He blessedly assures our hearts that "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (ver. 17). Christ is made unto us righteousness as well as redemption from God, so that we can now boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1. 30). Who can condemn Him? Who can condemn those whose righteousness He is? "Every tongue that shall rise against thee, in judgment thou shalt condemn. THIS IS THE HERITAGE OF THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD, AND THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OF ME, SAITH THE LORD" (ver. 17). Happy children of the free city! Happy servants of the Lord! Happy remnant! once *seeking* in vain for righteousness, now brought to *know it*, through redemption; and to boast in *Christ* who is our righteousness. Ours now, and theirs then, when they shall turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the remnant, called here for the first time "*the servants*" of the Lord, shall take up the national standing:

"Israel's race shall then behold Him,
Full of grace and majesty;
Though they set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree;
Now in glory
Shall their great Messiah see."

The Sure Mercies of David.

The gracious call sounds out now to others, far beyond the bounds of Israel, to come and drink of the refreshing streams of blessing: the waters, the wine, the milk, the fatness, the fulness; "*even the sure mercies of David*"; secured through Jesus Christ, the seed of David, raised from among the dead. All may be had now "without money and without price" (55. 1-3). The call is, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye!" (55. 1).

The risen Son of David has secured "*the sure mercies of David*"; and God says, "Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the peoples, a Prince and Commander to the peoples" (ver. 4). All, therefore, is stable, sure and safe in the hand of Him who died and rose again. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from among the dead, "in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant." All this is unmovable and eternal because of Him and His work. The covenant is "an everlasting covenant"; and He is "WITNESS," "PRINCE," and "COMMANDER," so that nothing can fail. The sure mercies were *promised*, now they are *procured*, and in Christ to be *possessed*, by those who turn to Him. Joy and singing, peace and prosperity is therefore to mark such. "Ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for AN EVERLASTING SIGN THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF" (ver. 13). The divine stamp of fixity, stability, and eternity, seal the sure mercies of David, secure in Christ. It is an *everlasting* sign; an *everlasting* covenant; *sure* mercies; speaking of *abundant* pardon and *full* blessing.

The Covenant of the Lord.

In chapter 54. it is the covenant of His peace; in chapter 55., an everlasting covenant; in chapter 56. it is Jehovah's covenant; but in solemn contrast, in chapter 57. 8-9, the last chapter of our section, we read of some who make a hopeless and wicked covenant, with the followers of Antichrist.

It is very blessed, however, to see in this fifty-sixth chapter that even the son of the alien and the despised are encouraged to lay hold of the covenant of the Lord. Moral qualifications are looked for in those who are to share the glory to come. To them it is said, "Keep ye judgment, and do righteousness: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed." So important is this, that even those whom

Israel would consider outsiders, if they are marked by these things, and "take hold" of the covenant and "join themselves to the Lord," shall have an everlasting name and be made joyful in His house of prayer; for, let it never be forgotten by those who form His house now: "*Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all the peoples*" (ver. 7). They will all be welcomed there, such is the grace of our God.

But meanwhile the responsible watchmen were blind and dumb, sleeping and lying down like selfish, greedy dogs; loving to slumber, and too lazy even to bark. Such have neither the faith, nor the moral qualities of those who "take hold" of the covenant, and as the next chapter shows, notwithstanding their official position, they have no part or lot in the blessings of the covenant of the Lord.

Before full blessing is manifested many of the merciful men and the righteous will be taken away from the evil just at hand. Others will give themselves up to abominable idolatry, for Antichrist will then be in power at Jerusalem. They will make a covenant (or "an agreement") (ver. 8). "To the king (Antichrist), with ointment" and perfumes they draw nigh; and debase themselves "unto hell" (ver. 9). But the stormy wind when it rages "shall carry them all away! A breath shall take them" (ver. 13).

A Revival.

On the other hand, those who refuse Antichrist and "TRUST IN ME," saith the Lord, "shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain" (ver. 13), when glory fills the earth. Therefore let all stumbling-blocks be now removed! "Thus saith THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE THAT INHABITETH ETERNITY, and whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place, and with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (ver. 15). The high, the holy, the eternal God who dwells in the height, now condescends to dwell also down here in the depth, with the humble and contrite to give them a revival. God becomes all to them. In a true and experimental and lasting way they can

now say, "IMMANUEL"; and they can say it in "THY LAND, O IMMANUEL."

