

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

SIXTH ANNUAL VOLUME
(1914)

“Thy Word is Truth”

“God’s Word a light before us spreads,
By which our path we see ;
His love, a banner o’er our heads,
From harm preserves us free.
Jesus, the Bread of life, is given
To be our daily food ;
Within us dwells that spring from heaven,
The Spirit of our God.”

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SCRIPTURE TRUTH

IF the Apostle Jude, while giving all diligence to write to the saints of the common salvation, found it needful, as early as the year of our Lord 66, to warn them against evil men and scoffers, who even then were creeping in to destroy our holy faith, we may be sure that such warnings are not less needful now, for the perils for the unwary have increased a thousandfold. We are glad to know that many faithful voices and able pens are being employed in this service, and we ourselves mean not to be slack in it, as we may have help from God. Yet we are persuaded that what is needed above all things is the ministry of positive truth, or to put it as we believe it ought to be put, the ministry of A LIVING CHRIST. It is necessary to expose the lie, and grind the error to powder in the mill of truth, but to destroy the evil and not build the good is disappointing work. We must present Christ, the living, and all-glorious Saviour, if men and women are to be truly helped and delivered from the devil's falsehoods. Ministry of this kind alone can save and sustain and invigorate the soul so that it shall be proof against all seduction.

When the churches had departed so far from the Lord that He had to say to one of them, "*Thou hast a name to live, but art dead,*" He proclaimed Himself: "I AM HE THAT LIVETH, AND WAS DEAD, AND BEHOLD I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE;" and it is Christ in this character that the saints of God need to know to-day. "Millennial Dawnism," "New Theology," "Christian Science," "Theosophy," etc. etc. are terrible deceptions of the devil, and from these things may men be delivered, but more subtle and soul-destroying than all is cold and lifeless orthodoxy—the name to live but dead—for it is this, so unsatisfying to the need of the human heart, along with the natural tendency of men to have any wretched fraud rather than Christ, that has made men an easy prey for the deceivers, and given these foul heresies the soil in which to grow.

There are thousands of believers who have no joy or power in their souls; their spiritual life is one long and weary struggle, broken here and there perhaps by a bright interlude, but with very little resemblance to true Christian life as described in the New Testament. They are clinging, it may be, to the cross, but have never realized that the Saviour lives; that He has annulled the power of death to deliver them from the fear of it; that He has been exalted to the throne of glory to be the worthy object of their faith and the all-satisfying portion of their hearts; that He ever liveth, at the right hand of the Majesty on high to make intercession for them.

To minister the truth as to this glorious Saviour is our desire, for it is the knowledge of Himself that stills the fears in the human soul, and fills the heart with the glow of faith and hope. But He can only be truly known by the Holy Ghost. Thank God the Holy Ghost is here on earth, dwelling in the hearts of believers to take of the things of Christ and show them to us.

"Amidst Thine own the Spirit still
Bears witness of His glory there,
And from the sphere which He doth fill
Brings knowledge of His fulness here."

May the great facts that Christ is there in heaven, our living and victorious Lord, and that the Holy Ghost is here to bear witness to us of His glory there, deeply affect us, and make us men and women of one purpose, like unto the Apostle Paul, who counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Christ or Creed ?

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

DURING the Moorish persecution of Christians in the kingdom of Cordova during the ninth century there were scores of brave men and women who laid down their lives rather than deny their faith. But if their historians do not do them injustice, they do not seem to have experienced that *joy* amid their sufferings that characterized the martyrs of the earlier centuries, or those who, later on, fell victims to Romish cruelty and intolerance. They ended their lives denouncing the errors of Mohammed, and defending the doctrines of Christianity, but they appear to have had little to say of Christ Himself. They were martyrs of the Christian religion rather than "martyrs of Jesus," though it may well be that in the day that is coming their Saviour will put a higher interpretation upon their labours and sufferings than the records of those bygone times enable us to do. From what we read of them we cannot but conclude that what they so bravely contended for at the cost of their lives was their creed rather than the Christ who would fain enshrine Himself in His people's hearts.

We will not depreciate those faithful men and women, however. Their names ring down the centuries for their heroism and fidelity. Maybe the historians, themselves strangers to the love of Christ, and knowing nothing of that holy and blessed intimacy with Himself which is the portion of His loved ones, have done them less than justice. We will consider our own ways, and raise the question: What does our Christianity mean for *us*? Is it merely a question of *creed*, and are we zealous in our adherence to true and scriptural doctrine? Or does it mean for us a *living Christ*, permeating our lives, dwelling in our hearts, filling us with joy, moving, working, speaking in and through us?

An intimate friend of a great poet was on one occasion walking through his grounds with him. Anxious to know, after all the beautiful things he had

written of Christ, how far he knew the Saviour personally, he asked: "What is the Lord Jesus to you?" The poet stooped and picked a daisy from the lawn, and said, "*All that the sun is to that flower, giving it life and strength, beauty and fragrance, the Lord Jesus is to me.*"

Happy they who can say the same. For this is what the Lord would be to all His people—the mainspring of their lives, the source of their joys, the fountain of their strength. But the Christ who is all this is not to be sought in creeds, however true and orthodox such creeds may be. He is not to be sought in books, though the books may bear faithful testimony to Him. He is the theme of the Scriptures, and speaks to our hearts through His Word, but it is possible to search the Scriptures, to study them with profound attention, and yet to miss *the living risen Christ*.

"That I may know HIM!" This was the cherished ambition of the Apostle's heart, though he had known Him as his Saviour for many a year. Like the Shunamite woman who so appreciated Elisha's company that she wanted more of it, and prepared a chamber for him, so Paul, attracted more and more to the Lord Jesus in getting to know Him better, longed increasingly for that knowledge as his greatest gain.

What the Lord was to Paul, He may surely be to us. We speak and hear sometimes of what He is *to God*, of the delight which the Father finds in His beloved Son. But are we in a position to appreciate this unless we have proved what Christ is *to us*?

To think that He wants to walk with us, and cheer us by His love all our earthly days! That He would be the Companion of our brighter seasons as well as of our times of sorrow and discouragement! That He would draw near to us in our griefs, and turn our nights of weeping into moments of in-

expressible bliss, a joy too deep for words.

Can a mere creed do this for its adherents? Does a belief in the "Christian religion" of itself produce such results? Nay, they can only be ours through personal acquaintance with the living, loving Saviour who never ceases to think of us, who helps and succours us in a thousand unsuspected ways, and whose cup of joy will never be full till He has us with Him, in His home of eternal love.

Patrick's prayer, when he was going

to preach at Tara and expected to be persecuted, if not slain, may well be ours, not only in times of stress and difficulty, but at all times and under all circumstances. It was this: "May Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ on this side, Christ on that side, Christ at my back. . . . Christ in the eye of every person who looks upon me, Christ in the ear of every one who hears me at Tara to-day."

God's Decisive Answer to Man's Great Sin.

"Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :

"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just . . . and killed the Prince of life,

"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified,

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree."

"Whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulchre."

"God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He 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" (Acts 17. 30, 31).

Faith is the nightingale that sings in the darkest hour. Faith can draw "honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." With Christ in possession and heaven in reversion, it marches to the time of Psalm 103. over the roughest road, and against the most cutting blast.

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2. 23, 24).

Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (3. 14, 15).

Whom God raised from the dead" (4. 10).

Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour" (5. 30, 31).

"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly . . . to us" (10. 39-41).

"But God raised Him from the dead. . . . But He whom God raised again saw no corruption" (13. 29-37).

The Risen Lord.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”—(Luke 24. 5).

THERE they stood at the edge of the empty sepulchre—a group of true-hearted but perplexed and disconsolate women!

They had brought, at early morn, ere the busy world was astir, their already prepared spices and ointments.

But the tomb where the body of their Lord had been laid was empty; hence their bewilderment.

They had seen Him in death, and had marked “how His body was laid.” But what now? That body was gone—how, where?

As they were much perplexed thereabout, two men stood by them in shining garments, who said to them, “Why seek ye Him that liveth among the dead?” (Luke 24. 5, marg.).

“Him that liveth”! What could that mean to these downcast women? He whom they sought was not there, but was risen! The sepulchre was empty; the spices and ointments were useless; but if He were alive again, the power of death had been broken, together with all that that could signify.

A living, risen Christ—that is the starting-post of vital Christianity! Christ risen from the dead, having annulled the power of death and the grave, having broken the power of Satan and made atonement for sin—that is its mighty foundation!

“He is risen”—that is our pæan of victory! “Him that liveth”—that is our everlasting strength and consolation!

Now see the immediate effect on these very women. We read that “they came and held him by the feet and worshipped Him” (Matt. 28. 9). Their perplexity gave place to worship, and their desolate hearts were filled with gladness.

“Rabboni,” cried the weeping Mary, when she heard Him call her by name.

“My Lord and my God,” said the unbelieving Thomas, when generously invited to thrust his hand into the spear-riven side.

“The disciples,” too “were glad when they saw the Lord” (see John 20.).

Oh! it was the dawn of a new day, the beginning of a new creation, the closing up of types and shadows, the presence of the glorious Antitype in actual resurrection form, visible, tangible, accessible, gracious as of old, and exactly “the same” as “yesterday,” when He wept and suffered and sympathized, and as, thank God, He will be “for ever.” The blessed Leader of Salvation had been made perfect—thoroughly fitted and qualified by suffering—for His new place as such.

See the effect on Stephen, the lovely proto-martyr of Christianity. He was full of the Holy Ghost who had been sent down by the living, risen Christ after His ascension to heaven, and consequently, in the power of this glorious indwelling Spirit, he cried: “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God”! (Acts 7.).

What a vision! But how thoroughly in order.

We know the sequel; he was stoned to death, but passed away in deepest peace, saying, like Him on whose face he was gazing, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” He “fell asleep” like a wearied child rocked in its cradle. Death was, as we said, annulled, shorn of its sting and terror. See the effect on John in Revelation 1. He had fallen prostrate in the visible presence of the Son of Man, as He walked, judicially, amid the seven golden candlesticks. There he lay, but on him was laid a gentle hand, while a well-known voice said: “Fear not, I am He that liveth and became

dead, and behold I am alive for evermore"!

Enough; fear fled, the seer arose, the apocalypse followed full of terror to the world, full of comfort to the true and faithful church.

It is still the risen, living, and coming Christ.

Notice, "Because I live, ye shall live also," are His precious words in John 14. With Him we are "in safeguard," indeed, as David told one of his trembling followers.

As certainly as He lives on the other side of death, so shall each and all of His beloved and believing people. For He is their life. Hence we read in Hebrews 7. 25: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Such is the present activity of His life in glory—our High Priest and Intercessor.

"He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Oh! there is succour, sympathy, care, consideration, love in that tender heart up there on the throne! He has felt our pangs; He has shed our tears; He has known our sorrows; He was made like us in all things but sin; He calls us His brethren. He is the star and sun of the Christian life!

A creed, a rule, a form, a system, a kingdom, a heaven! Oh, more, infinitely more is our living, loving, tender,

holy, faithful Lord! It is everlasting life!

No marvel that Paul could write of and crave for "the surpassingness of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." It surpasses and eclipses all beside.

This knowledge is no fable, nor myth, nor imagination.

The Christ of God and of Christianity is a living Person—truly God and truly Man—the Son of the Father, the Redeemer of men, the risen, glorified Lord and Head of the church, who appeared once to put away sin by His own sacrifice, who is coming shortly to call His own to be for ever with Him in the Father's house—those whom He loves to the end, and who will appear again in judgment and power and glory.

Beloved, it is ours to-day, during His rejection, to learn His personal worth—to set our hearts on this one thing, so that we may bear the stamp of Christ upon us in the reproduction, in our poor frail bodies, of His beautiful life of love and holiness. This is the truest fruitfulness and greatest joy. Let us bathe our souls in the pure waters of John 14., 15., and 16., until we can better appreciate John 17.

"Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality."

The Warmth of the Truth.

TH**ERE** is a scientific experiment by which a beam of sunlight shining into a darkened room can be robbed of all its warmth. The man of science interposes a strong solution of alum, and lo, the heat ray dies in that beautiful beam, and that which passes on is light without heat. We have met men to whom *the faith* is like that cold and loveless ray; they hold the doctrines, clearly and scripturally, but to the living Christ and the warmth of His love they seem to be utter strangers. They have been cheated out of the great realities by some device of the devil. This is not as our Lord would have it. He desires that we should abide in all the blessedness of His perfect love, so that we shall not be robbed of any part of its healthful virtue. He says, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (John 15. 9). (H. J. V.).

The Speaker and the Word

(JAMES BOYD).

In the Hebrew Epistle.

THE SPEAKER is God Himself speaking in the Person of the Son. His greatness is set before us in chapter 1. There He is the Heir of all things, the One to whom by right the whole universe belongs, and the One by whom God brought at the beginning everything into being. He is also the perfect expression of God in that universe which is the work of His hands, as He is also the One who upholds it by the Word of His power. And having by Himself made purification for sins He set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This shows Him to be infinitely above *angels*, by whom Israel had received the law, and under whose administration that whole Jewish system was. Thus at once does the writer set the present dispensation immeasurably above the past. From this to the end of the chapter the Messiah is placed in contrast with angels. He has a name more excellent than they. And then the Spirit of God unfolds from the old Scriptures the name which is His. He is the Son begotten in time, and for this the second Psalm is quoted.

Next we have a quotation from 1 Chronicles 17. 13. "I will be His Father, and He shall be my Son." In all these Scriptures which apply to the Son angels are left far behind, for to none of them could any of these passages be applied. But there is still more to come. The angels of God are all called to worship Him (Ps. 97. 7). Everything is eclipsed by this glorious Person.

Next, He is addressed as God: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Here, as having been proven

to the utmost and found faithful, He is entrusted with the government of the world.

Next, we have a quotation from Psalm 102., a Psalm in which the Messiah cries out of the deepest depths of humiliation, and in presence of the indignation and wrath of Jehovah who had lifted Him up, and cast Him down again. He sees His days shortened, and His strength weakened; and His request is that He may not be taken away in the midst of His days. Then we have the answer of God: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." Here the foundation of the earth is said to be laid by His hands, and the universe is all His own work; and He is the One who will make a complete change in the whole fabric of creation; but in the midst of a creation that grows old and is the subject of change, He who created it, and who is found in it as Man, is for ever the same.

One thing more is added to complete the glories of the name so set at nought by those who should have welcomed Him with acclamations: He is called to sit at the right hand of God; a place occupied by no angel; for they are all only ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Such is the greatness of the Speaker.

THE WORD stands in contrast with the word spoken by angels. The reference is to that which was spoken from the burning mount. From the midst of the thick darkness and the devouring fire were declared in the ears of the people the terms upon which they

were placed in relationship with God, and upon which they were to inherit the land. It was a covenant of demand, and the man who fulfilled the demand—and he only—was to live in blessing with God. But this, as Paul shows in 2 Corinthians 3., was a ministration of death and condemnation. And, as he tells the Galatians, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." There could be no inheriting on that ground. Hence the people were never under pure law, for after their sin in making the golden calf, and the breaking of the tables upon which the law was first written, the Lord proclaimed Himself "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exod. 34. 6, 7). Had grace not been thus mingled with law, none of them would have left Sinai alive.

But the Word spoken by the Lord is a word of *grace*. It is not telling men what they should be for God, but rather what He is for them. It is not saying to men, "You must love Me or be cursed," but it is God saying to men, "I love you, and am come down to be your Justifier and Saviour." In the synagogue at Nazareth, at the commencement of His ministry, they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded out of His mouth. It is no longer the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words that could not be

listened to. But it is mount Zion, a mount that as yet cannot be touched, for it is but yet in testimony, not in actual being, as it will be in the world to come—it is this mount we are come to; and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to all these mighty and gracious principles which will be open and manifest in the coming age, but which we are now brought face to face with in the gospel.

In the presence of that display of Divine majesty and terror that accompanied the demand of God, Moses exceedingly feared and quaked; but to hear the words that fell from the lips of Jesus, even the publicans and sinners could draw near without the least evidence of perturbation. The Word spoken by angels was condemnation, that spoken by Jesus was salvation. He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4. 18, 19). The Creditor was there with forgiveness for the debtor, not to enforce the payment of the debt. Instead of demanding love from the people, God was there seeking to occupy their hearts with His love to them. Jehovah was there as Saviour instead of Law-giver. Hence He was attractive to every heart that felt its need of the grace of God.

Leave no Unguarded Place.

In giving evidence at the memorable Tay Bridge inquiry in Scotland, Admiral Dougall attributed the collapse of the great bridge to a sudden pressure of wind from an unexpected quarter. "Even trees," he added, "are not able to resist pressure from unusual directions. A tree spreads out its roots in the direction of the prevailing wind." A gust of temptation from an unusual quarter may work for me such havoc as did the sudden squall for the famous bridge. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

THE presence and power of the Spirit gives character to the life of God in the Christian and in the church, and in considering the subject we shall, we believe, be in keeping with the desire, so warmly entertained in many, for a fuller and more intelligent apprehension of what the Christian life really means, both in its individuality and in its corporate relationships, and for a more hearty and purposeful devotedness in seeking to answer practically thereto. It is a subject of paramount importance, and may well demand our most earnest and prayerful consideration; for, on it depends the whole question of our answering to the mind of God in the purpose of our Christian calling, and in result of our bringing forth fruit to Him.