This revival of the spirit and heart of the believing remnant will be permanent. It will not be the outcome of a visit simply, but of the dwelling of God with them. What a wonderful day of rich blessing that will be, of peace and joy and righteousness in the abiding consciousness of God's presence. Before that day, however, while the Holy Spirit is here, forming believers into the one body of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the living Head, giving them access to the Father; "in the Lord" they are "*built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit*" (Eph. 11. 22). What true revival blessedness accompanies the recognition of this fact. This is indeed far more wonderful, and connected with far higher privileges, than Israel can know in the day to come. The assembly's blessing is corporate and heavenly, and the relationship is with the Father, as the sons and heirs of God: Israel's is national and earthly, and the relationship is with God as Jehovah. All alike, however, is based upon the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace could alone be procured by the blood of His cross. His is "*the blood of the new covenant.*" He Himself is the Surety and Mediator of it. Peace, therefore, is not only procured, but it is also preached to all.

"Peace, Peace!"

In this connection it is striking that verse 19 is used in Ephesians 11., from which we have already quoted. This news will be proclaimed when the remnant of Israel is revived; "*Peace, peace* to him that is far off, and to him that is nigh" (ver. 19). They will sound out the good news to the Gentile "*afar off,*" as well as to the Jew that is "*nigh*"; but even now "He has preached the glad tidings of *peace* to you (Gentiles) who were afar off, and to those (Jews) who were nigh" (Eph. 11. 17). It is striking that in both scriptures the Gentile is put first. This is unusual, and looks as if the present period of the assembly was specially in the mind of the Spirit.

The result of all this is, before the national blessing of Israel, both the believers from amongst the Gentiles,

and those from amongst the Jews are brought into one body—the assembly; for Christ died “that He might reconcile both in one body to God,” that “He might form the two in Himself into one new man”; therefore before Israel is restored to *Jehovah*, “through Him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 12. 18). Then, as now, it will be the outcome of the *peace* which was *procured* by Christ, and *preached* to those “afar off” and to those privileged to be “nigh”; the *peace* which is *possessed* through faith in Him; for all the efficacy of His work is because of who and what He Himself is; so that in the truest sense, whether for the Jew or the Gentile who believes, Christ becomes our peace.

Thanks be to God we can truly say already now in Christ Jesus we who “once were far off, are become nigh by the blood of Christ. For HE IS OUR PEACE, who has made both one.” Upon the cross He took our place and bore all that was due to us. We were unsparingly judged there in the Person of our Substitute; but now, in Him who has gone to the Father, we are taken into everlasting favour. His place is ours. All distance and disturbance has been removed by Himself, and He is now before the Father’s face. What nearness is His! What nearness is ours!

“Peace, yes, peace, for Christ in heaven
 Object is of faith to me:
 Peace, yes, peace, for Christ is risen!
 Righteousness now counts me free;
 And free access to the Father,
 Through the Christ of God we have;
 By the Spirit here abiding,
 Promise of the Father’s love.”

“No Peace.”

Like the last, this section closes with a divine declaration as to the lawless among the people of God; “*there is no peace*” for them. Lawlessness in way and in word; lawlessness in doing and in thinking; lawlessness in working and in writing; *i.e.* the fulfilling of “the desires of the flesh and the thoughts,” and

brings down the wrath of God. It is in complete contrast to abiding in His love and keeping His commandments. Sin is lawlessness; it is marked by restlessness and vileness; it leaves out God. The lawless know Him not. They are “like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (ver. 20). They will follow Antichrist when He comes. Already their restless activity is of the same spirit. The last verse of our section is similar to that of the previous section: “There is no *peace*, saith my God, to the wicked” [*or lawless*].

It is interesting and instructive, however, to notice the small but significant change. It is “*Jehovah*” (the Lord) in 48. 22 who speaks: it is “*Elohim*” (God) here in 57. 21. Let us notice the consistent care of the Holy Spirit in His inspiration, using Isaiah to write the appropriate name of God in its particular connection; and let those who follow the follies of the Jehovistic and Elohist theories be ashamed. The first section begins by addressing Jerusalem; *Israel in the land of Jehovah* is in view; the second begins by addressing the isles and peoples afar off; *the Gentiles* as well as Israel are to be blessed of *Elohim*. Similarly the first two prophets who prophesied *in the land*, have *Jehovah* weaved into their own names: ISAIAH and JEREMIAH; whereas the next two who were *among the Gentiles* have *El* in theirs, EZEKIEL and DANIEL. This is not by mere chance; but by divine wisdom. Like Himself, God’s Word is perfect, though our apprehension of it is very imperfect. May we be led by the Holy Spirit, who inspired its writing, to understand it better, seeing Christ Himself in all the scriptures of truth; for it is in Him our God and Father is seen and known, and in His knowledge we are to grow.