The contrast between the Christian state and being "in the flesh" is markedly brought out in Romans 7. 5, 6. The distance between them is measured by *death*; showing that there is no possible compatibility between the two. "When we were in the flesh"—that is the position in which the Jew was, under law—"the motions of sins, which were by the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Now, what is the passage from that state to the Christian state? Not by fuller light and greater earnestness, and the betterment of that state thereby, until at length it passes into Christian liberty, but by "death," a complete and irreversible separation from that state, in order to be in another state of another kind. It is in this way deliverance is wrought; not by the improvement of the former state; not as the result of much experience and the devoted pursuit of deliverance as an object of commanding desire; "but, now," says the Apostle, in contrast with this whole system of promotion by improvement, "we are delivered from the law, being dead in that wherein we were held," *i.e.*, the flesh, "that we should serve in newness of spirit"—as

in newness of life, before, chapter 6. 4—"and not in the oldness of the letter." This is the manner of Christian deliverance—death as to the state in which we were, in order that we should serve in a new state, in the liberty of life by the spirit.

This is expounded more fully in the following chapter, Romans 8. Here we find the Christian state fully outlined. The *status* of the Christian, in the realm of God's creation, is "in Christ"; that is the category to which he belongs amongst the various classes of the creatures of God; and it is the Spirit of God in him which correspondingly determines his *state*. No other creature of God, so far as Scripture speaks, has this status; no other creature is in this state. Angels stand in their own excellency. This place was not set before Israel as the goal of their hopes; the nations are not placed on this footing; spiritual forces and powers will act on their behalf; the Spirit will be poured *out* from on high in great abundance *upon* all flesh, and many outward signs and wonders will result (*cf.* Isa. 32., Joel 2.). Israel will be born again by the Spirit (Ezek. 36.-39.); it will be a veritable new being for them, nationally; and individuals will necessarily have part in it; and a marvellous effect will be produced thereby, fitting them for participation in the kingdom of God; but, beyond and above all this, that which gives to Christianity its distinctive and crowning character is the fact that the Spirit is the power of life in the Christian, giving him deliverance from the law of sin in his members, so that he is no longer "in the flesh," where the law can stir up the motions of sins in him, but he is "in the Spirit," in another character of life, and the Spirit is in him, so that he can "bring forth fruit unto God." He has the conscious sense of being delivered from the law of sin—"sin shall not have dominion over you"—and being in the liberty of the Spirit to serve God happily and

without distraction. This is not affected by the conscious sense of his own weakness and of his liability at any time to failure; it rests on the fact that the objective status acquired for him in the gospel is "in Christ," and the subjective power whereby his state can be regulated in harmony therewith is "in the Spirit." It is the great fact of Christianity, not the condition in which so many Christians are actually found. They don't know what Christianity really is. Being for the most part as to the state of their souls under law, they cannot know it; and then they level Christianity down to their own feelings, instead of allowing the Spirit to level them up to the plane of the gospel. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His," or, "he is not of Him," does not mean that he is necessarily an unconverted man. There have been many besides the unregenerate who have not had His Spirit. No one had it or could have had it in Old Testament times. No one had it even during the lifetime of Christ, until He breathed it on His disciples in John 20.; and there were truly regenerate people in subsequent times, as there are to-day, such as Cornelius in Acts 10., and the disciples at Ephesus, Acts 19., who evidenced marks of genuine piety, without having as yet "received the Spirit." This accounts for the *malaise* in which many dear children of God actually are found; many who have never heard, or who, having heard, have not received "the gospel of the Christ" in its fulness (Gal. 1. 7).

By the breath, or Spirit of God, man was first assigned his place in the animal kingdom. His *status* thus determined has continued ever since. By His Spirit God has acted on him in divers ways and manners in His various dealings with him. By the operation of a new "birth"—born of water as a moral cleansing agent, and the Spirit as communicating a nature corresponding thereto—he is fitted to see and enter into the kingdom of God. But he still be-

longs to the family of man in the order in which he was first created; and though "born anew," he has still no higher type to which to refer his status as a man, than the man from whom he originally sprang. He is a member of the human family as first created, though born "anew" within the confines of it. This action of the Spirit in the "new birth" has not altered his status therein. It has not yet gone beyond the bounds of what is earthly (John 3. 12). But with the introduction of Christ, there is a new order of man (1 Cor. 15. 45-47), who in His life fulfils and enlarges all the relationships and responsibilities of the first man, while also in resurrection He introduces a new *status* for "His own," and places them in new relationships of a higher and a heavenly kind, that were not the subject of previous revelation, nor were they possible of accomplishment in the order of manhood pertaining to the first man. As the breath of life breathed into Adam determined his *status* as such, so now Christ breathes His Spirit on His disciples—"the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—giving henceforth a new *status* to the Christian, in the life he now possesses in the Spirit (Rom. 8. 2).*

In due course the Spirit Himself comes at Pentecost to take His place on the behalf of Christ, to administer in power the affairs that concern the interests of

* As regards the expression "he is not of Him" (Rom. 8. 9), it must not be confounded with belonging to Him, or being the object of His love and care. All the Saints at all times are such. "He loved His own which were in the world," while He was in the world with them; but that did not give them the *status*, which was subsequently conferred upon them in John 20., when He breathed upon them His Spirit, and thus associated them with Himself in this new place, which, as a risen man—a quickening Spirit—He had prepared for them in the family of God. It is plain that the Christian position, as set forth in detail in Romans 8., could not apply to any saints prior to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the presence of the Spirit consequent on His ascension.

Christ in the Christian and in the church. These two things (John 20. and Acts 2.) combine in the problems of Christian life, as we find in Romans 8., where we have first the Spirit as "the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8. 1-13), and then from ver. 14 the Spirit Himself personally indwelling and controlling the Christian; and so much is this the characterizing feature of Christianity that it is said, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him." He is of Adam, even though he were the subject of grace, as were any of the saints of old, ere Christ came. Such an one is not "of Christ" to-day, even as they could not be "of Christ," before He came. This then gives us the *status* of a "man in Christ," and any enfeeblement of its character must also produce a corresponding enfeeblement of Christian character in the individual.

Connected with this is the formation and constitution of the assembly. It is composed of those who, as believers in Jesus, "having heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." His Spirit is the seal of God's approval of their faith in Christ; it is the earnest to them from God of all that He has promised us in Christ. How perfect then, how well-founded is this whole transaction, alike on the part of God and in favour of the believer. All is thus settled satisfactorily, and secured for the coming day of glory. His great desire for us now is that by the "Spirit of wisdom and understanding" we might fully and intelligently enter into the full meaning of it, in the apprehension of Christ's place as exalted Lord of all, and Head of His body the church, and of our place as associated with Him. The security of this place is evidenced in the fact that He has "raised us up together, Jew and Gentile believers alike, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ." In Micah 4. 4 we read that in the coming scene of blessing pictured there, "they shall sit, every man under his vine and fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." It

is a scene of peace and plenty and of undisturbed repose. This is figured in the word "sit." It is the unassailable portion of faith, despite the efforts of the enemy to disturb it (*cf.* Psa. 110. 1-11; Heb. 1. 3; 10. 12).

But further, in the consideration of this vast subject, comprehensive of the riches of His glory, and the full extent of all His purposes in Christ—the breadth, and length, and depth, and height—no human mind could of its own capacity take it in, still less conceive it, a "mystery that contains all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The Apostle therefore prays earnestly for them, that God would grant them according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that the Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, apart from which capacity there was no power in them to apprehend it; no, not even though it were revealed in the Scriptures. To apprehend intelligently and effectively so great a compass of divine purpose, a corresponding capacity of the Spirit is plainly necessary. That capacity the Christian has in "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16) and in the Spirit of God (Eph. 3. 16).

The power and energy of the Spirit, indwelling the believer, is more especially the subject of Paul's ministry. In the writings of John He is regarded more in the absoluteness of His personal and divine subsistence—the equal cause, effectively with the Father and the Son, of all the relationships existing in the family of God. It is He who gives to them their character and consistency. This is shown in John 14.-16. All the Father's mind had been set forth in Jesus, both as to the revelation of God, and the relationship into which He was to bring the children. But how were these things to be known effectively and realized, until the Spirit came? "At that day ye shall know . . ." He was to be "another Comforter," who would undertake their cause and effect their interests, even as Christ Himself had done when He was here. When

the Spirit came, He would teach them all things, and quicken their memories in all that they had already heard (John 14. 20-26); He would testify of Jesus, and instruct them in all the truth concerning His glory (15. 26; 16. 13, 14); and this means all the glory of God the Father (16. 15). Moreover, He would "convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." These are vast subjects; the inheritance of the saints; only too little appreciated, and too little sought after. Yet He says, "Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things"; and "the anointing which ye have received of Him abides in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2. 20, 27). How could any one conceive

such things to teach them, or give the capacity to understand them? They are divinely given, and divinely received.

And with this comes the exhortation, "Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2. 24). Now, if the Spirit gives their character and consistency to these relationships, then, to pass from the domain of the Spirit to the mind and darkness of man is to lose all; and herein lies the secret of the history of the church at all times, and of the present state of things around us.

"David said unto Abiathar . . . Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."
(1 Sam. 22. 22, 23.)

Few sentences in Holy Scripture seem so beautifully suggestive of the assurance of God to His imperilled people. Disciples are always encompassed by foes. The satanic adversary, chief of all enemies, most mighty and resistless, conspires against the very souls of God's people. But in the midst of all that is dangerous our living Lord says to His children: "Abide with Me, fear not: he that seeketh to injure you seeks to injure Me, but with Me you shall be in safeguard." Such assurances as these have sustained millions of believers in indescribable trials when it seemed as though all men were against them and even the demons in hell were conspiring to destroy them. The sense of the Lord's presence has banished fear, and the consciousness of identification with Christ has assured them that no evil could befall them, since every arrow aimed at them could reach them only through the encircling presence of the Master, so that with Him they are in perpetual "safeguard."

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15. 13.)

Paul's prayer for the Roman church was that they might be filled "with all joy and peace in believing," that they might "abound in hope." Can faith which has none of these blessed fruits be rightly called faith at all? Who should be so filled with "peace," and so abound in "hope," and be so moved by "joy," as those who know in whom they have believed? Sorrows may compass them about; misfortunes may surround and dog them; but with the risen Lord as the object of their faith and the Holy Ghost within them they have a fount of joy that is a perennial strength.

Holding the Fort, and Helping the Truth.

(J. T. MAWSON).

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

"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 5, 10, 11).

"Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well. Because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."

(3 John 5, 6, 7, 8).

AN inspired epistle to A LADY AND HER CHILDREN! Here is something that ought to arrest our attention and make us ask the reason why—for this short letter stands (2 John) alone in this respect in the New Testament.

One of the last of the inspired writings, it emphasizes at the closing of the canon of Holy Scripture that which is so constantly taught therein, that in weakness God manifests His power, and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He ordains strength (Ps. 8.). When men in times past abandoned the truth and, because of their cowardice or selfishness, failed the Lord, women stood firm and maintained the ground for God. This we see at the time of the first coming of our Lord, when pious women kept constant watch, and faithful, for the advent of Israel's Redeemer; and when Mary of Bethany, anticipating His rejection and death, poured her precious ointment upon Him, in holy self-abandonment, whilst His mendisciples quarrelled as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom; and also, when the Magdalene stood weeping and alone without His empty tomb, whilst the rest sought the shelter and comfort of their own homes. These are examples of devotion that shall never be forgotten, and with them shall be remembered the faithfulness of this nameless lady who held herself and her household for the Lord.

She probably lived in a great pagan city in which there may have been a Christian assembly such as that described in John's letter to Gaius, out of

which godly men were being cast, and into which neither the Apostle nor his inspired letters were received.

The citadel had been surrendered to the enemy and the flag had been hauled down and laid in the dust. Had it? As far as the majority were concerned, who had yielded to other authority than the Lord's, and who had compromised the truth, this may have been so. But this lady and her children had not yielded to the adversary. They were keeping the flag flying. When the church failed, the *Christian household* stepped into the breach; its answer to the enemy was "No surrender!" and it held the fort for the Lord and the truth.

A day of small things, and weak! say you. Yes, and yet, though small, certainly not weak. Suppose news reached us that a great and numerous foe had invaded some British territory and had swept all before it until checked by a handful of men—say, a dozen—who withstood the mighty army and kept the flag flying. Should we call that small and weak? No; that would be something to be talked about and admired, something at which all the world would wonder, an exhibition of courage and power that would win lasting fame. Neither is it an exhibition of weakness which is given us in this epistle, but of "power and love and a sound mind."

It is no small or weak thing for an individual believer surrounded by declension from the truth to hold himself for Christ; it is a most blessed thing

when a company of Christians hold on their way in the same path, the Lord their Centre and His Word their law. But in this particular case it was a household that walked in the truth, and this greatly gladdened the heart of the inspired Apostle.

The instruction given must not be unheeded by any assembly of saints, whether great or small, that desires to abide faithful to the Lord, for, apart from the rigid exclusion of evil doctrine here spoken of, the ground cannot be held at all. Indeed, that assembly that opens its doors to a denier of the faith has already gone over to the foe, bag and baggage: it has become a partaker of his evil deeds. There is no ambiguity about that statement; and this is a matter that will admit of no parley or accommodation or compromise. In whatever else we are neutral we cannot be neutral here. But the letter was not written to an assembly of saints in which were Christian men, strong and learned, but to a lady—probably a widow—and her children. As we have said, when the assembly failed, the Christian household stepped into the breach and kept the flag of truth aloft. This should be great encouragement to us, for it shows what the grace and power of God can do for those who are dependent upon Him.

The attempts of the devil to break down this lady's faithfulness to Christ had failed; he had not been able to capture her house—it had stood like an impregnable citadel in the presence of all his assaults, so he changed his tactics and determined to accomplish by subtlety that which he had failed to do by force. It was because the Apostle knew of this that he wrote to her to warn her that if any came to her house in the guise of a Christian minister, and yet not bringing the doctrine of Christ, her doors were to be bolted and barred against him.

But there was another danger that threatened from within, and they needed to be reminded of the commandment of the Lord. John had often pressed it

upon them when with them, but now, being absent, he writes the self-same thing to them: "THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER." Love is the divine nature; it is also the atmosphere in which the true children of God live and thrive; it is the power that inspires all true activity, and it cannot be indolent; where it is it will always show itself in self-forgetful service. Apart from this a man is NOTHING, even though he stands most rigidly for purity of doctrine. What pleasure could the Lord find in a man who, while he refused all complicity with a heretic, did not love his brethren? None at all, we trow, for the man who does not love his brother does not keep the command of the Lord, and he who does not keep the Lord's command does not love Him (John 14. 21-24).

Where the Lord's command is kept, whether in the assembly or the household, there He is supreme; but here it is not only the Lord's commandment, but the *Father's*. How wonderful that grace should have set the saints in the path of obedience to the Father's will: a path trodden perfectly by the Lord when here, and in which we are to be His followers! In His lowly obedience to His Father's command He was maintained by the Father's hand, and abode in His Father's love. And we also, as our hearts are set for this path, shall find succour from that same most blessed source of all blessing, for mark how the salutation runs: "*Grace be with you; mercy and peace, from GOD THE FATHER, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, THE SON OF THE FATHER, in truth and love.*" The succour comes from the top, and is according to the full revelation of the truth—God the Father and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is entirely adequate to keep us walking in THE TRUTH and filled with the power and joy of it, in spite of the hostility of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This salutation is one of the most wonderful in the Scriptures, and volumes would fail to explain the blessedness of it. It speaks of great

realities which the weakest of us may prove; it speaks of all the mighty resources of the Father revealed in Jesus—grace, mercy, and peace—and tells us that these are at the disposal of those whose hearts are set upon walking in the truth. Let us contemplate it in the presence of God our Father, and fear no more either the power or subtlety of the devil, for from it we learn that the assembly, household, or individual that is set upon walking in the truth is the object of the Father's special care.

“Walking in the truth” does not mean that we hold the doctrines of Christianity intact—it involves this, surely, but it is more—it is obedience to the Father and love to one another; and further, as the letter reveals, the resistance of all attempts to introduce subversive teaching contrary to that which we have learned from the beginning.

Obedience to the Father's command will result in love to one another, and make us valiant for the truth. True love does not wink at evil. It is not that weak and falsely-called charity that preaches a universal brotherhood, and runs with any man who is plausible and popular, no matter what his creed and doctrine may be. Such charity as that is the devil's spawn, produced in the shameful bed of modern latitudinarianism. What an amazing thing it is that in Christendom every God-dishonouring and Christ-denying doctrine that was ever propagated beneath the sun should find a home! And yet it is the fulfilment of the parable of the great mustard tree in which the foul birds of the air find a lodging (Matt. 13. 31, 32). So that we are not taken by surprise when we find it so.

True love is jealous for the truth; it will not bid the heretic “God speed”; it will withdraw from him, and avoid those associations where he is tolerated; for he who denies the truth of Christ is a deceiver and an antichrist, and to hold intercourse with him is to play the traitor to the Lord. True love will close the door against the evil teacher, for it knows that if Christ is to be kept in, the

deceiver and antichrist must be kept out; it also knows that if evil teaching is admitted, the very springs of life will be poisoned and that all true godliness will wither and die, “for he who abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not GOD,” and if God be taken from us what life have we! So, as a mother would refuse to allow polluted or poisoned food to come into the house and upon the table where her children feed, true love will keep far distant all that is not the truth. And if this cannot be done in the church at large, then it must be done in the Christian home; it is the privilege and responsibility of the head, as well as of each member of it, to be valiant and diligent in this regard. May the grace and mercy of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, maintain many in the truth until we see the Saviour face to face, when our joy will be full.

Helping the Truth (3 John).

But important as it is to hold the fort and maintain the truth free from all contamination, so that we may have it to walk in for our own joy and the glory of God, it is not everything. It is the first thing, undoubtedly, and without it everything else, no matter how popular with men, must come, more or less, under the Lord's disapprobation. But there is something further, and, in its place, of equal importance, and this is the subject of John's third letter. The gospel must be aggressive, the truth must be active. *It is active*, thank God, and as long as the Holy Ghost—the untiring Servant of the glory of Christ—abides here the gospel will continue to run and be glorified; and every saint of God who loves the truth, and is intelligent as to it, will desire to be heartily and actively in sympathy with it.

The way that God has chosen in His infinite wisdom for the sending out of the truth to win its victories in the world, is by the preaching. “God has been pleased by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1. 21; N.T.). “How shall they call on

Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10. 14, 15.)

John addressed his third epistle to Gaius to commend him for associating himself with the truth in its aggressive character. Now Gaius walked in the truth and his soul prospered in it. This was evidenced by his loving and hearty identification with the outgoings of it. He could not rest satisfied in knowing it for himself. It had brought him into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and in that wonderful fellowship he had become intelligent in the thoughts of God. So he welcomed to his home the brethren, and strangers who for Christ's name sake had gone forth with the truth. He interested himself in their work and welfare, and he sent them on their way in a manner worthy of God, and in so doing he was A FELLOW-HELPER TO THE TRUTH.

The church, in which Diotrophes ruled, neither instructed nor encouraged him in what he was doing. There was no sympathy in it with the truth in its activities, the preachers of it were not received, nor the Apostles, nor their inspired letters. Tradition and prejudice and the will of man held sway in it, and those who acted according to the truth and in the vigour of divine life were cast out of it. A sad condition of things, and the more so as this is the only mention of the church in John's writings outside the Revelation. But again we find that it was in the Christian home that God's thought was carried out when the church had utterly failed as to it, and the consequence was that in the home there was soul-prosperity while in the church the will of man held sway, and, consequently, evil, and spiritual stagnation.

Not all Christians are in the circumstances of Gaius, and his opportunities

perhaps come within the reach of the few only. Yet all may show an active interest in the testimony of the Lord, all may whole-heartedly identify themselves with the truth in its activities, and so be "fellowhelpers to the truth"; a priceless privilege.

We must not allow anything to hinder us from acting in the fervour and power of divine life and love, and these short epistles are given to us to encourage us to walk in the truth and to warn us against the things that might hinder us. They are the shortest books of the New Testament and so are apt to be passed by as of minor importance, but the instruction they contain is of the greatest possible moment to us, and is needed to-day more than ever before, and if we ignore it we shall cease to walk in the truth.

We are called to reject the evil and receive the good; to rigidly exclude from our communion all who do not bring the doctrine of Christ, and to faithfully include the brethren and strangers who go forth in His name bearing His testimony, dependent upon God and independent of the world; to have no intercourse, even of the most formal kind, with any who would undermine our holy faith, but to show the heartiest sympathy and in a way "worthy of God" with those who are labouring to carry forth the Word and to build up the saints in it. In short, since the truth has been given to us we have now, in the vigour and the joy of it, to make its protection and propagation our one great business in life. Not in the wisdom of men shall we be able to do this, but we have "received an unction from the Holy One." The Spirit of God dwells in us to lead us in the truth, and to develop divine affections in our souls, and to direct us as to the right channels in which these affections should run, and He does this latter by giving us understanding in the things that are written. **BELOVED, FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL, BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD. HE THAT DOETH GOOD IS OF GOD: BUT HE THAT DOETH EVIL HATH NOT SEEN GOD.**

The Living One.

(H. J. VINE).

BELIEVERS have come to a living Saviour! The Lord upon whom we call is a living Lord! The Head of the assembly to which we belong is a living Head! He can never die! He ever liveth!

The Lord Jesus Christ, though still refused by the world, is precious to God. He is the living Stone, rejected by the religious builders; but in connection with whom God is building up a spiritual house, for His own praise. In this house, of which every true believer is a stone, the word of Hezekiah is abundantly fulfilled, "The living, the living He shall praise Thee!"

It is true that many sincere souls might yet be asked the question, "Why seek ye the Living One among the dead?" for death still seems to overshadow all for them. The life, and love, and liberty which are in Christ Jesus, raised from among the dead, they do not enjoy. They know little of the meaning of the words, "In the light of His countenance is life; and His favour is as a cloud of the latter rain."

There are, however, many who speak of a "living Christ," who show by what they say that it is not the Christ of Scripture which is in their thoughts. It is a mere experience that they are seeking after, or an ethical ideal which fills their imaginations; with some it is simply an example or a moral principle. The Son of God, a living, loving, personal Saviour, who having died for our sins, has been raised again from among the dead, and who now lives, the Man Christ Jesus, in the glory of God—to Him they are strangers; nor is He owned by them to be the Christ who is over all, God—the Creator, the Controller and Sustainer of all.

In speaking therefore of the Living One we shall not follow the fancies of such, but shall seek grace to gather what the Scriptures of Truth tell us

concerning Him, as made known to us by the Holy Spirit, that other Comforter. Here we shall be on ground that is solid, safe, and sure, because God-given.

But there are those who sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ, who, seeing the abounding lawlessness, and the miserable state of the assemblies, as responsible witnesses on earth, have become depressed and downcast. Knowing something of the majesty and holiness of the Lord, they feel the more the failure they deplore. Too much occupation with the sad state of Christendom has left them low in soul. This is wrong, though often the outcome of great sincerity, sincerity which feels that which is inconsistent with the holiness of God. The eye must be lifted up from the confusion and departure from truth to the Lord Himself, the living Son of God; the heart must afresh be cheered by His own changeless love. This will set the soul free according to God.

HE THAT LIVETH.

When John turned and beheld our Lord Jesus Christ standing in judicial majesty, like unto the Son of Man, in the midst of that which symbolized the seven assemblies, he fell at His feet as dead (Rev. 1. 17). Why was this? He had leaned on the Lord's breast at supper; he had enjoyed His confidence and His love; these had been so real to him that he had styled himself "The disciple whom Jesus loved." Had that love changed? Far be the thought! Then why is he so overcome? It was because of the fiery holiness which he saw in the midst of the assemblies. He beheld the Lord shining in the supreme splendour of His pre-eminent majesty as the divine Judge. Who could stand before Him thus?

The blessed Saviour, however, would not have him cast down. He would

cheer and strengthen and encourage him. He laid His right hand upon him, and said, "FEAR NOT!" How often he had heard those words fall from His gracious lips before, and they banished all terror from his heart. And those words were spoken for us. Oh, may we be enabled to hear them, for surely we need them. The state of Christendom has not improved; worse and worse have things become; the assemblies have not returned to that first love which they so early left; nevertheless, "FEAR NOT!"

We may feel the right hand of His strength upon us, for it is upon all His own. He holds them; and none else can ever claim them. Heed carefully His encouraging words, "I am the First and the Last." This is Jehovah Himself (Isa. 44. 6). There was none before Him; none can come after Him. "I AM HE THAT LIVETH, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1. 18).

There could be no doubt left in John's mind as to who it was that thus spake. It was Jesus in very truth. It was the Living One, whose love was so precious to him. He had become dead, and thereby expressed that love, and also overthrown the power of the devil. He is now alive for evermore, the victorious One, the triumphant Conqueror of Death and the grave and Satan. He holds the keys. He has all power now. And whatever the state of the assemblies may be, nothing can hinder Him building His own assembly. This He is doing upon His Father's revelation of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as He said, "*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matt. 16. 18). There may be all sorts of Satanic schemes laid; they will utterly fail. The Living One goes on building in life and resurrection; and all will come out in perfection. He may give Peter the keys of *the kingdom* of heaven; but He builds His church Himself and holds in His own hands the keys of death and Hades.

We are in safety as we cleave to the Lord. At the beginning the believers were exhorted, "with purpose of heart to abide with the Lord" (Acts 11. 23, N.T.). This is of immediate importance for us also, if we would be kept bright for His glory whilst waiting for His return; serving Him faithfully, and walking in the truth, as we look and long for the blissful moment of His coming, to receive us to Himself.

Time after time Jeremiah sought to arouse the people of God with the cry, "THE LORD LIVETH!" "THE LORD LIVETH!!" "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto Me . . . and thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory" (Jer. 4. 1, 2). This is the way of true revival, and of overflow for others.

It is our Lord Jesus Christ who is for us the Living One; once dead, but now alive for evermore. All authority is given to Him. He is our living Saviour; our living Lord; and He is the living Head of the assembly to which we belong; in whom all fullness resides; and the Holy Spirit of Truth is here to enable us to abide with the living Lord.

This will not make us indifferent to the abounding evil; it will however keep us from getting under it. And constrained by His love, we shall still keep His commandments, and serve Him, as we wait and watch for His return.

HE LOVETH.

The love of Christ has already been proved. "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us." That love, however, though told out fully at Calvary, is not a past thing. It still fills His heart for us. Expressed at the cross, it endures on the throne. Always the same; the glory into which He has gone has not changed His love for us. In all its active perfectness, that

love still serves us. His past service of love was perfect; so also is His present service. He is "The Friend that loveth at all times" (Prov. 17. 17, N.T.).

How suitably the Book of Revelation begins by speaking of His present love for us before unfolding the coming judgments upon the assemblies, the nations, and the wicked. Glory is ascribed in chapter 1. verse 4, to "HIM THAT LOVETH US." It is not "*loved us*" simply, as if it were past; it is a present, living love. That which the waters of death could not quench, nor the floods drown. That which is in the heart of the One who is above all things; once in *the depths* of suffering, shame, and death; now in *the heights* of gladness, glory, and immortality; Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the first Begotten of the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth; He it is that "loveth us." Blessed be His holy name!

Our hearts need to be encouraged by the knowledge of the present activities of His love for us. He may have to pour out judgments upon the lawless; but for His own, His dealings are all in grace and love. Let us allow none to cheat us of this divine fact.

HIS PRESENT SERVICE OF LOVE.

The Lord is constantly solicitous concerning the spiritual education of each of His own. To this end He deals with us individually. He has a present mind concerning us, each one according to the progress we have made in our schooling. To understand the activities of His love we must grasp this. It is a most marvellous fact that He Himself learned from the things which He suffered, though He were Son (Heb. 5. 8). He lives now, and lovingly watches our progress. If it is true of an earthly father, "He that loveth his son chasteneth him betimes," for he seeketh his good; it is also true, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"

and we know it is "*for our profit.*" If we are without this educational dealing, we have no part in His love at all. He loves His own too well to leave them alone.

In our weaknesses, too, He sympathizes with us at all times. He is not indifferent to the infirmities of those for whom He died. He knoweth our feeble frame. And he ever liveth, that blessed Man in the glory of God, to make intercession for us. His love sustains Him in His present service on our behalf, for we are weak and wayward. How blessed it is to know that "*He continueth ever.*" Men tell us that they have now discovered that the spirit continues always, and that there is no such thing as discontinuity. Those who know our Lord Jesus Christ understood this long ago. Jesus, however, not only in Spirit, but in His body, raised from among the dead, "CONTINUETH EVER." He is a real, living, loving, sympathizing Man at the right hand of God. He said in resurrection, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke 24. 39). But He not only sympathizes, He saves to the uttermost His own who draw near to God by Him. This is beyond the ken of the unregenerate, however scholarly they may be.

Let our hearts then be encouraged in the Lord! We are His! He has unfurled the banner of His triumph over us! His banner is love!

"O blessed living Lord, engage our hearts
with Thee,
And strike within the answering chord to
love so rich and free."

HE LIVETH; HE LOVETH; BEHOLD,
HE COMETH; His love will then
present us to Himself with exceeding
joy, and conduct us into the riches of
redemption, giving them to us to share
with Himself. Blessed be His name for
ever.

A Morning Song.

THE morning breaks, my heart awakes,
 And many thoughts come crowding o'er me,—
 What hopes or fears, what smiles or tears
 Are waiting in that path before me ?

Am I to roam afar from home,
 By Babel's streams, in gloom despondent ?
 On sorrow's tree must my harp be
 To grief's sad gusts alone respondent ?

The mists hang dank, on front and flank,
 My straining eye can nought discover ;
 But well I know that many a foe
 Around that darkened path doth hover.

Nor this alone would make me groan,—
 Alas ! a traitor dwells within me.
 With hollow smile and heart of guile
 The world without, too, plots to win me.

Thus I'm beset with foes, and yet
 I would not miss a single danger :
 Each foe's a friend that makes me wend
 My homeward way,—on earth a stranger.

FOR NEVER HAZE DIMS UPWARD GAZE,—
 OH, GLORIOUS SIGHT ! FOR THERE ABOVE ME
 UPON GOD'S THRONE THERE SITTETH ONE
 WHO DIED TO SAVE —WHO LIVES TO LOVE ME !

And like the dew each dayspring new
 That tender love shall onward lead me :
 My thirst shall slake, yet thirst awake
 Till each breath shall pant—" I need Thee."

No wisdom give ; I'd rather live
 In conscious lack dependent on Thee :
 Each parting way I meet this day
 Then proves my claim to call upon Thee.

No strength I ask, for this Thy task
 To bear Thine own on Shepherd-shoulder.
 Then faith may boast when helpless most,
 And greater need make weakness bolder.

Then, Lord, Thy breast is, too, my rest ;
 And there, as in my home, I'm hidden,—
 Where quiet peace makes groanings cease,
 And Zion's songs gush forth unbidden.

Yes, e'en on earth may song have birth,
 And music rise o'er nature's groanings,—
 Whilst hope new born each springing morn
 Dispels with joy my faithless moanings.

Practical Christianity.

(ALGERNON R. POLLOCK).

CHRISTIANITY without Christ! Impossible! As every road in the Roman Empire led to Rome, so every doctrine of Christianity leads to Christ. Nay, further, every doctrine in Christianity owes its form, its fulness, its power to Christ risen, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth.

For what is Christianity? It is a word, indeed, that does not occur in the Bible. A good part of the word, however, does. *Christ! Christian!!* but what is *CHRISTIANITY*?

There can be no Christian without Christ. There are, alas! multitudes of *merely* professing Christians without Christ. A *merely* professing Christian is no Christian—indeed, no profession at all is better than a false one.

But if the word—Christianity—is not in the Bible, the thing itself is delineated there for us. And just as there can be no Christian without Christ, so there can be no Christianity without Christ.

What, then, is Christianity? Definitions in divine things are often very dangerous. How impossible it is to adequately define what is connected in its form and fulness with Christ. The infiniteness of divine truth cannot be compressed within the measure of the wit and words of man (1 Cor. 2. 4, 5).

But without giving a hard-and-fast definition, or pretending that *all* the truth can be covered by terms, suffice it to say that Christianity is that living system of blessings and relationships in which the believer is set consequent on the exaltation of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Then, further, there is an expression in common use—*practical Christianity*. By this it is intended to convey the thought of the Christian being so in living touch with Christ, the Source and Spring of all blessing, the Inspirer of all desire toward Himself, that in the power

of occupation with Him by the Holy Ghost his walk and conduct shall exemplify the blessings and relationships in which divine love and purpose have graced him. The believer becomes, thus, in measure, the transcript of Christ.

This is a day when practical Christianity is becoming more and more rare. Doctrines subversive of Christianity are publicly allowed in the churches. Ritualism on the one hand and Rationalism on the other, with worldliness on every hand, eating like a cancer, characterizes the professing church. Its vitality is at a very low ebb. And with lessening vitality there is less and less power to resist the tide of fast-approaching apostasy.

How vastly significant it is to see where spiritual decline begins. Crowds are made up of individuals, and when individuals on every hand move in a certain direction it amounts to what is commonly called a movement.

The first movement away from the brightness of Pentecost was the departing from first love, the waning of affection that had hitherto known no object but Christ, an all-absorbing, satisfying love (see Rev. 2. 4).

Studying the course of departure as outlined in the prophetic word, we find where the decline terminated. On the one hand in Thyatira—in corruption—in an ornate ritual smothering reality—in political intriguing for world-wide dominion—in spiritual adultery of the worst type—in the depths of Satan! On the other hand in Laodicea—in intellectual trafficking in the things of God—in religious infidelity—in self-satisfaction of the most nauseous kind.

We see these movements before us in Rome and in New Theology churches.

You shrink back, and tell us that you condemn both these excesses, these gross departures from the Christian faith, with your whole heart.

We do not doubt but that you do, but what we earnestly wish to arouse in your mind is a sense of the seriousness of the *start of decline*, the *wavering of first love*. If you never take the first step you will never take the last. If you judge the incipient departure you will never know its full-blown results.

And see what a place the *heart* has in the Scriptures! The greatest thing in Christianity is love, and that is from the heart. There could be no Christianity apart from the heart of God, and there can be no practical Christianity on our part except our heart is in its right place.

“My son, give Me thy heart”—“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,” was the exhortation of the wisest of men.

There comes then the searching question from the Lord to each one of us, as it once did to Peter of old, “Lovest thou Me?” Practical Christianity is measured, not by deeds and actions, but by *love*. What is the spring of all that we do?

What is 1 Corinthians 13. but a magnificent adjustment between practical Christianity and love? You may talk, aye, talk grandly, speak like an angel, yet if you have not love your talk is not a part of practical Christianity; it is but sounding brass or tinkling cymbal—an empty sound.

You may have plenty of knowledge. You may be able to unravel prophecy with the art of a master. You may have all faith, so that mountains dissolve before you—and yet how Scripture measures you if love is lacking. Oh! how the Word withers up all pretension—without love you are nothing.

If we love the Lord we shall love His Word. Are you a student of the Word—not merely endeavouring to be intelligent in divine things, but desiring to know His mind and His will so as to please Him in all things?

If we love the Lord, we shall be prayer-

ful. His interests are so manifold, needs concerning His glory so manifest on every hand, that, loving Him, we must take a prayerful interest in His interests.