“Thy word, Thyself reflecting,
 Doth sanctify by truth,
 Still leading on Thy children
 With gentle heavenly growth.”

Since Christ by His death has perfectly satisfied God about the question of sin, the great question now between God and us is, Are we satisfied with Christ? Is He enough for our peace and salvation? Does He fill and satisfy the heart? Is He our refuge, our joy, our hope?

Answers to Correspondents.

Hebrews 6. 4-6, and 10. 26.

R.F.—In neither of these passages is it said that those who are spoken of as falling away, or sinning wilfully, were "*indwelt by the Holy Ghost*," as you put it in your inquiry. They had taken up the *profession* of Christ, and had come out of the shadows of Judaism into the full light of Christianity where the Holy Ghost ministered the good Word of God. They had been in contact with the joy and power of Christianity, but were now going back from the substance to the shadows again, proving that they never had had any vital link with Christ. From such apostasy there was no repentance. Note that this is not the, alas, only too common backsliding of a true believer, for these there was no way of repentance; they had turned back from Christ to the nation that crucified Him, and by so doing declared their belief that that act of the Jews was right. "They crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." (See "The Salvation of the Soul" page 380).

Preparation for the Future.

J.H.—We believe that all the exercise of soul through which a Christian passes in this life, which results in a fuller knowledge of Christ and of the grace of God is of more than present value, for nothing that is wrought into the soul by the Spirit of God can be lost. It will come out in the coming kingdom of the Lord, for the one who is faithful in a little here is openly rewarded there; and faithfulness here is measured by that amount of true exercise of soul before God, which results in the knowledge of His faithfulness to us.

The stones of the holy city, New Jerusalem, also, are, we believe, being now prepared by God; and the bride of the Lamb is working out the wedding-garment of fine-twined linen, clean and white, which is the righteousnesses of saints. The present is the time of schooling, of sowing, of building; the time of faith and of hope; it is in the future that we shall see the issue of all God's ways with us, and all our exercise here below.

Not of Works.

THERE is a way which is very popular indeed, and that is the way to heaven *partly by works and partly by grace*. A sincere obedience of the creature is the foundation of the road, and a little of the Redeemer's merit is borrowed to repair it. We may not have quite righteousness enough to make up a perfect robe; but suppose, now, we do our best, and then borrow a length of better stuff from Jesus? This is an old theory, this plan of making a joint affair of salvation—partly our doings and partly Christ's. Hark ye, and give heed now, ye that trust to get to heaven by a compound of God's grace and man's merits. When did God ever take His creature into partnership with Him? When He made the heavens, who stood by Him to guide His finger, or who was architect to draw the plan? Did He not upheave the mountains alone, and dig the channels of the sea in solitary majesty? And when He made the stars, which seemed to fly like sparks from the

incandescent mass of matter which He hammered upon the anvil of His divine decree, who was with Him? He stood alone, and not a creature was with Him then; and do you think He will have you as partner with Him in the new creation? God forbid! And now, in providence is not God still alone? Who guides the clouds? Did you ever contribute even to the making of a daisy on the grass-grown turf, or a gnat in the summer's sunbeam? God is in providence actually on the throne without you, and asks no advice of you. When nations reel, when catastrophe follows catastrophe and empires totter, does He ask you to come in and fix the balance of power? He doeth as He wills among the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world. And do you think He wants your assistance in the work of your salvation? When both in creation and in providence He acts alone, shall He not also do so in redemption? Who aided the Saviour when the Lord laid

on Him the iniquity of us all? Hear the Master Himself, as he comes fresh from the winepress of Bozrah, wearing his blood-red garments—"I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me." No prayers, no doings can help the Master. He pays the ransom-price in blood, and bears the wrath of God, with none to help Him. And what! Will He take thee to finish the work when He has asked nothing of thee hitherto? Go, thou infatuated man, and yoke a seraph with a worm; but when thou hast done this, do not dream

of yoking the Almighty Jehovah with thyself! The work of salvation is His grandest work. It is not to be interfered with; thou canst do nothing in it, and even if thou couldest He would not have thy help. It shall be said at the last in heaven—"Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood"; but there shall never be such a jarring note as "Thou hast redeemed us, *but we helped Thee*; Thou hast saved us, *but we aided Thee*." No, no; give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

"In Me ye shall have Peace."

LONG days and nights upon this restless bed
 Of daily, nightly weariness and pain!
 Yet Thou art here, my ever-gracious Lord,
 Thy well-known voice speaks not to me in vain!
"In Me ye shall have peace."

The darkness seemeth long, and even the light
 No respite brings with it; no soothing rest
 For this worn frame; yet in the midst of all
 Thy love revives. Father, Thy will is best—
"In Me ye shall have peace."

Sleep cometh not when most I seem to need
 Its kindly balm. O Father, be to me
 Better than sleep; and let these sleepless hours
 Be hours of blessed fellowship with Thee.
"In Me ye shall have peace."

Not always seen the wisdom and the love:
 And sometimes hard to be believed, when pain
 Wrestles with faith, and almost overcomes.
 Yet even in conflict these sure words sustain:
"In Me ye shall have peace."

Father, the flesh is weak; fain would I rise
 Above its weakness into things unseen.
 Lift Thou me up; give me the open ear
 To hear the voice that speaketh from within:
"In Me ye shall have peace."

Saviour, the hour is come! the hour when I
 Shall with these fading eyes behold Thy face,
 And drink in all the fulness of Thy love;
 Till then, oh, speak to me Thy words of grace:
"In Me ye shall have peace."

The Salvation of the Soul—*continued.*

(J. BOVD).

In these papers, written in the form of a dialogue, views put forward in a book recently published, entitled "God's Pilgrims," are reviewed in the light of Scripture.—Ed.

E. If you will examine some of the statements in this chapter (Heb. 6.) you will, I think, discover that the danger of getting acquainted with these advanced things is neither insignificant nor imaginary.

T. Well, we will, with the help of God, examine these things. Verse 2 sets before us the things that belonged to the infancy of the people of God, that which was known in Judaism; verse 4 what people had come into contact with in Christianity. These had been "enlightened." They were of the Christian assembly, where the power of the Spirit had made itself felt; and no one can come there without getting enlightened. It is true of Christendom to-day, though the mass are wandering again into heathen darkness. But they were not in that darkness, or we could not speak of their going back into it. It is no question of their salvation. No saved soul, no true believer, will ever abandon Christ. These abandon Him for what they had already rejected. But the writer exhorts them not to lay that foundation again, but to go on to perfection; for if, after seeing all that was in the power of the Spirit in the Christian assembly, they turned back to Judaism, those weak and beggarly elements, there could be no recovery for them. What could be presented to them that would act upon their consciences and hearts? They had seen, they had come into contact with all that could have any good effect upon them, and had given up the "new wine" in favour of the "old." They had also been made "partakers of the Holy Ghost." This does not of necessity mean that they were *sealed*, but rather that they had come under the influence of His presence, and, in measure, were endowed with His power. We read of some who will come to the

Lord in the day of His judgment of the quick, and will speak of doing many mighty works in His name, and He will profess to them, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7. 22, 23). They had also "tasted the good Word of God," like some who wondered at the words of grace that fell from His lips, and who with joy received the word of the kingdom, but without any saving faith in it. The "powers of the world to come" were also exhibited in the sphere of Christian profession. But none of these things of necessity supposed the possession of the divine nature. It might be there, or it might not; and everything was valueless without it (1 Cor. 13.). But where it was no soul would abandon Christianity for Judaism, nor for anything else. The writer says, "We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." They had shown work and labour of love for His name, having ministered to the saints, and were continuing to do so. They had the salvation and these things were the evidence of it, for they always accompany it. Then again, if any went back they were exposed as empty professors, and were lost for ever, nigh to cursing, and their end destruction. Their privileges could not have been greater, and their only safety was to hold fast to them, and not to lay a foundation again of that which they had abandoned.

E. But the passage speaks of the impossibility of renewing such *again* to repentance. The unbeliever has not been "*renewed*" at all. Consequently the passage could not be applied to such.

T. But that is just what this passage supposes. The person who "*falls away*" is viewed here as never having been re-

newed. The meaning of the word here translated "*renew*," any Greek dictionary will show you is to make wholly new. It is not the refreshing, reviving, or re-animating anything that was in activity before, but it is the implanting of something that was never in the soul previously.