If we love the Lord we shall love His people. “By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments” (1 John 5. 2). Our love for the Lord’s people will not lead us to walk with them in paths contrary to the known and revealed will of the Lord, but we shall show our love to them by our fidelity to the Lord and His will.

If ever there was a day when we needed to be in close and direct touch with the Lord it is this present time. It is not sufficient to walk a path because the faith of our fathers did so. We must walk it for ourselves. We must read for ourselves. We must pray for ourselves. We must judge for ourselves. We must hold fast for ourselves.

Now the summing-up of what we want to say is this: How far are you walking in faithfulness and freshness? How far are you set for the Lord’s glory? Do you study the Word? Are you prayerful? Are you walking in self-judgment and lowliness?

We pray you to take heed to these searching questions, for increasingly it is becoming manifest that it must be this or nothing. The tide of evil doctrine on the one hand, the indifference to the claims of God, the utter worldliness of Christendom on the other will sweep you off your feet, unless you are in living touch by the Spirit with the Lord in glory, and are KEPT.

He says, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3. 11).

May this exhortation from our blessed Lord and Master, whom we are so soon to see, stir up each one of our hearts to a deeper, fuller, steadier response. May we know the power of practical Christianity.

The Lamb in the Midst.

(H. NUNNERLEY.)

WHAT would heaven be without the One who died for us? All the rich glories and magnificence of the many mansions could not satisfy if He were not there, for the heart needs an object, One that it loves and in whose affection it can repose. Where shall we find a heart so true, an affection so excellent, as that of the slain Lamb? He is heaven's chief attraction, its one great and supreme joy.

“The Lamb is there, my soul—
There God Himself doth rest,
In love divine diffused through all
With Him, supremely blest.”

The living creatures had voiced the holiness of God, the prostrate elders had ascribed glory, honour, and power to the Creator (Rev. 4.), when suddenly all heaven becomes vocal, and its arches ring with a new song the cause for which we read in Revelation 5. The chapter opens with John's gaze falling upon a book sealed with seven seals, lying upon the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. What follows is explained when we remember that during the course of these visions the Seer in Patmos is a representative of Jewish hopes, deeply interested in their national aspirations, and views things as affecting God's earthly people. He fills the prophetic, not the apostolic office. Conversant with the fact that Daniel, after learning the sorrows and final deliverance of his nation, was bidden to seal the book, we can imagine how intently he listened as a strong angel with a mighty voice asked, “Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?”

Heaven heard the question, but neither Michael nor Gabriel, cherub nor seraph, came forward. Earth also was challenged, but neither potentate, prince, nor philosopher responded. Lower still penetrated the sound of that voice to creatures under the earth, but only the echo came back: “Who is able?”

Filled with grief as all his hopes seemed crushed, John wept much; but

his sorrow was turned to joy as one of the elders bade him dry his tears, telling him that Judah's “Lion,” and David's “Root” had prevailed to open the book and break its seals.

Judah was the royal tribe; Jacob had spoken of a lion who would be the subject of his brethren's praise and the object of his enemies' dread (Gen. 49. 8). Isaiah had predicted a root of Jesse who was to bear righteous rule, smiting the earth with the rod of His mouth, and slaying the wicked with His breath (Isa. 11.). The fulfiller of these prophecies is David's Lord and David's son, the One in whom divine and human glories meet. He it was who has conquered, who went into a darker valley than that of Elah, and fought there a greater fight than David waged. He fought that fight alone, and gained the victory and has thus “prevailed” to open the book.

Christ has many titles to the earth. He can claim it on the ground of creation—it was made by Him and for His pleasure; He can claim it on the ground of heirship, for He is the true Heir; He can claim the land of Israel on the ground of kingship, for He is its rightful king; and the king of Israel has the right to the universal throne, for He is *Son of man*, but the earth was defiled, the inheritance was polluted, it had fallen under the yoke of sin and Satan, it had to be redeemed. He has done this and claims it on the ground of redemption. This is His title here, He is the reconciler of all *things*.

The Seer, turning to behold, no longer wept, for in the centre of the throne, in the *midst* of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders he saw One, the sight of whom filled him with joy. No Lion appeared there, but a Lamb as it had been slain. Before his enraptured eyes appeared the “same Jesus” whom he had known on earth. It was as the Lamb of God that he first heard of Him and loved

Him, and on Calvary's cross in the *midst* of two thieves, He had seen this same Lamb led to the slaughter; he had watched the Roman soldier pierce His side, and had borne witness to the flowing forth of the precious blood. He was present when Jesus, risen from the dead, bearing in His body the marks of the nails and the spear, presented Himself in the *midst* of the gathered disciples. He beholds Him again now in the midst of the glory, but still bearing the marks of His death, even in that glorified body, proving Him to be the same unresisting Lamb, once crucified through weakness, but now enthroned in everlasting power—the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The seven eyes and seven horns are symbolical of perfection of power, and perfection of discernment now characterize Him. The eyes are said to be the seven spirits of God, for here, as elsewhere, the Holy Spirit acts in concert with Christ. The Spirit brooded over the waters whilst chaos was reduced to order. The Spirit wrought with the Son incarnate in His works of mercy on earth, for to attribute Christ's works to Satan was blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It was by the Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God, and it is the Spirit who will quicken our mortal bodies when Christ's voice is heard summoning the dead to rise. But in none of these ways do we see Him here; it is as sevenfold in power sent forth in all the earth as the spirit of burning and of judgment, quick to discern, and powerful to carry out what the seven-horned Lamb decrees. The statement that the Lamb has "prevailed" to open the book is based on redemption by blood being already accomplished, whilst the horns intimate that redemption by power is about to begin. As each seal is broken the thunders of the throne reached the earth and the seven eyes discriminate between the peoples upon whom those judgments fall.

In this chapter no seal is broken, heaven is occupied with the *worthiness* of the Lamb to take the book. The innermost circle, the elders in whose

midst stands the Lamb, voice this as they tune their harps to sing a song never before heard in those "palaces of love." Redeeming blood and righteous judgment are its themes. The worth of the Saviour and His worthiness to judge is the keynote. "Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and wast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation."

Their title to tread the golden street is the blood of the Lamb, their thrones they owe to Him, but it is not of themselves they sing; their song widens out, its burden will be a joy and comfort to others, for Redemption will get fresh spoils in those yet to be redeemed from the earth; who shall enjoy with them the privileges of priests, and the honour of kings, reigning with them over (not on) the earth. Who they are this book tells us later on.

This song of redeeming love has scarcely ceased before an innumerable company of angels take up the strain. Ten thousand times ten thousand of these unfallen beings tell forth the greatness of the Lamb. They had not been the subjects of redemption; cleansing by blood was not their portion, since they needed it not, but they well knew the worth of the Lamb in other ways. A multitude of this heavenly host had worshipped Him as come into the world, saying, "glory to God in the highest;" others had been charged concerning Him during His stay here, and had carried Him back when rejected by man, now gladly they voice their thoughts of Him in that glorious anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, blessing."

Wider still the mighty volume of praise rolls on, until every creature in heaven above and earth beneath, the sea and all things in it are saying blessing, honour, glory and might to the ages of ages, not only to God who sits upon the throne, but also to the Lamb, as worthy of equal homage.

An Inscribed Pillar.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, . . . New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and . . . My new name."—Rev. 3. 12.

WE cannot fail to be struck with the frequency with which the expression "My God" occurs in the above verse.

The first picture presents the prospect to the overcomer of being a pillar in "the temple of My God." These pillars are stable and immovable. They shall go no more out. What a contrast this is to earthly experience. The dearest friends must part. Meetings, be they ever so enjoyable, are limited by the clock. The longest life comes to an end. An aged relative said to me the day before he died, "Everything here comes to an end." How true it is! Who, then, would not yearn for that city out of which no friend ever departs? If we look at visible fellowship, there are pillars; those we lean on. I do not speak of preachers or even of people in health. The strong soul and strong body are not necessarily associated. Indeed, the strong soul is frequently the tenant of a weak body. How often an invalid proves to be a channel of blessing through which the water of life flows into a weary soul! To take up the metaphor again, the pillars are removed, as silently, one by one, those trusted ones go out from us to return no more. What a happy thought it is to treasure that we are fast going on to a house the pillars of which cannot be shaken! There loved ones, the re-deemed of the Lord, will abide.

It will be noticed that there are three inscriptions on the pillars.

1. "The name of my God." The sculptor chisels his name on the column, to commemorate his skill.

"O God! the thought was Thine!
Thine only could it be."

When a sculptor commences his work,

his material consists of a long rough shaft of stone. With his chisel he knocks off here a piece and there a piece until he attains to the model which was in his mind when he took the work in hand; and so our God chisels us down, knocking off the rough angularities which are not pleasing to Him, and the object He has in view is that we should ultimately be conformed to the image of His Son. The chiselling process is not agreeable to the nature. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12. 11). An overcomer is God's workmanship, and he shall bear God's character for ever, the name of God written upon him.

2. The second inscription is "the name of the city of My God." This implies citizenship. Citizenship takes its character from the city to which it appertains. To be a citizen of the republic of Andorra in the Pyrenees is of small consequence, because that "city" has no power to secure the rights of its citizens. But to belong to this glorious city of which the Lord speaks here, how great is this honour! Although on earth we are but strangers and pilgrims, our real commonwealth or polity is in heaven, out of which is to issue the new Jerusalem, the city or community which contains all our abiding interests.

In the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation we are informed that the heavenly city—New Jerusalem—has the "glory of God" in it. At the time of John's writing, the old Jerusalem had become a mere ruinous heap, but behold, there bursts upon the vision a new resplendent city, heavenly and incorruptible, the dwell-

ling-place of God and the Lamb. Many had been the tears shed over the perished earthly city, even the tears of Jesus fell for it; but in the day of the new Jerusalem God shall wipe all tears away.

3. The third inscription is "My new name." One of the earlier Christians was so imbued with the thought that he belonged to Christ that he had the name "Jesus" tattooed across his breast. However laudable might have been the motive which prompted him to perform the act, it was far short of the mark. His inscription was put on the earthly house which is shortly to be dissolved. But there is another structure, a building of God, eternal in the heavens. It is on this that the new name of Christ is to be graven, and that with an eternal pen. It will be noted in Revelation 3. 8 that the faithful Philadelphian

remnant had the commendation, "Thou didst not deny My name," and how fitting is the reward that they should become the recipients of His own peculiar new name. If you ask me what is involved in that expression, I must frankly confess I cannot tell you. Gather up all that the Lord Jesus has been, and is, in the experience of His people and seek if it be possible to give that a name; add to that all that He is to God, calling forth His eternal approbation. We shall begin with that in heaven, and then what a wonderful expansion will be witnessed in Eternity.

"If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love
Lifts our poor hearts this weary world
above,

"What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What the unmingled fulness of His love?
What Hallelujahs shall His presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise!"

Studies in the Psalms.—Second Book

(C. E. H. WARREN.)

Psalms 42.-45.

WE now begin the consideration of the Second Book of Psalms, the divisions of which are perhaps a little more difficult to grasp than in Book 1. We are helped in the present case by the titles. Psalms 42.-49. are all of or for the sons of Korah (Ps. 43. is so clearly an appendix to Ps. 42., that, though without a title, it makes no exception to this grouping). Spared by divine mercy in the day of the destruction of their rebellious kinsmen (Num. 26. 9-11), they are peculiarly suited to sing God's ways in mercy to Israel. The series thus characterized closes with an appeal to all the Gentile world (Ps. 49. 1, 2). The following two Psalms are respectively God's judgment of His people (Ps. 50. 4) and their judgment of themselves in connection with their guilt in respect of the death of Messiah, of which David's sin was a foreshadowing. This completes the account given, experi-

mentally and prophetically, of the circumstances of the remnant of the Jews dealt with in this book. The Psalms that follow are the Spirit's teaching for them in those circumstances. Their grouping we shall see more suitably when we come to them. The book closes with a glowing description in Psalm 72. of the glories of the reign of Christ as the true Solomon, and "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," for the whole earth is filled with the glory of Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel. Far otherwise does the book open. In Psalms 42. and 43. the saints are viewed as outcast and oppressed; but though excluded from God's earthly centre, which at the time, prophetically contemplated, is under the dominion of Antichrist, with the abomination of desolation in the holy place (Matt. 24. 15), they are not free from the presence of foes who mock

them continually, crying, "Where is thy God?" This taunt is to the persecuted one as a sword in his bones (ver. 10), for he knows that God is for him and will command His lovingkindness in His own time; but of this there is no present witness, and the enemies of God seem to triumph and He does not intervene.

Our great lesson in the Psalm is contained in the whole-hearted longing after God Himself, in spite of (perhaps we should say the fruit of) the circumstances of distress in which the faithful one is found. Tears are his meat day and night, and he realizes in his isolation how *all* God's waves and billows are gone over him, yet it is not so much deliverance that is sought, as God—the living God—for whom the soul is athirst. Blessed fruit of affliction! Herein is true moral greatness and a superiority to the depressing effect of chastening, and it is real faith that shines forth in the thrice-repeated refrain, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." The ancient versions make the words identical in Psalm 42. 5, 11 and 43. 5, and this is probably correct.

Another point characteristic of Book 2 is well illustrated in this Psalm, the saints being driven out of Jerusalem and not in the enjoyment of approach to God according to His order (see vers. 2, 4, 6), use but little the covenant name of Jehovah in their petitions. In Book 1 Jehovah is used two hundred and seventy-two times, and Elohim only fifteen; in Book 2 Elohim one hundred and sixty-four times, and Jehovah only thirty (*Delitsch*). But this very loss leads in result to an experimental knowledge of God in His own nature which could not otherwise have been reached. This is beautifully illustrated in this and the next Psalm, which should be read with Psalms 62. and 63. In all these the whole energy of the renewed being calls out for God Himself. The Christian should know how in the conscious pos-

session of eternal life this soul-thirst is quenched, and this is just the teaching of John's first Epistle; nevertheless, there is always a thirst for God which lasts while in our present condition, because it is imperfect. Perhaps the highest attainment in Christian experience is described in 1 John 4., "He that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him." But just because the realization of this is necessarily imperfect, the thirst after God remains in our souls till that which is perfect is come (1 Cor. 13. 10).

PSALM 43. adds some beautiful expressions of desire to the longer Psalm preceding it, and is remarkable as the only place in Scripture where the Jews are described by the word generally used for the heathen nations, "Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly *nation*." The reason is that they have, as a nation, apostatized from Jehovah, and are under the rule of the deceitful and unjust man—really the Antichrist. Probably another hostile power is mentioned in verse 2 as the oppression of the enemy. The position is explained in Daniel 9. 27, where we should read, "Because of the wing [meaning protection] of abomination, there shall be a desolator." A chastisement is providentially ordered by God because the people have sought the protection of idols.

From all this terrible scene of disorder the Spirit leads the soul to turn to God and seek restoration in the remarkable prayer of verses 3, 4. These verses have been described as the Epistle to the Romans in miniature, and are blessedly fulfilled to us in the revelation of the light and truth that have come to us in Christ and the gospel concerning Him. If the gospel has not brought us in the consciousness of our souls to God and given us to know Him as our "exceeding joy," so that He is truly praised, it has not fulfilled its purpose in us. The Christian's hope in this respect has been thus expressed:—

"There with unwearied gaze,
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
Our hearts supremely blessed."

PSALM 44. beautifully describes the working of the Spirit in the faithful in the circumstances of their great trouble or, as it is called in Isaiah, the time of indignation (10. 25). In the first three verses, as often in the Psalms, the miraculous deliverances of Israel's early history are recalled. Faith reasons that God changes not, and therefore in the end He will show Himself to be what He was at the first. In this faith the soul can wait for His intervention, and disclaims any reliance on its own strength: "I will not trust in *my* bow, neither shall *my* sword save me," yet they are in the conflict in the power of God, and in the end He is praised by a victorious people. But this is anticipated in the spirit of prophecy (Ps. 7. 8). Their present state, as they vividly describe it in their prayer to God (vers. 9-16), is in absolute contrast to what faith looks forward to, and herein is its trial. But the trial of what is really of God only declares its incorruptible character, and here no second cause is considered, for seven times God is owned as the One from whose hand their troubles have come. All is told out in detail, and the result—"My confusion is before me all the day long, and the shame of my face hath covered me." Just here comes the moral climax of the Psalm: "All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten

Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant: our heart is not turned back," etc. To take all from God's hand and own Him as the One from whom the affliction comes is the true way of understanding His purpose in it, and to cleave to Him in spite of all adverse circumstances will ensure His richest blessing. Moreover, it is well to understand how far these verses 17, 18, 20 are from the self-righteousness that boasts itself before man; rather, it is the true integrity of heart which confesses itself to the all-seeing, heart-searching God. If to this plea of moral uprightness it can be added: "Yea, for *Thy* sake we are killed all the day long" (ver. 22), much boldness and confidence is gained in prayer, so here: "Awake! why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise," etc. Once again He is reminded of their low estate (ver. 26), from which the redeeming grace of God Himself alone can deliver. The answer in the next Psalm goes further than the petition. The petition truly expresses the need of a guilty people, but He answers by bringing them into union with the divine Conqueror, as we shall see. What a glorious translation from the desolation of the place of dragons (perhaps jackals, Ps. 44. 19, R.V.) to the palace of the King of Kings (Ps. 45. 14, 15).

The Word of God.

The Word of God is a lamp, but it is a lamp that we may walk by its light. The Word of God is a sword, but it is a sword for fight, for conflict; given not merely that we may appreciate the keenness of its edge, the polish on the blade, and the gem-encrusted hilt, but rather that we may take "the sword of the Spirit" in our hands and, empowered by Him who is the Spirit, win conquests and victories for our Lord. The Word of God is the living seed, and our seed-basket is filled that we may sow the seed. In short, the gospel is given to us, not only as a treasure, but as a trust.