E. But how could an *unbeliever* "crucify to himself the Son of God"? They may reject the grace of God, continuing in their sins, refusing the pardon and life offered to them as the fruit of the cross of Christ, but Christ was crucified for them. They cannot crucify Him for themselves.

T. Supposing a Jew embraces Christianity, sees and tastes the things that are there ministered in the Spirit's power, as far as the natural man can see and taste such things—and Scripture shows that this may go to very great lengths—and then returns to that order of things under which the people rejected and crucified the Messiah, the Son of God, does he not by thus going back justify their act, and, so to speak, crucify the Son of God for himself? Any one who does such things is "like the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it," and "beareth thorns and briars." He has not profited by the ministrations of grace in the Christian assembly; instead of the precious fruits of the divine nature manifesting themselves it was the wretched product of fallen flesh that was brought to light. Such were nigh to cursing, and their end the *unsparing judgment of God*.

E. In chapter 10. we read, "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." The Apostle is certainly speaking here of sins committed by the people of God; for in support of the warning he quotes the scripture, "The Lord shall judge His people."

T. Surely it is His people which are before the mind of the Spirit. But what

people? It is the people who are looked at as His people the whole way through the Epistle. It is the descendants of those to whom God "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past by the prophets"; though in the forefront of the mind of the Spirit stands the remnant who had confessed Christ.

E. Do you mean to say the passage has no application to the assembly of God?

T. I mean to say that the assembly of God, as the body of Christ, composed of Jews and Gentiles, is not in the mind of the Spirit in any part of the Epistle. Prominently in the mind of the Spirit is the Christian profession amongst the earthly people of God, but the nation, as such, is never absent from His thought, though there may be certain statements made regarding the portion of this remnant which cannot be, without some modifications, applied to the nation. That the Lord does judge His saints of this dispensation need scarcely be said; 1 Corinthians II. 30-32 makes this plain enough. But the passage here is confined to Israel. The quotation comes from Deuteronomy 32. In a song which Moses recited in the ears of the people he brings before them the favour bestowed upon them by God in making them the centre of the nations in His government of the world, then the way in which they provoked Him with their strange gods, and how He would have made the remembrance of them to cease from the earth had it not been that the nations around them would have taken the credit of their annihilation to themselves. But the time would come when He would deal with them in His wrath. He says: "To Me belongeth vengeance and recompense, their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left." To this people to

whom this judgment and vengeance was due, these who confessed Christ were in danger of going back; hence the warning. The writer exhorts them to hold fast the confession of their faith without wavering. That is they were to hold fast to the fact that God had brought them out of the house of bondage—a worse bondage than their fathers had been in in Egypt—and that He would bring them into their heavenly inheritance at the coming of Christ, for whom they were patiently to wait. Next, they were to consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; “Not forsaking,” he says, “the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” The neglecting of these privileges was but the preparation of their going back into the Judaism which they had professedly abandoned. This is what he calls *sinning wilfully*.

One carefully reading the three previous verses can have no doubt on the subject. Now if they went back, it was to the *shadow* they returned, after having tasted something of the *substance*; and as the sacrifice of Christ had made an end of sacrifices altogether (and this the truth in chapters 9. and 10. had made clear to their souls), there was nothing for them “but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

E. It seems to me the reference here is to Leviticus 15. There we read that for sins of ignorance there was a sacrifice provided, but none for “the soul that doeth ought presumptuously.” Such an one was to be cut off from among His people.

T. That was under law, but the Lord says, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men” (Matt. 12. 31). The only exception is *the sin against the Holy Ghost*, and this involves the complete rejection of the testimony of the Christ; for they said He had an unclean spirit. But otherwise there are but few sins that are committed in Christendom that are not wilful. Was

the sin of the fornicator in Corinth one of ignorance? Why, it was repulsive even to the idolatrous people about him! Yet through the one sacrifice of Christ there was forgiveness even for him. But let anyone abandon Christ, and what hope is there for him, especially if it be in favour of a religious system which had once been ordained of God? How could such an one be restored? There is no good in presenting Christ to him, for he has had a taste of that already, and has gone back to the old as better. And suppose one speaks evil against his brother. Does he not know well enough that this is forbidden? But how has such an one “trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace”? No one could do these things in any other way than in abandoning Christ. Then he says, “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment shall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?” etc. What was that *death without mercy*, which was visited upon the transgressors of the law of Moses? They were consumed by the wrath of God in the wilderness (Ps. 90. 7; Heb. 3. 11); the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them (Num. 16. 32); they were devoured by fire from before the Lord (Lev. 10. 2); they were destroyed by serpents (Num. 21. 6). There is but one punishment that can be spoken of as *sorer* than these, and that is “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1. 9). Is it a fearful thing for a *saint* “to fall into the hands of the living God”?