"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9. 25.)

Evangelism true and thorough is not a debater, but a witness. It does not argue, it testifies.

Disappointment and its Cure.

(FRANK B. HOLE).

DISAPPOINTMENT is one of the most fruitful causes of discouragement amongst Christians, with the attendant consequences of soul-declension and drifting into the world; and it is to be feared that it is operating powerfully to-day in many directions.

In times of revival, when the Spirit of God is very manifestly working, it is a comparatively easy matter for the believer to travel happily in the right direction. He finds himself borne along on the current of spiritual enthusiasm and encouraged by every contact with his fellow-believers; but, on the other hand, when, as is always the case, the revival season begins to wane, when the power of evil again becomes painfully manifest, and the flood-tide of prosperity is succeeded by the ebb-tide of adversity, then depression often sets in, rendered all the more acute by great and frequently unwarranted expectations begotten by the previous success.

At the present moment a season of very acute depression has set in, embracing practically all the Protestant countries and specially the English-speaking lands. The declension is widely recognized, for it has reduced congregations in all directions, and piled up big missionary deficits both in men and money. Its roots, however, lie deeper, being found in that loss of faith-contact with Christ which has let loose upon us a flood of false and fatal teachings connected with utter worldliness. As a result, disappointment and sad defections are being witnessed in many directions.

We live in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, *indwelling*, upon earth. It was preceded by the brief dispensation of the Son of God, *incarnate*, upon earth. Into those brief years were crowded the most memorable public events of this world's history. They excited in some hearts the liveliest

expectations, and subsequently overwhelmed them in the deepest disappointment. We are furnished in Luke 24. 13-25 with a touching story illustrating the inward experiences of two such individuals, revealing the causes of their disappointment, and showing the cure. Let us learn a few lessons from their history.

The two disciples going to Emmaus were evidently drifting away from the centre of divine operations at that moment—Jerusalem. They were drifting because discouraged, and discouraged because disappointed in the deepest possible way. We can but little imagine, perhaps, the expectations kindled in their breasts by the advent of Israel's Messiah. Visions of emancipation from the Roman yoke, of a national revival, and of glory and splendour under David's Son, in which they expected to share in no inconsiderable measure, filled their eyes. "We trusted," said they, "that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Now, however, the vision had been rudely dispelled, for instead of ascending David's throne to the overthrow of Cæsar, He had been lifted up by Cæsar's soldiers on the cross of Barabbas, and the whole people had rivetted Cæsar's yoke upon their necks more firmly than ever, and publicly, too, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar." Sick at heart and unable to solve the riddle presented by His claims which they accepted on the one hand, and His sudden and dramatic eclipse on the other, Cleopas and his companion were in the act of abandoning their discipleship and returning to their home.

"Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." At first He asked but two questions which served to draw out from them the story of their disappointment and woe; but that told, also, how unerringly He was able to put His finger upon the root of their trouble, saying,

“O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

Here let us observe two facts:

First, that disappointment amongst believers is caused by their cherishing mistaken expectations not warranted by the Word of God.

Second, that such unwarranted expectations *are* entertained by believers because they base them upon a partial view of Scripture rather than “ALL that the prophets have spoken.”

Were there no Scriptures which would warrant the belief in a Messiah who would come in power and glory for Israel's deliverance from every yoke? Certainly there were. Multitudes of such passages could be adduced; but there were others which spoke of a humbled Messiah, despised and rejected of men, cut off for the iniquities of God's people, and these they overlooked. Dazzled with the passages speaking of His glory, the others would doubtless seem to them indistinct, mysterious, obscure, and be speedily ignored on the plea that they were difficult to explain and of no particular interest or profit. Hence it never occurred to them that the Christ might *first* “suffer these things,” and *then* “enter into His glory.”

Nearly two millenniums have passed since Cleopas and his friend pursued their sorrow-stricken way, but the main outlines of their history are being retraced still by multitudes of disappointed Christians.

“Soon after my conversion,” says one, “I sought and, as I thought, obtained ‘entire satisfaction.’ I claimed the action of the ‘cleansing fire’ and believed that sin within me was totally eradicated. However, as time proceeded I found to my unspeakable sorrow that still it was alive and active within me; and from the hour of that discovery my hold on God has been of the feeblest sort. I hardly know whether I am saved or not.”

“I used to be an earnest Christian worker, with great zeal for missions,”

says another. “I fully believed in the coming of a millennium such as the Bible depicts, and the idea of the gospel triumphing and advancing from conquest to conquest until that end was reached filled me with enthusiasm. Of late, however, it has been forced upon me that the actual number of *professed* converts, to say nothing of the *real* ones, is not keeping pace with the increase in the world's population; and worse, that the real triumphs of the gospel in heathen lands are much more than offset by the triumphs of the leaven of rationalism and ritualism in the home lands of Christianity. I cannot describe my disillusionment. I have lost heart entirely.”

“Years ago,” says a third, “I connected myself with a religious movement which I thought was going to effect a real deliverance within Christendom. My soul was greatly blessed as truth recovered from God's Word after long oblivion was presented to me; and I thought I had indeed found ‘the model church’ instituted upon primitive and apostolic foundations, which would prove a rallying centre for Christians everywhere. But to-day, how has the fine gold become dim! Where is my model church? Ecclesiastical confusion seems to be complete, and every attempt at displaying church unity and order has ended in a mess and failure. I am sick at heart and very depressed.”

Many other such sorrowful complaints could be instanced, but one and all they would only illustrate, as do those quoted above, the disastrous effects of cherishing expectations not warranted by Scripture *as a whole*.

Do we not read in Scripture of deliverance from sin as well as from its penalty? Does it not speak of “the refiner's fire,” and is not the promise that we shall be baptized with fire, as well as the Holy Ghost? Is it not said “sin shall not have dominion over you”?

All these things we read—and more besides. Yet let us not overlook that “if we say that we have no sin, we de-

ceive ourselves," and that even the Apostle Paul, after a sojourn in the third heaven, needed a thorn in the flesh to prevent the flesh within him being "puffed up." Taking all Scripture into consideration we learn that it is indeed God's thought that a believer may in this world be delivered from the *power of sin*, and we are saved from the ruinous mistake that we are already delivered from the very *presence* of sin,—with its resultant disillusionment and shipwreck!

Again, the prophetic Scriptures are undoubtedly very full of predictions concerning a wonderful time of blessing for this earth, commonly called the millennium. Christ *will* extend His sway over all nations. Mighty spiritual movements *will* take place. A nation shall be "born in a day." The people of Israel shall be "all righteous," and throughout the wide world righteousness and peace will flourish.

But let us not overlook the significant statement that "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26. 9). Or that of Peter in the council of Jerusalem to the effect that the divine programme for this age is the gathering out of the Gentile nations a people for Christ's name (see Acts 15. 9).

And what shall be said to the multitude of Christians so sadly distressed because of their own failure and the failure of their fellow-believers in regard to association in service or Christian fellowship? What earnest lover of the Lord Jesus is there who does not find himself standing amidst the wreckage either of "denominations" or "assemblies" or "fellowships" or "societies" or other associations of a sacred sort?—whether originally constructed on scriptural lines or not. In some cases visible disintegration has produced nothing but fragments; in other cases, which is even worse, outward *unity* has been preserved at the expense of *purity*. Rottenness and cor-

ruption are rampant within. What about the bright anticipations formed, so ruthlessly dispelled? What *can* be said?

From the lips of Cleopas, in our story, there fell one tell-tale sentence. "We trusted," said he, "that it had been He which should have redeemed ISRAEL." Evidently the redemption and glory of his beloved nation held the supreme place in his thoughts. He read the Scriptures and *Israel* was to him the great theme, with Messiah as the God-given servant of Israel's greatness. This was the order of their relative importance in his thoughts: Israel, *first*, Messiah second. A great mistake, fruitful of keen distress!

Is it possible that many of us have been guilty of the same error, in principle? Have "causes" absorbed too much of our attention, until we have insensibly set up little "Israels" of our own manufacture, the prosperity of which has become more dear to us than all beside? There have been many distinct movements of the Spirit of God, heaven-born in their origin, since Pentecost; and into the current of one such we may have been drawn. Many a time have saints become over-occupied with a movement till they are left clinging to *it*, with its vital force spent and gone. The *movement* has eclipsed the *Master*! Has it been so with us?

There is, however, thank God, A REMEDY, plainly indicated in the scripture before us. In our analysis it seems to be composed of three ingredients, which we will consider separately.

I. ALL SCRIPTURE. This is of deep importance, for no less than three times is it emphasized within the compass of a few verses (25-27). "*All* that the prophets have spoken," "*All* the prophets," "*All* the scriptures" are the expressions used. We need to avoid favouritism in our reading of Scripture—the constant reading of certain passages the almost or entire ignoring of others.

We equally need to avoid partiality in our interpretations of Scripture. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1. 20)—*i.e.* it is not to be interpreted as an isolated passage, but in reference to the whole body of Scripture testimony, just as the exact meaning of a small figure inserted in the corner of a great painting by a famous master may best be ascertained by a knowledge of the central idea of the picture and the picture itself as a whole.

More important even than all Scripture is,

2. CHRIST as the theme and centre of all Scripture, for "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Not "concerning Israel," mark, but "concerning HIMSELF." What revelations were made to their wondering hearts during the remainder of that walk! No wonder that their hearts burned within them!

So after all, everything was not gone, even if Israel's redemption seemed to be indefinitely postponed. Christ, not Israel, is the glorious centre of all God's purposes. In the course of that marvellous exposition of all Scripture, Isaiah 49. 5, 6, must have been considered. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." The theme of any discourse founded upon that scripture must necessarily be, "Not Israel, but Christ."

One thing more was needed by Cleopas and his companion ere the cure of their disappointment was complete. The walk ended in the quiet home in Emmaus, and at the evening meal when the invited guest suddenly assumed the place of host and broke the

bread their eyes were opened and they *knew Him* as He vanished from their sight. Here we find, most important of all—

3. CHRIST RISEN, *known by faith as the rallying centre of His people.*

They had indeed lost their Messiah as formerly known amongst them in flesh and blood; they now had their first glimpse of Him in the new resurrection conditions into which He had entered, and that first glimpse entirely transformed them. Under His teaching they had just seen that He Himself was the theme of all Scripture; but even while they listened and their hearts as a result burned within them, they only saw Him with their natural eyes and did not *know* Him. Now He vanishes from sight, and they do know Him by *faith*. What an exchange!

Then it was that their disappointment was changed into delight. Instead of everything being gone, everything was secure. Their night of weeping was over; their souls were bathed in the light that shone from the risen One. Their Sun had not set amid storm-clouds never again to rise, as they had imagined; He had but suffered a momentary eclipse for their sakes, and had now emerged from the shadow, never to enter it again! They were transformed by their discovery. Their disappointment being cured, they did not pursue their course of drifting for another hour.

"They rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together . . . and they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them."

The rest and joy that filled their hearts at that moment may be the portion of every disappointed believer to-day, but—*only in the same way*. Christ, and Christ alone, is the Object before the mind of God. Consequently His object is not to make saints *consciously* holy and satisfied with them-

selves, but consciously weak in themselves and *satisfied with Christ*. His object in the world is not mere philanthropy in wholesale conversion movements, but the election from among the nations of *a people for Christ*. He is not occupied to-day in constructing ecclesiastical unity—seeing it has once for all collapsed—but in *elevating Christ* as the rallying point before His people's faith and love, so that becoming an intense reality to them, He may be magnified amongst them, whether by life or by death. As this is produced, a large measure of unity—the unity of the Spirit—will be realized, though perhaps

badly expressed in due ecclesiastical form, since the breakdown in that continues in the government of God.

Let us then, dear Christian reader, carefully form our expectations in the light of *all* Scripture, and let Christ, His glory, His fame, His interests, and, above all, the excellency of the knowledge of Himself be our satisfying portion. Then shall we go forward through circumstances the most distressing with courage and with joy until the bright goal is reached, when—

“All taint of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And we shall dwell with God's Beloved
Through God's eternal day.”

Be Careful for Nothing.

(WM. MAGOWAN).

“**BE** careful for nothing,” Lord help me to heed them,
These words of true solace for saints in distress;
Each day of my journey I constantly need them
To soothe me in sorrow, and cheer me in stress.

“Be careful for nothing,” how clear and conclusive,
Diffusing sweet peace o'er my exercised mind;
'Tis God who has spoken, it can't be delusive,
Be restful, my soul, and fling fear to the wind.

“Be careful for nothing,” I long to obey it,
As onward I move through the desert so drear;
“Be careful for nothing,” I trustfully say it,
For if Thou art near me, oh, why should I fear?

“Be careful for nothing,” Oh, God, I receive it,
And mix it with faith in the depth of my soul;
Oh, give me more grace to more simply believe it,
My steps to support, and my mind to control.

“Be careful for nothing,” oh, saint in thy sorrow
To Him every trial and trouble confide;
His grace is enough for the need of the morrow,
His arm to protect thee, His wisdom to guide.

“Be careful for nothing,” the prospect is cheering,
We walk even now in the light of the day,
And we ardently wait for His glorious appearing,
To chase all defilement and darkness away.

And then in the glory and gladness of heaven,
Each saint shall have part in unspeakable bliss;

“Be careful for nothing,” to us it is given
In that world to reign, but to suffer in this.

Divine Strengthening

(H. J. VINE).

1. "According to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts."—Eph. 3. 16-17.

2. "To walk worthily of the Lord, . . . strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks."—Col. 1. 10-11.

OFTEN and often we hear the desire expressed that we may be marked by more power. There is no question in the mind as to God's ability to grant us power. What then is wrong? Why is there so much weakness in the things of the Lord? Is it that we do not ask aright? or is it that we ask for a wrong purpose? Are we putting the great things in the place of the small? Or the small in the place of the great? Again, are we going in the way in which the power of the Holy Spirit operates for our blessing and for God's glory?

It is very evident that there is abundance of power provided for us. Thanks be to God He has not called us by His grace and blessed us everlastingly through our Lord Jesus Christ, and then left us to struggle in our own strength, or rather sink through our own weakness. All that is necessary is freely supplied. Mercy, grace, peace and strength are given.

And strength is indeed a necessity to the believer who seeks to be true to his Saviour and Lord. He has the raging wind and the boisterous wave to meet, as he presses forward to the glory of God across the storm-swept seas of this life. Unseen powers, with subtlety and fiery dart, seek to hinder his heavenly progress; they cannot stay him from reaching his heavenly goal. But he is cheered by the grace and love of His living Lord. Again and again comes the word: "BE STRONG!" "BE STRONG in the Lord!" "BE STRONG in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!"

First of all, the greatness of that which grace has freely given to us in Christ is made known to us. True treasure and the things that are excellent are to fill our thoughts; and

applying ourselves to these exalted things, which are ours abidingly and eternally, other things will wisely receive the limited attention which is their due, and more time and thought will be given to matters of real value, of eternal import.

To this end, however, we all feel how much we need spiritual power. To please God in this way divine strengthening must be ours according to *the riches of the Father's glory*. Nothing less will do. It is supremely necessary, if we are to be here according to His perfect and acceptable will concerning us, that we be strengthened according to *the might of God's glory*. And this, blessed be His holy Name, is the strength which is granted to us in this connection, as I trust we shall be enabled to see.

The Mystery made Known.

Grace has saved us, and in Christ Jesus, the Living One at God's right hand, we have redemption and are taken into God's favour. The truth of the mystery, which was previously hidden, is now made known. It was kept a secret from the past generations. Silence was kept as to it during the long times of the ages. It was hidden during those lengthened periods, not in the Old Testament, but in God Himself. It has now been made manifest, and we are encouraged to enter into the full knowledge of this mystery. Not only of the administration of it, but into the very riches of the glory of it, which is Christ in us the hope of glory. Its greatness and blessedness are ours along with our living Lord Jesus Christ. In this mystery "are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*." Once it was hidden in God: now the divine treasury is hidden in it. This marvellous

mystery is concerning Christ and the assembly.

Who could have conceived such a thing but a God of love, and grace, and wisdom, and power? Certainly none else could have brought it to pass.

“For sure, no other mind,
For thoughts so bold, so free,
Greatness or strength, could ever find;
Thine only could it be.”

That poor “far off” sinners like ourselves should be taken up by divine grace from our low estate, and, becoming the subjects of divine power, be brought into the most exalted associations—yea, into oneness with Christ Himself for His own praise and pleasure, and for the display of the surpassing riches of God’s grace—is most wonderful in our eyes: but not too wonderful for such a God as ours.

Something of His glory and power are to be seen in creation; something of His ways and judgments in His dealings with man; something of His government on the earth in Israel; but the fulness of redemption glory will be seen in heavenly splendour and majesty in Christ and the assembly, in the mystery; when, as His body, the assembly complete shall be His fulness—the fulness of Him who is already the exalted Head over all things.

The whole universe is to be filled by Him with the glory of God, who created all things in order that there might be a scene for the development and display of His glory; the assembly, now blessed in Christ, being the lesson-book of His all-various wisdom to the exalted intelligences in the heavenlies, according to His purpose in Christ Jesus.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we need divine strengthening, seeing that we are so intimately connected with such surpassing glories, centreing in Christ. One of old in the sense of the greatness of “the glory of the Lord,” connected with earthly government simply, cried to Him for suitable strength, and said: “Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength

in my soul” (Ps. 138. 3). And God will do this also to-day for those who have to do with greater glory, and who form an integral part of this mystery. But this strength is ours in connection with that of which we have spoken, and not that we may take another way, however good it may seem.

We feel sure that it is just here that many have unconsciously left the King’s highway. Some side issue, some paltry things zealously contended for, and these great things slighted. Smallness has been magnified into greatness: and the truly great things of our most holy faith have not received the earnest consideration which our God and Father looks for. If we had rightly considered them, little things would be seen in their relative littleness, and not occupy days and months of precious time, to the neglect of heavenly realities. Pettiness and pride, too, would be displaced, and our happy hearts would be filled to overflowing with the good things freely given to us of God.

It is only by this constant occupation with what is great and good and glorious that we shall also have true spiritual discernment. To meet the difficulties which arise on our heavenly journey regulations and rules and rigid principles are often propounded and laid down; and these are more or less suitable for unregenerate, though “religious”-minded men; but we are to feed on the spiritual food which belongs to us if we are to have our “senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil” (Heb. 5. 14). We must go this way if we are to get on and be of real use to our blessed living Lord now.

Christ Dwelling in the Heart.

Divine strengthening has *firstly* in view our being right *inwardly*—in our affections and apprehension as to Christ and the greatness and glory of which He is the centre: and *secondly* that we may be right *outwardly*—in our walk and life, now, at this very moment. This has been made known as the present thought of the living Head of the assembly for

us; and this is the direction in which the Holy Spirit is working to-day.

We have seen that the purpose of God centres in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is now the Supreme One, the pre-eminent One. This place is His as man consequent upon His work of redeeming love at Calvary. He descended first to the lowest place: He has now ascended to the highest. He is Head over all things, and that in present and eternal relation to the assembly which is so precious to Him, so that every member becomes a necessity to Himself in this connection, as a cherished part of His body.

It is that *He may dwell in our hearts* through faith, that power, according to the riches of the Father's glory, is granted to us; so that, being strengthened thus in "the inner man" by the Holy Spirit, and being established in love, vitally and characteristically, we may apprehend from the Centre, "*with all the saints*" the universal scene of His glory. This could only be possible to those whose faith and affection embraced Christ Himself, who is the centre of that wide range of radiant blessedness, and all those embraced in His love.

We must guard against an idea which is very common, namely, that Christ must *reign as King* in our hearts. It is not this that He desires, but TO DWELL in the hearts of those He loves so well. The two thoughts are widely different. It is not the thought of His ruling or swaying us; but that He Himself, the loved Object of our hearts may dwell in them through faith; and that the love of Christ, the living love of the One who died for us, may be known to us as a present reality; though, being infinite like Himself, it necessarily remains a love that passes knowledge. What tongue could tell the love of the One who once gave Himself for the assembly, that she might be His own eternally, to enjoy with Him the universal heritage and the unfading felicities of redemption, and to be to God's glory?

The Riches of the Father's Glory.

It is according to these riches that we are strengthened to this end. But who can fully explain what they are? Not one of us. Yet, thanks be to God, that neither alters them, nor the strength given, which is according to them. Who can tell what life is? or what electricity is? Yet the effects of these things are seen, though the very people who possess them and use them cannot define them. On all sides we see the light, the energy and the power of that which we are speaking of. So, while we cannot explain these riches, we may know the joy of them, and feel their power and see their effects.

We are, however, helped by noticing that the prayer for divine strengthening is addressed to the Father, "*of whom every family in the heavens and on the earth is named*" (Eph. 3. 15). Let this be weighed carefully. It will enable us to get some thought of the marvellous magnitude of the Father's riches and resources. It is not enough to say, "God is omnipotent," and then leave the consideration of these matters. As our Father who deeply loves us, He desires that His own should be interested, and become intimate with His things, even though we cannot explain them all. "The knowledge of the holy is understanding." "Also, that the soul be without knowledge it is not good."

Now the only One who could properly name every family in the heavens and on the earth is the One who knows perfectly their separate and entire constitution and character. The Father does this, since He has given being and nature to each one of them. He therefore must necessarily know them all thoroughly, and so be able to give them name accordingly. Let us think what vast and varied riches and resources must be His to give being to all these families. So *multiform* are they in design and distinction and beauty and organism: and yet so *uniform* in purpose and plan and object and destiny.

Think of the fiery seraphic family in their holy exaltedness. Think of the glorious cherubic family in their governmental greatness. And then of the angels in their supernal strength. And coming to the earth, think of the patriarchal families; and of the families of the tribes of Israel; then of those of the nations, and of the peoples which are afar off. All of them in their diverse distinctness and in their objective oneness are His handiwork, and are to be brought under our Lord Jesus Christ. Could we fully understand the astonishing elements which must make up their constitution; could we know the wonders of their entire being, we might then obtain some small idea of His riches, according to which divine strength is granted to-day, to those who form the assembly. But these riches, like Himself, are marked by infinitude; and, therefore, though we may get some *apprehension* of them, yet they must ever surpass our *comprehension*.

One of old sang, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: *the earth is full of thy riches.*" Diligent scientists know a little of some of these. But only those who are taught of the Holy Spirit have any knowledge at all of the abiding riches of which we speak; and they only receive the strength which is, according to them, in "the inner man." We have simply to trust our God and Father for this, who will never fail us, as we delight ourselves in the Lord and His things. This will not make us merely mystical; it will produce proper practice.

Purposefulness.

In the Old Testament we read of a servant of the Lord who was enabled to see the divine glory. His name is Ezekiel, which means "Strengthened of God." He saw the glorious cherubim in their great splendour. He saw their wide wings and their high wheels, with the clear crystal-like firmament above them. Higher up still he saw the glowing sapphire throne; and as the

appearance of a Man above upon it. With the colour of amber and the appearance of fire, it had brightness round about, and the brightness was like the rainbow in the showery cloud.

After viewing its various movements, Ezekiel saw its glorious return to the earthly metropolis for blessing. "The earth shined with His glory" (43. 2). And the glory of the Lord filled the house of God at Jerusalem. The name of the city from that day is JEHOVAH SHAMMAH—THE LORD IS THERE (48. 35).

It should be noticed that Ezekiel saw the glory return to the city over the eastern mount—the mount of Olives. The last time the feet of our blessed Lord stood there He was rejected by the world, and He is still the rejected One. From that spot on earth He ascended to the right hand of God, to "the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens." He is still there, the living One; the Man in the glory, rejected from the earth. When He returns to it, we are told, "His feet shall stand in that day upon *the mount of Olives* (Zech. 14. 4). Coming again to that same spot, power will mark His return: not lowliness and humiliation as before. A violent earthquake will introduce His royal reign of righteousness upon this earth. The assembly, His body and His bride, will have been translated to glory before that time; but now, while she awaits that moment, divine strengthening is granted to us in "the inner man," so that we may see by faith in the power of the Spirit the glorious greatness of that of which Christ is the centre, and that He may dwell in our hearts, though outcast by the world. Ezekiel saw the glory on the earthly side: we are enabled to view it in connection with the heavens as well as the earth—the universal glory. May we enter into all this with true *purpose of heart*. This is what is needed on our side. It is no question of *feeling* strong; for, said Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

(To be continued.)

An Appeal for the Revival of an Old Custom.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

TWENTY years ago it was the universal custom among the Lord's people we moved among to have reading of the Scripture and prayer either in the morning or evening or both. The household was thus brought into God's presence daily, God's protection and guidance and support claimed, and His Word, as a lamp unto the feet and a light to the path, honoured.

Things, however, have changed alarmingly, and these are days of disintegration, lukewarmness, and looseness. The apostasy is fast ripening. The tide of evil gathers force, and threatens to sweep every vestige of godliness before it. In connection with this, one of the most significant signs of the times is the decay of this custom of family reading and prayer. It seems now to be the exception to have it, where once it was the rule.

Our fathers were converted out of the world, and took their position for the Lord at the cost of much personal sacrifice. The second generation often come into things easily. They are born in a godly home, shielded and protected in every way, and their piety often lacks the force and virility of their fathers'.

We plead for a revival of this old and honoured custom. We believe it means much for our children. We believe it is impossible to exaggerate its importance.

There is enough of warning in Scripture against the neglect of what is due to God in the home—Eli was rebuked by a man of God for putting his private interests before the Lord's. His very sons—whom he honoured before God—became his dishonour and shame. Israel defeated, the ark captured, his sons slain in one day, his own neck broken, is commentary enough on the folly of putting anyone but the Lord first. "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise

Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2. 30), was the mingled encouragement and warning given to Eli.

See how family reading was enjoined in the Old Testament:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6. 6, 7).

How plain and encouraging this is! And if we want a concrete illustration of this and the blessing attending on it, do we not find it in Timothy? We are told of his godly grandmother, Lois, and his godly mother, Eunice, and that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make "wise unto salvation."

But it may be urged this is a day of tremendous rush and pressure. Granted—but cannot five or ten minutes be found for this godly exercise?

However rushed, we find time for breakfast; and however rushed, time is often found for the news of the day, and for many other things. Why should it just be the Lord's claims that are sacrificed?

Do you have daily reading and prayer in your home? If not, let me entreat you to begin to-day. Do it heartily. Read a chapter, or part of a chapter, reverently, comment on it briefly or not as you feel led, then put yourself and your household earnestly into God's hands, seek His glory and blessing in regard to your home, and you will never regret giving the Lord His place. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

All-Sufficient Grace.

(Wm. MAGOWAN).

THE following is the story of a man named MacPherson, who attended some meetings for Christians which I held recently in Wilmette, a suburb of the city of Chicago.

Some years ago he left Inverness, Scotland, for the United States. He was a quarryman and soon found employment in this country (America). Being a man of powerful physique and great capacity for work he rose to the position of foreman in an immense quarry, near Denver, which was operated by one of the railroad companies. Thousands of tons of rock were regularly dislodged in this quarry by means of dynamite and tons of black gunpowder, and his special duty was to superintend blasting operations.

One day, when engaged in this perilous work, a premature explosion occurred, hurling the poor fellow into the air, cutting off his two hands above the wrists, blowing his eyes away, and mangling face and head in a frightful manner. He lay on the ground in an unconscious state for three and a half hours until surgical aid arrived. Three weeks elapsed before he knew that his eyesight was destroyed, and he piteously pleaded with the hospital nurse to take away the bandage from his eyes that he might look around him.

Before the accident he had a glimmer of spiritual light from God. Like the prodigal in the far country, he knew there was plenty and to spare in the Father's house. But he had not returned to the Father and experienced the kiss of forgiveness and welcome.

For a few years his forlorn condition was intensified by the fear of insanity. Could his brain bear the contemplation of his helpless, hopeless state? This was a constant dread for five years, as he sat in a chair, or lay in a bed provided by the Railroad Company in a charitable home for disabled railroad

servants. He was helpless as an infant, having to be fed like one, and was, and is still, perfectly dependent upon an attendant—provided by the company—without whose presence and assistance he dare not move about.

But in his despondency and dread there grew up in his soul an overwhelming desire to know more of God's precious Word. He realized powerfully how trifling to him were the things of this world. All his human hopes and aspirations had been effectually blighted in the prime of life; as completely blasted as his poor body had been ruined; but, wreck as he was, he turned to God and discovered that He was willing and able to pardon and bless him and give him a brighter and better portion than the best that the world could give him, and his misery was changed into divine merriment.

He longed for a better understanding of the revelation of God in Christ, but his mind was not stored with the holy Scriptures, which, not only are able to make a child wise unto salvation, but which rise up to furnish every requirement of a man of God. To read the Bible himself was his great desire, but this seemed an impossible task in his condition. But one day it occurred to him that his desires and prayers might be fulfilled. Hands and eyes were gone, but one sensitive member yet remained. Could it be possible that his tongue might replace his fingers, and trace the raised letters?

He made known his idea to some one, and soon an ingenious mechanic constructed a frame which he could raise and lower by his stumps, and having tapes inserted by which the leaves could be turned. He then began, as he said, the most difficult work of his life. The quarry had been child's play compared with this. He said to me: "Had any one seen me during the night, toiling at my new work; getting

on my knees to cry for God's help; going to bed for a time; rising again to work at what seemed an impossible task, he would have thought me mad.

"In my desire to conquer the difficulty, I could hardly refrain from eating the embossed letters off the page. My tongue was excoriated: my neck so painful in the position I was forced to take that time and again I had to desist from my efforts."

But, through God's goodness, he at length mastered the self-imposed task. It was with mingled feelings of curiosity, pity, and love to my afflicted brother that I listened to him slowly but correctly reading the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, from a book furnished him by the American Bible Society. He passed his tongue lightly across the page, pronouncing each word in a low tone before going forward to the next. The wealth contained in the Scriptures had been unexpectedly restored to him, and no miser gloated over his hoard of gold more intensely than did this dear brother over his spiritual treasures.

He seemed to be the happiest man at our meetings. His beaming face was the witness of this. It shone with pleasure as he listened to the Word of God unfolded, perhaps, more fully than he had been accustomed to hear it.

His meekness of spirit drew one's heart irresistibly to him, and the commandment to love one's brother emphasized the inspired comment, "His commandments are not grievous," for love to him could not but be spontaneous and fervent.

One could not help feeling, with such an example before one's eyes, how all-sufficient is the grace of Christ! It can sustain a suffering saint so that Christ may be magnified in his body, even when that body is so terribly mangled and broken as was our friend's. How very small are the ordinary trials of the Christian's daily life compared with what our brother has to bear! Yet he has found Christ's grace sufficient to keep him in the enjoyment of things above, instead of withering under the blight of self-occupation, or sinking in despair.

[We publish this story not only as an illustration of the all-sufficient grace of the Lord and of His ability to succour His saints in the most trying circumstances, but also to stir up our readers to value the Word of God more. MacPherson appreciated its value and overcame almost insurmountable difficulties that he might search it daily, and this marks him out as "noble" in the estimation of God (Acts 17. 11). May all our readers be like him in this respect.—Ed.]

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18. 1.)

This text teaches us three things: first, the imperative duty of prayer: "Men ought . . . to pray"; second, the constant necessity of prayer: "Men ought always to pray"; third, the secret of prevailing prayer: "and not to faint." Prayer is not merely a matter of privilege. It is a solemn obligation.

"Hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2. 21, R.V.)

"Till he come" our Master expects each of His followers to "do well," to "suffer for it," and to "take it patiently." He is still an example for us; and we should follow in His steps who did well; who suffered not for Himself, but for us; "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed [alike] Himself [and His cause] to Him that judgeth righteously."

The Inheritance and the Priest

in the Hebrew Epistle.

(JAMES BOYD).

THE INHERITANCE, though, because of the nature of this Epistle is largely occupied with the habitable earth to come, opens up a heavenly order of things for saints of the present dispensation. In the first place, the angels are said to be sent forth to minister to them who are to inherit *salvation*. In order to understand this expression we must keep in mind the fact that the prophets in the past time had set forth with terrible clearness the judgments that the people of Israel would be called to pass through, and how in the mercy and grace of the Lord, a remnant would be saved to be for a seed of God in the earth; for were this not so they would be, like Sodom and Gomorrah, utterly abolished (Isa. 1. 9; Rom. 9. 27-29).

It is to this remnant that reference is made in Luke 13. 23. There one asks the Lord the question, "Are there few that be saved?" That is the remnant which is addressed in Hebrews, but in the church period lifted out of mere earthly hopes into heavenly. At the same time room is left in the teaching of the Epistle for the return of the remnant to their national place upon earth. I need not say not the same individuals, for at the present time the Jew ceases to be a Jew when incorporated into the church, but at the close of the present period the Jew will be taken up again as a Jew, and will enter into his earthly inheritance. This is the salvation which is looked at here, the salvation of a remnant while the nation is in rejection.

But there are also the *promises* to be inherited, and this is really the inheritance which is before the mind of the Spirit all through the Epistle. Of these promises Abraham was the root. They were first given to him (Gen. 12. 1-3), and afterwards confirmed to his seed on the principle of resurrection (22. 16-18). It is to chapter 22. the writer of this Epistle refers when he speaks of God

confirming His word by an oath, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we [the Hebrews, and we, of course, along with them] might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

Then we have that which lifts our thoughts above all that is revealed to Abraham, in the words: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Here it is not only the world to come that is in view, but heaven itself, where our place and portion are.

Now we become followers of them who by faith and patience inherit the promises. But that does not say that our prospects are confined to that which is encompassed by these promises; for the hopes of those in the past dispensation, whose followers we have become never entered within the veil, nor indeed could they until they had the Forerunner there; but we become imitators of their faith, in the power of which they overcame every obstacle that rose up to hinder them in their progress toward the goal.

There is a very clear statement regarding the principle upon which we inherit these promises found in both Romans and Galatians. In Romans 4. the principle upon which we are justified, or rather, the principle upon which Abraham was justified, is raised. He was, we are told, justified by faith, and the proof that the blessing of the justified man comes equally upon the uncircumcision as upon the circumcision is given in the fact that Abraham was justified by faith while he was in uncircumcision: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the

righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe," whether circumcised or not, who walk in the steps of that faith which he had in his uncircumcised state: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." "Therefore," he goes on to say, "it is by faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." The whole argument of the Apostle here is to show that those who are of faith are on the line of Abraham, are justified, and *certain to inherit*.

The faith of Abraham as set before us here is in the God of resurrection, which is the great characteristic of the faith of "the cloud of witnesses" in Hebrew 11. Now in Galatians 3. we have the same questions discussed as in Romans 4.; that is to say, righteousness and inheritance. There we are told "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Again, we have "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Then in the latter part of the chapter we read that "We are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" and then, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Then in chapter 4. we are sons of God, and heirs through Christ. Nothing can be more certain than that as believers we are justified, and as certain to inherit as though we were already in possession. Indeed, in Ephesians 1. 14 we have already got the earnest of the inheritance in the seal of the Spirit.