E. Do you say that none who fell in the wilderness shall enter into the rest of God?

T. I cannot alter Scripture. I must take what it says, or say I know better than He does whose Word it is. I think the reference of the Psalmist

(Ps. 96.), from which the quotation in Hebrews 3. is taken, refers to Numbers 14., and there evidently it is the *land* they are deprived of; but I think the Psalm and Hebrews both go beyond the land to the world to come. In the profession of Christianity there are three classes of people which have their types in Israel. There were amongst the twelve tribes those who perished in the wilderness—these represent a class of professors who have really no faith in the Word spoken. They know Egypt better than they know the pleasant land, and in heart they go back into it. These are thoroughly unconverted professors, and are lost for ever. Then there are those who go right to the Jordan, and enter into possession of territory which has been given to them of God; for Israel inherited the whole country that lay between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Euphrates, though the land itself in which they were to dwell lay on the west side of the Jordan. But two and a half tribes of the people took up their abode on the territory which lay on the east of the Jordan, and refused to take up their abode in the place appointed them by God. These represent true saints of God, but saints who refuse

while upon earth to take up a heavenly position, resting in the knowledge and enjoyment of forgiveness, and a hope of heaven when the present life is over, but who are practically very earthly-minded. Then there were those who crossed over the Jordan, and settled in the land which was theirs by the favour of God, and in the place in which He would have them dwell. I fear those Christians who are represented by these people are few indeed. They are such as take up a heavenly position and maintain it in spite of all hindrances. But this is all on *earth*, and in itself has nothing to do with the world to come, except in the danger of the situation. The antitypes of all these three classes are found in Christendom. First: those who have "*no faith*" (Deut. 32. 20; Heb. 3. 19); second: those who are true believers, and often very valiant for the truth when they find it attacked. (1 Chron. 12. 14, 15, 37), but who fail to take account of themselves and heavenly men upon earth, and who are, in consequence, to an extent earthly-minded. Third: those who unthankfully accept their full heavenly position, and seek to maintain it in the face of the "*wicked spirits*," who are the original inhabitants of those high places (Eph. 6.).

The Sun of the Soul.

THE same sun that shines in London shines in every other part of the land, and also to the very ends of the earth; and the Lord Jesus like the sun is in all places. Go where we will we are not far from Him, if we have but eyes to see Him and hearts to perceive Him. He is the Sun of the soul, and He can make us as sensible of His presence as we are of the sunshine at noon-day; and when we once obtain a clear sight of Him, a thousand little things which have hitherto engaged our attention, will, in a manner disappear.

As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed;
So earthly beauties fade away
When Jesus is revealed.

The defender of truth will need to watch his spirit and temper, lest while he attacks error in doctrine, he falls into evil in practice.

Grace and Glory.

(WM. MAGOWAN).

“But the God of peace, who brought again from amongst the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, in the power of the blood of the eternal covenant, perfect you in every good work to the doing of His will.”—(Hebrew 13. 20-21. N. T.).

NOW may the gracious God of peace
His people guard and guide,
Until the weary journey cease
O'er deserts waste and wide.

Where living water never flows,
Nor fruit nor food is found,
And tender blossom never blows
On all the barren ground.

No mountains lift their stately height,
No vales delight the eye,
For nothing meets the longing sight
But sand and sun and sky.

The Better Land lies on before,
With hills and verdant vales
Supplied from God's abounding store
With bliss that never fails.

There living waters constant run,
And heavenly food is found;
All treasures of the glorious sun
Enrich the holy ground.

May He who from the vanquished grave
The great, good Shepherd brought;
Who rolled back death's terrific tide
And full redemption wrought,

Perfect the saints in every grace
Till that bright day has come,
When we shall see Him face to face
In our eternal home.

Where heavenly saints enraptured raise
A loud melodious song;
And all below in lofty lays
The harmony prolong.

To Him whose shining calm and clear
Will all the world illumine,
And make the desert, dull and drear,
To blossom, bud and bloom.

JESUS ! to whom each knee shall bend
And every voice be praise,
To Thee shall joyful hymns ascend
Through everlasting days.