As to the exhortations and warnings which we so constantly find in the Scriptures, they are of infinite value to us, for "By the words of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps. 17. 4). Pilgrims and servants have to take heed to their ways, lest in the end they be rejected, for they may be true believers or otherwise; but as to children of God, as to all in

vital relationship with Him, they are just as safe and as sure of glory, the kingdom, the inheritance, and all else in the way of blessing, as they shall be in the day in which they shall be glorified.

THE PRIEST is the Son of God. This sets before us the greatness and dignity of His Person. He has also graduated for the priesthood. He has made purification for sins (chap. 1. 3); He has annulled our oppressor, the one who had the power of death—the devil—and has set us free; He has been tempted in all things that can tempt us upon the path of faith (4. 15); He learned what it is to obey by the things that He suffered (5. 8); He has trodden the whole path of faith (12. 2); others had trodden parts of that path, but no one ever traversed it completely but Himself.

He is of the order of Melchisedec; saluted as such in resurrection; made priest after this order by the oath of God (chap. 8). But while He is, after the order of Melchisedec, a Priest upon the throne, that priesthood is exercised after the order of Aaron. The priesthood of Melchisedec does not take in intercession; that of Aaron does. He has made propitiation for the sins of the people by His death on the cross; He has passed through the heavens, He appears in the presence of God for us.

We are told that "such an High Priest became us," because of the greatness of our calling. He has gone into the place that is ours in the counsels of God, and from there He maintains us down here according to the place to which we belong. This has nothing to do with our sins. They were all put away by His death before He took His place as Priest in the presence of God. Then again, it is not with the *Father* He is Priest, but with *God*. We do not get the Father in Hebrews. The character of the Epistle is much too low for that. I may say also that the worship in Hebrews is not of the highest character, just because it is not the worship of the Father.

The End of the Law.

(J. T. MAWSON).

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”—(Romans 10. 4).

“CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW.” He was the One to whom it pointed with a thousand fingers, for every command and sacrifice and ordinance spake out to the faith of those former days that He was coming who would be the fulfilment of them all.

We are travelling to London, and the finger-posts are most helpful to us along the road. Without them we should often be in doubt, and sometimes quite astray; but when at last we reach the City and stand in St. Paul’s Churchyard we no longer need the pointers: London is the end of them for us. So pointed onward those ancient God-given finger-posts of the law until Christ came; but now He has come, and we need not turn back to them again, which were but the shadow of Christ who is the substance, and in whom all fulness dwells.

“Christ is the end of the law FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” We wished to obtain an article at a local tradesman’s place of business, but we found that the usual door to his shop had been boarded up. On these boards, however, there was a notice in which we read: “This door closed. Entrance round the corner.” We did not waste our time in making vain attempts to force our way through that old door, but, following the plain directions, we entered by the new way, and obtained what we wanted. Men need righteousness if they are to be at peace with God, and if this righteousness could have been obtained through the law, then the law would have stood as the way of blessing; but no sinful foot ever trod that road, and so none were, nor could be, justified by the deeds of the law. Now God has closed that way for ever; He has superseded it by Christ, and through Him the worst of men may obtain the blessing without works.

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness TO EVERY ONE THAT

BELIEVETH.” The law has nothing to say to, it has no jurisdiction over, the one who believes in Jesus. No matter how great the terror or bitter the bondage in which it held him anterior to his faith. Christ is the end of it; in Christ he is beyond its reach for ever. There toils a slave for a hard master on a West African shore, but in his misery he has heard of a way by which he can be free, and in eager hope he scans the sea. At last there greets his longing eyes the sight for which he looked—a ship flying the Union Jack. He plunges into the water, and with strong and rapid strokes he cleaves the waves until he stands at last where no slave breathes—upon the deck of a British ship, a bit of British possession. So the one who is *in Christ* is free; once, “in the flesh,” he quailed and groaned beneath the terrible demands of a holy law, but now *in Christ* there is no condemnation; and all who are in Him are free men; and it is here that grace puts all who believe, so that Christ becomes the end of all the toiling and wretchedness and despair into which the law plunged the awakened soul who found that his whole nature as in the flesh was contrary to it. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

But can the just claims of the holy law be ignored? Can men despise and break it with impunity? Impossible! It must be upheld; the penalty and curse must fall if it is broken. Yet viewed from this side also Christ is the end of the law to everyone that believeth.

In the dock of the Assize Court stands a guilty man. The witnesses have spoken, the jury has conferred, and the verdict has been given. Amid the solemn hush the stern judge pronounces the condemnation, and the felon passes down to his cell to await the morning

of the execution of that dread sentence. That morning arrives, and the man dies for his crime, and to him the law of the land can say no more: his death is the end of it for him, it can pursue him no further.

So were we condemned, so lay we under the curse of the broken law, and yet we who believe are now free from it, even though we have not borne the penalty. But how in righteousness can that be? Behold for answer that central gibbet on Calvary. Impaled thereon hangs One who did no sin, who had fulfilled the law in every jot of it, and who found His delight in so doing. The law had no judgment for Him, and death had no claim upon Him. Yet He bore the curse of the law and died for us. He met its full demands by the sacrifice of Himself. He was there as

our substitute, and in our stead He paid the penalty, and we died in Him.

“Death and the Curse were in our cup,
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup, love drank it up,
Left but the love for me.”

When our Lord Jesus Christ hung dead upon the cross there was an end of the law and all its dread claims for those who believe. Blessed deliverance! And He who died for us lives again, a risen Saviour; and we who believe are in Him, partakers of His life, indwelt by His Spirit, and happy and free, so that now the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who in Christ are beyond the reach of condemnation and for ever righteous before God, and “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8. 4).

God's Work and Ways.

(H. P. BARKER).

Conversations on the Book of Ruth.

I.

Q. I suppose that in all the books of which the Bible is composed there is some great outstanding lesson which it should be our prayerful endeavour to discover. What is the great central lesson of the book of Ruth?

A. All seems to lead up to the genealogy which we find at the close of the book. Though the incidents here described took place some thirteen centuries before Christ came, yet God was already working, according to His own plans, for the introduction of His beloved Son into the world. He was going to bring a poor Moabitess to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel, and to become the wife of one of the chief men of Judah. Their grandson Jesse would be the father of the man whom God chose to fill the throne, and of David's royal line the Lord Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time, would be born.

Q. You say that God was working in those bygone times, making events dovetail into one another, in view of ultimately bringing Christ into the world. Is there anything analogous to this going on to-day?

A. I think we may say that whatever work God is pleased to put His hand to is always in view of giving *Christ* a place for His glory and honour. If God has wrought in our souls, it is that Christ may be enshrined therein and that we may be for His praise through eternal ages. If, by and by, He will take up “His strange work”—that of judgment—it will be in view of bringing Christ in, and securing for Him the place of pre-eminence here where He has been rejected and His name covered with contumely.

Q. Why is attention called to the fact that the events narrated in the

book of Ruth took place "in the days when the judges ruled"? They were terrible days, as we learn from the closing verse of Judges, days of lawlessness and confusion, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

A. Difficult days indeed they were; but it seems as if God had dropped this lovely narrative right down into the midst of those trying times to show that He allows nothing to cause Him to swerve from His purposes. In dark days and in bright He pursues the accomplishment of His designs. Whether His people cleave to Him, or whether the tide of apostasy runs strong, God works His own will, and fulfils His own counsels.

Would that *we* ever kept Christ in view in all that we do, and allowed nothing to turn us from cleaving to Him with purpose of heart.

Q. In view of the promise that the land God gave to His people of Israel should be "a land of corn and wine," and "a land flowing with milk and honey," how is it that a *famine* existed in time of Elimelech and Naomi?

A. No doubt God permitted it, temporarily, in order to test His people's faith. He said, as it were, "I will put My people to the proof to see what holds them in the land that I have given them." Remember that the tabernacle was there, and the priesthood, the sacrifices, the law, and all that was connected with the testimony and worship of Jehovah. Was it *these* things that held such folks as Elimelech and his family, or was it the temporal mercies that they enjoyed? Their mercies were taken from them, and then it became apparent that they were ready to turn their backs on all the wonderful things connected with the presence of Jehovah among His people, and, unable to trust Him to supply their needs, preferred to go and sojourn in a heathen land where, maybe, they would never hear His name.

Q. Does God test His people similarly nowadays?

A. It would seem so. Some He tests with trial and hardship in their temporal circumstances, to see whether, at all costs, they will cleave to Him, and find their joy in Himself rather than in the mercies that He gives. Others He tests in a different way. They find themselves, perhaps, in a place where there is nothing much to minister to their souls, and where there are few, if any, with whom they can enjoy real fellowship in the things of God. What course will they pursue? Will they accommodate themselves to the level of things around them? Will they leap over the wall of holy separation unto the Lord that severs them from the religious world (the religious *world*) at their doors? Or will they seek to walk with God in secret, jealous for His truth and the glory of His name, and content to suffer rather than lose faith and courage, and go "to sojourn in the country of Moab"?

Q. Is there any significance in the fact that it was to Moab, and not, for instance, to Egypt or Babylon, that this family of Ephrathites betook themselves?

A. Evidently. All these places (and others, such as Sodom and Jericho) are figures of the world, but the world in different aspects. Egypt, for example, the land of "the fish . . . the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick," is a picture of the world in its attractive form, as it appeals openly to the flesh. It is true that Egypt was also the land of cruel bondage, but this was forgotten by the people when they recalled the times when they "sat by the flesh pots" and "did eat bread to the full," just as the underlying weariness, nay, the veritable *bondage* is forgotten by the votaries of pleasure to-day. Egypt, then, stands for the world of the ball and the theatre, the racecourse and the gambling saloon.

Babylon portrays the world in its

religious guise. It is the same world; and its religion, in all its various forms, is suitable to itself. It may clothe itself with the Christian name, and claim to be Christ's bride, but its pretension is false, and its overthrow is certain.

Moab stands for something different from this. A verse in Jeremiah will give us a clue to its significance. "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel" (Jer. 48. 11).

It is to be feared that many a Christian, to whom the world in its *Egypt* character appeals in vain, and whose eyes have been opened to the true character of the *Babylon* which surrounds it, yet falls a victim to the snares of *Moab*. You see a Christian settling down on earth, ceasing practically to be a stranger and a pilgrim. Unlike a substance emptied from vessel to vessel, he has become stagnant. His soul is no longer in constant movement, making progress from day to day in the race that is set before him. Perhaps through discouragement, or from natural lack of energy, he has *settled down*, and the passing years find him spiritually in the same stage to-day as he was long ago. He has become a sojourner in the land of Moab!

Q. Is any importance to be attached to the meaning of the names of Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons?

A. Possibly. But we must guard against mere mental ingenuity in making deductions from the meanings of Scriptural names. In many cases there is great difficulty in deciding with any certainty as to the correct interpretation of a Hebrew name. Elimelech means "My God is King"; Naomi, "pleasantness"; Mahlon, "infirmity"; Chilion, "pining". Possibly the names of Elimelech and Naomi set forth the condition of the child of God who walks with Him, owning His sovereign right to rule and filled with joy as the result.

The names of the sons might be taken to indicate that which characterizes those who wander from the Lord and choose their own way.

Q. What lesson do we learn from the death of Naomi's husband and sons in the land of Moab?

A. A lesson that had to be burned into the soul of Naomi herself: namely, that whatever object beneath the sun we set our hearts on, death, as the great divider, will either snatch it from us, or us from it. Picture the grief of this poor woman! First her husband dies; then her elder boy begins to fade and droop, and follows his father to the grave. Only her younger son is left, and by and by he, too, is taken from her. Poor desolate, forlorn, bereaved Naomi; a bitter lesson indeed was hers to learn. Let us, too, lay it to heart. *Death is upon everything here.* To seek rest or satisfaction in such a scene is to ensure bitter disappointment. I remember once passing a most beautiful place—a pretty house standing in charming grounds. The entrance gates bore the name "Mon Repos" (in English, "My Rest"). But not long after, a big black board was fixed up just inside those gates announcing that "Mon Repos" was for sale! *Death* had visited that lovely spot and broken up the rest of the family that lived there. And thus it is on every hand. The most lofty ambition, the most attractive object, the fairest cheek, all are liable to be blighted and destroyed by death's ruthless hand.

Happy then are they whose hearts are set upon an object of which death cannot rob them, One who has triumphed over death itself. Happy for us who know the Lord to be assured that we too have passed "out of death into life"; that we no longer belong to the sphere where death prevails but to the sphere of life where the bonds which unite us to Him who loves us can never be severed.

The Church.

(E. Cross).

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.)

A FEW words on the subject of the Church will not be out of place on this occasion. The subject is an important one. For a Jew, the most important subject on which you could address him would be Israel, with the hopes and promises connected with the people. For us, to-day, that which has most importance, that which interests us most, is that which God has in His mind for us, that which concerns the Church. It is with this—not with the fulfilment of His promises to Israel, nor with the purposed blessing He has in store for the nations to be fulfilled in the age to come—that God is now going on, in the activity of His present ways; and the Church therefore ought to be for us a subject of paramount interest likewise.

The gospel also is a subject of commanding interest. But then the character of the gospel for the time being is that it is a feeder. It feeds the Church. The recruiting officer is a very interesting and necessary functionary in H.M. Service. He is a feeder. He feeds the regiment. And similarly, the gospel feeds the Church, for without the gospel there would be no Church. It creates the Church, and it supports it. Therefore to set the gospel against the Church would be as fatal as to set the Church against the gospel. They are complementary, and interdependent the one on the other, and so we read (Eph. 4. 9, etc.) "Now He that ascended . . . also descended . . . and He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers . . ."; all the gifts necessary for the edification of the body of Christ. Thus we find the evangelists sandwiched in between the two former and the two latter—none acting independently of the rest, but each contributing to the common end in view.

The rejection by Israel of the Messiah

has postponed the blessing of the world, which in turn depends on the blessing of Israel (*cf.* Pss. 67. 117). And so the Lord says (Isa. 17. 9), "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given Me," *i.e.* the interests of Christ now are not the same as those expressed in the Gospels, nor the same as those in which He will be by and by interested, according to Psalm 2. 8. Scripture speaks of various ages, each with its separate interests. And so we read (Eph. 1. 21) of "this age and the coming age"; (Eph. 2. 7) of "the ages to come"; and (Eph. 3. 21) of "all the generations of the age of ages," *i.e.* that God is forming to-day that which will be by and by the vessel of His glory throughout all eternity, in the composition of the ages that form it. Whatever ages there may be to come, the Church will be the vessel in which the glory of His grace will shine forth through them all for evermore.

Government will be established in the coming age of kingdom, power, and glory. Read, for example, Psalm 101. It is the language of the Messiah when He assumes the ordering of the house of God. It ends: "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all evildoers from the city of the Lord." That is coming; but it is not what he is doing to-day. Instead of cutting off the wicked doers of the land, they have cut Him off. Instead of going into the house and putting it into order, they said, "away with Him," and they cast Him out, and killed Him. But He is coming back again, and all this will be fulfilled gloriously. Meanwhile we are not involved in the politics of this world. "Our citizenship is in heaven," and our business is not to intermingle with the strife that is going on around but to wait for the Lord from heaven, according to His promise. Meanwhile He has gone

back to His father to prepare a place for His own, to open up a new and heavenly sphere, and wonders that were never set forth before. These are the eternal interests of our souls, and to let them go from being the commanding object of our lives would be to lose the fellowship of the Spirit of God. If you set yourself on millennial blessedness as your present object, you are out of it. The time for it has not yet come. If you take up that which belongs to the world, so that the world becomes your object, then your eye and your heart are not where Christ's are. His eye and His heart are to-day on His Bride—on the Church; and the gifts He gave are to form her for Himself. She is the "pearl of great price" for which He gave up everything. He gave up all that belonged to Him as a Jew; He gave up all that belonged to Him as Master of the Millennium; He gave up all that belonged to Him in every sense as a man coming into this world—though it all belonged to Him—that He might gain this one great object, the Church, His bride. This is the great object of Christ to-day; and it is about this one great object we would be occupied here to-night.

The Church is spoken of in different places in the New Testament and in different aspects, *e.g.* among others:

1. In Matthew 16. we have the assembly in her *dispensational* character; then,
2. In Corinthians, in her *historical* character; then,
3. In Ephesians, in her true, *essential*, spiritual and eternal character; then,
4. In Revelation 2. 3 we have the churches in their *prophetic* character, *i.e.* the church system, in the period during which the professing, external church runs her earthly course. It is not here "the Church," in the unity of the spirit, formed as such for God, but what the profession of Christianity has come to in the hands of man; and then,

5. Revelation 21. what the Lamb's Bride is in *glory*, as the New Jerusalem. Here then she comes out finally, according to the purpose of God about her originally.

We must not look for light to "the Fathers" in the Church. They could but tell us what the failure of the Church is—*what the Church is not*. Scripture alone will tell us what *it is*. God cannot alter His thoughts and mind for us—we must see to it that our thoughts are altered to His. Therefore, to understand what the Church is, we must get before our minds what God has first said about it; for what He said at the first will be done at the last. And this is the great value of the Epistle to the Ephesians, because it is God's revelation to us of what the Church is, viewed in her essential, heavenly, and eternal character. In Corinthians we see her in her historical place, and in the failure connected with it; from it we never could understand what the Church properly is.

In Matthew 16. the Church is introduced in a dispensational way. Up to this point in the Gospel the kingdom was in view; but now that He is rejected, the kingdom passes into mystery, and the assembly comes into prominence, on the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord says, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "Oh, but," you say, "have they not?"—No, they have not. Man has failed in it; but the truth cannot fail; and we must be governed in our minds, not by the failure, but by that which cannot fail. But then that involves self-denial; and so the Lord forewarns us. It means denying yourself and taking your place with Christ in rejection; and that is no easy path. Only the mighty power of the Spirit of God could maintain any one of us there.

The historical Church begins 1 Corinthians 1., "I of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ." This was all the

work of *babies*, and he tells them so (1 Cor. 3.). That is the overture of the historical church, and there it is to-day; and there is the seriousness of it. Instead of seeing the Church in her unity, as we find it first in the power of the Spirit in the Acts, and then intelligently by the doctrine that sets her forth later on in Ephesians, we see her split up at once into parties and sects. Then along with that come in all sorts of moral evil; and finally, even some among them "not having the knowledge of God" (chap. 15.). And such has been the history of the Church ever since.

In Revelation 2. 3 we have the churches, prophetically, and the Lord judging in the midst of them. He begins with, "You have left your first love;" then He passes in Thyatira to "the depths of Satan," *i.e.* the climax of evil in the pristine church; and, finally, to Laodicea He says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth," *i.e.* the end of the reformed churches.

Now what should we do if the Scripture ended there? We should be shut off from all hope. There would be no light for us. But we pass on to Revelation 21. 9, etc., and there you see the Church—like the Phoenix rising from her ashes—coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light most precious, in the beauty of her unity, as a system of administrative glory, that will illumine the nations by and by, as they walk in her light.

Now, a few words as to the Epistle to the Ephesians (chaps. 1.-4.), "According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Speaking of Israel he says (Ps. 110.), "the womb of the morning." But this is before the morning. This is God's eternal purpose. That is where she comes from. By and by (chap. 3. 21) we find where she is going to—the vessel of His glory evermore. Now what we want, every one of us, is to be able fully to apprehend this. It is the common property of all saints—the breadth, the length, the

depth, the height. But for this we need the mighty power of God, the Spirit dwelling in us (Eph. 3. 16). The Apostle was on his knees, earnestly in prayer for them about it; we need to be on our knees likewise; we need to seek from God light about it all; we need to seek it purposefully. As He gives you light, walk in it. Walk in the full truth of the Church of God as set forth in Scripture. Take your own place in the light of it in faith. Do not give it up for any party or sect; nor for the union of any number of party names. The Holy Spirit of promise is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. That is the seal. The seal is on the believer; and the believer has the earnest. It is as a man getting a bright shilling as the earnest for a larger sum. If the shilling is bad, the rest will be like the earnest. Do not take the earnest of a party name for the name of Christ; nor ought else but His Spirit as the earnest of Himself. This is a difficult proposition, rendered more so by the traditions of man and the inherent perversion of our own hearts. But it is of paramount importance.

Now turn to chapter 3. 16, 17, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened [that your minds might be capacitated] . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This is not my party, nor any party, nor all the parties of them—for all the parties would be only one evil multiplied into more. But that Christ in His fulness—Christ only and Christ wholly—may dwell in your hearts by faith. It is an amazingly large thing, but it will put you into a very narrow path. The larger it is, the fewer there are to take it in; and the fewer there are who will go with you in it. The Apostle did not find many to go with him in it. He seeks for them more enlarging and capacitating, the enabling and ennobling power of the Spirit of God, "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to apprehend, with all the saints," what

is the vastness of the whole scene—the plenitude of the divine blessing stored up in the mind of God for the display of His glory in Christ. The breadth of it is the universe, the length of it is eternity, the depth of it is the cross of Christ, and the height of it is His glory as an exalted Man; “and to know the love of Christ”; but this is, beyond all knowledge, immeasurable: “that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God.” Then let us seek before God for enlargement, like Jabez, when he prayed, “Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast . . . and God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. 4. 10). We may well cry:

“Oh, Lord, enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders thou hast wrought . . .”

And He will do it. It will be a new conversion to you; and a wonderful conversion too; to be converted from your narrow thoughts about yourself, and those with whom you are personally associated; and to be converted to God’s thoughts about His Christ. Let us, then, seek these things in earnest prayer—seek them purposefully, to possess them in our souls truly, for the glory of God and for our own blessing. And unto Him who can do beyond all we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, be praise and worship evermore.

A Rose in God’s Garden.

“A damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.”—(Acts 12. 13).

I LIKE this sweet Judæan Rose, for so her name—Rhoda—signifies.

She says to me : Anybody can be the friend of Jesus. It does not matter how young you are—no, nor how poor and humble you are. I was only a girl, and, more than that, I was only a slave-girl. Yet He had a place for me, so simple and lowly and unpretending, in His home and heart. Ah! He despises none: He casts out none: He waits for you.

And she says to me: You can please Him in the common, everyday tasks. It was my work to answer the door, nothing sublimer or loftier than that: and I left off praying to go and do it. And my answering the door was service to Him as truly as my praying was. So remember that you can honour Him in the most trivial and ordinary affairs of the quietest and meanest life.

And again she says to me: See that you have a trust in Him which nothing can shake. The brethren would not believe me when I told them that Peter was safe and well outside: but I—I confidently affirmed that it was even so. Do you the same. If you cannot argue with people, bid them go down to the door and see for themselves. For One better than Peter is waiting to enter there. “Behold,” Jesus cries, “I stand and knock. If any man open the door I will come in.”

Indeed, I thank the damsel Rhoda for her wholesome and uplifting lessons. Peter is one of the great mountains in the kingdom of the Bible, Rhoda is a wild rose in the hedge by the roadside. But both mountain and flower have their message for me, and I can part with neither.—[*In the Hour of Silence.*]

There is nothing so mean as the human heart. But there is nothing from which God, in His grace, will bring out such lovely and transcendent music—because man is the subject of redemption through Christ.

Psalm 45.

BELIEVERS in the inspiration of holy Scripture will not require to spend time in seeking to find some historical event which this unique Psalm celebrates, nor will those who have in any small degree appreciated dispensational distinctions look for its fulfilment in Christ and the church; that mystery or secret is a great one (Eph. 5. 32), and is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy. The prophetic writings referred to in Romans 16. 26 are those of the New Testament (see also Eph. 3. 5 and Col. 1. 26).

What we find in Psalm 45 is God's gracious answer to the prayers of the afflicted and persecuted saints of the three preceding Psalms—an answer, as already remarked, which gives much more than was sought for (Eph. 3. 20). In it is revealed God's purpose for Christ in His relations with Jerusalem as the capital city for restored Israel and the millennial earth (Isa. 54. 5—62. 4; Zech. 2. 10, 11, and 14. 17). Another point should be noticed before we enter on the details of the Psalm: that as it concerns the earthly people of God, the warrior judgments precede the marriage union. The Jewish bride is herein distinguished from the bride of the Apocalypse, in whose case the marriage is celebrated in heaven (19. 7), and is followed by the conflicts of verses 11—16. In both cases an earthly relation is used as a figure of a great spiritual reality, according to which the love of Christ for His saints is revealed in such a way as to create a true response in them; and this will surely be effected in the measure the subject is spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2.).

The divisions of the Psalm are fairly well marked, the first two verses constituting the first of them. They should be read as the Spirit's utterance, through the writer, of the excellency of

Christ. He it is who causes the heart to bubble over with so goodly a matter (*cf.* John 4. 14) and to speak the things composed touching the king. This ministry is not limited to vessels of inspiration, but known in some measure by everyone in whom the Spirit is ungrieved. Every saint will be a worshipper in glory—why not now? It is really the lack of a suited subjective state which hinders; when that is right, as in our Psalm, the soul passes quickly to contemplate the perfections of Another, "Thou art far fairer [literally 'fair, fairer'] than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips"—an allusion to the first coming to win men for God in grace. This testimony of grace so truly represents God that it secures His eternal blessing, for He always supports what is like Himself. Contrariwise, when the saints misrepresent and thereby render false witness, He enters into controversy with them.

The next three verses give us a no less true but very different presentation. We read of the king riding to victory with a sword and arrows that are sharp in the heart of enemies. Here, as so often in the prophetic writings, the characteristics of the first and second comings are placed in close connection, and it seems from the wording of verse 4—"because of truth and meekness [in or of] righteousness"—that the warrior judgment of the future will have a retributive character in respect of His rejection in the past, when truth and righteousness were displayed in meekness. The judgment is on the peoples (Gentiles) and on all the king's enemies (Luke 19. 27; Ps. 2. 12).

Verses 6—9 bring us to the great truth of the person of the Christ. The man of grace of verse 2, and the man of victorious might of verse 4 sits on an

eternal throne as GOD. The words themselves and the citation in Hebrews 1. show that the One addressed is really in the Godhead and not a mere representative ruler for whom the word "Elohim" might be used. He rules in equity, and as loving righteousness and hating wickedness. This is again in entire accord with the divine nature, and therefore He is anointed by God with the oil of gladness above companions (*cf.* ver. 2). As man God anoints Him, but the anointed One is God Himself—the Lord Jesus, the eternal Word become flesh, alone fulfils the conditions of this prophecy.

But who then, are His companions? The same word is translated "fellows" in Hebrews 1. 9, and "companions" in 3. 15; so that during this time of the hiding of the King in heaven, this title of associates or companions belongs to the believing remnant of the Jews with whom the Gentile saints are united "as all of one" (Heb. 2. 11). Moreover, in Matthew 25. the virgins are the companions of the Bridegroom. The bride is unnamed, but the marriage finds its accomplishment in our Psalm. In the time of the kingdom to which the Psalm looks forward "the companions" of the king may be found in the monarchs of the millennial earth (Ps. 72. 10, 11). One application never exhausts the prophecies of Scripture (2 Peter 1. 20).

The next verse exhibits the worship of the kingdom; once, devoted hearts offered the same fragrant spices in view of death and burial; now they perfume the robes of the reigning King while strains of music minister to Him from the ivory palaces* of a renewed and peaceful earth.

All the accompaniments of the divine King are suitable to His royal state; king's daughters are His attendants,

and His queen is clad in garments enriched with the gold of Ophir. Gold is the well-known symbol of the righteousness in which believers are accepted before God, and this exactly suits the connection here and precedes the needlework adornment of verse 14, which answers more to what grace works in us and through us now—both have their place in the time of display in the kingdom.

The next section (vers. 10, 11, 12) is an address to the queen. What Ruth surrendered in her devoted attachment to Naomi, the bride is exhorted to yield in love to her lord. The glorious past which faith had recalled in Psalm 44. 1-3 is to be eclipsed by a more glorious future (Jer. 23. 7, 8) in the favour and delight of the King, as His regnant queen, loved for her surrender of all for Him. A present application to Christians individually may be found in John 14.: "I will love Him" (ver. 21), and "we will love Him" (ver. 23). In both cases the love of complacency is contemplated which rests in what answers to itself. The Gentiles represented by the daughters of Tyre and probably also by the rich among the people(s) have a suited part in this scene of glory, contributing their homage in gifts (Isa. 60. 5, 7). This affords further evidence that the marriage of the church is not to be found here. In the heavenly bride national distinctions are abolished; and what place could the daughter of Tyre have in the marriage supper of the Lamb? (Rev. 19.)

The next section (vers. 13-16) contains a further description of the glory of the queen—she is styled the king's daughter, for the Jewish bride has her origin in divine grace (Cant. 8. 5). Only one so derived could be suitably united to the king (*cf.* Gen. 24. 3, 4; and Heb. 2. 11). The words "all glorious within" have occasioned some differences of interpretation. From verse 14 we see that this section is descriptive of the bride before she is brought to the king, it thus precedes

* Those who have access to the early numbers of "Bible Treasury" may like to refer to a short paper by the late Mr. Bellett, vol. vi., p. 95, "Faith's Ivory Palaces," which gives a present application to these wonderful edifices.

verse 9. The reference is probably therefore to her as she waits in her own apartments robed for the marriage. This accords with eastern custom. Like the bride in Canticles, she has companions who are brought with her into the king's palace with gladness and rejoicing. As the queen is the earthly city Jerusalem, these companions may represent either the cities of Israel or the capital cities of the Gentile kingdoms.

The next verse seems rather to point to the latter view, as the rulers of the

Gentiles all derive from her—and this constitutes her glory—rather than descent from the patriarchs of old.

The last verse stands by itself, the declaration of almighty power—that the name of Jesus (Phil. 2.) will be had in remembrance for ever, and that in all generations, giving occasion for eternal praise. May we now know such a power of the Holy Spirit that when we gather to the remembrance of that name our worship may be also “in Spirit and in truth.”

Baptism and the Remission of Sins.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

Question.—Kindly explain the relation of baptism to the remission of sins and the subsequent gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2. 38 and 22. 16)?—(Norwich).

THE great truth involved in the reply of Peter to those who were convicted under his address and asked, “Men, brethren, what shall we do?” was that that day, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, God had taken up His dwelling-place amongst the redeemed. Thenceforward His habitation on earth was to be found in the assembly of those who professed Christ's name. They were to repent therefore and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. These two were the first of the characteristic blessings of that place. Baptism as the normal confession of His name was the door of entrance therein: he who was baptized was received outwardly into the house of God as set up in the world; entering by faith in Christ's name, he got the forgiveness of sins as administered there, and was thereupon made a recipient of the Holy Ghost.

The fact of the house of God being here may be difficult to discern now, as from early times, through the failure of everything in which man has his part, the reality of God's building has been obscured by the wood, hay, and stubble of man's work. But, even if defiled, it is the dwelling-place and temple still (1 Cor. 3). The house of

God, the assembly of the living God, has the responsible place of being the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3. 15), which is to be found, not in Judaism or heathenism, or Mahomedanism, but only in Christendom. Judgment, too, will begin at “the house of God” (1 Peter 4. 17), because of its failure to answer to its privileged place as such. Thus it may be terribly corrupted; but till God judges it, it is still the place where His blessings are found, and baptism is the formal admission therein.

That it was regarded as a privilege to be conferred we may see from the Ethiopian official in Acts 8., who, having heard from Philip the glad tidings of Jesus, sought at once to be identified with His name, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” Thus also in the case of Cornelius and his company: who could refuse to receive them amongst professing Christians whom God had already marked as His by the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is the same great truth that leads Ananias in Acts 22. 16 to call upon Saul to arise and be baptized, and so enter where *administratively* his sins might be washed away; baptism being the symbol of that to which the death and resurrection of Christ was available.

The Question of Sin at Calvary.

(JAMES GREEN).

Questions.—If the whole question of sin was settled at Calvary's cross, why do men go into a lost eternity?

If the penalty of sin has not been paid, how is it that the invitation is to "whosoever will"? Is unbelief the only sin for which men are punished?—*Enquirer.*

THE difficulties of the questioner arise from not distinguishing between the two aspects of the death of Christ, viz. Godward and manward. Sin had affected God in that it had outraged His rights as Creator; the majesty of His throne and the holy character of His government were involved; therefore these things necessitated that He should act in judgment upon the whole race which was found in this condition of rebellion. His rights as Sovereign Ruler must be maintained, and God Himself in respect of His holy nature must be vindicated before all intelligent created beings. But had He thus acted in judgment, where then was the display of His grace? And it was in order that His grace and righteousness might both be manifest that God provided Himself a Lamb—His own beloved Son—the Lamb of God—to bear away the sin of the world. To Him belonged the mighty work of removing the dishonour which sin had brought upon the name of God by the sacrifice of Himself. His cross was the answer to all God's righteous claims; and, in addition, God was so glorified by the perfection of that work that all the attributes of His holy nature were free to act without in any way being contradictory to each other. Love could have its way in fullest blessing, grace and mercy could be shown to the vilest sinner, and at the same time righteousness maintained in all its unsullied purity. It is to this aspect of the cross that 1 John 2. 2 applies: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for

ours only but also for the whole world"—as the text correctly reads. On the ground of this propitiation, forgiveness of sins through the righteousness of God is preached to all men; it is "Unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Rom. 3. 22). The man who draws near to God by faith in the Lord Jesus, then, knows that the Saviour was His substitute when He laid down His life; that He bore his sins, cleansed him from guilt, and that now, justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But if a man declines to accept the only way by which God can be just and yet justify him, if he does not take his place as a guilty sinner before God, if he does not believe in the Lord Jesus, then he remains outside of the gracious provision that God has made for his salvation. There is ample value in the precious blood of Christ to save all men, and God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9).

The consequence of unbelief is that a man is left under the guilt of his sins, and he will most surely have to meet their judgment, as Romans 1. 18 clearly shows: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"; and Ephesians 5. 6: "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"; and in the great judgment of the wicked they shall "be judged, every man according to his works" (Rev. 20. 13).

Faithfulness is success; doing the will of God is usefulness to man. We may seek opportunities for ourselves, while neglecting those God gives us.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 21.

(HENRY J. VINE).

Chapters 58.—66.

THIS short section (chaps. 58. to 66.) with which the book of Isaiah concludes, comprehends within its small space truths of immense and immediate importance, and of present application as well as of future fulfilment.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit takes largely from the precious store of this section. In Luke, in John, in Romans, and in Ephesians there are some significant applications from it given by the Spirit. The connections, the comparisons, and the contrasts all combine strikingly to show us the differing distinctions and dignities of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the real *Subject* of Isaiah, as indeed He is of all the Scriptures; and He is also the *Object* brought before the believer, satisfying his deepest desires and filling his heart with thanksgivings, praises, and worship.

The Subject of the Scriptures: the Object of believers.

Shining above the brightness of the sun, we see Him in this section as the "everlasting Light," proclaiming with gracious words good tidings to the poor; we see Him as the anointed Preacher; travelling in the greatness of His strength to execute vengeance, we see Him as the "mighty to save"; bringing deliverance and blessing and glory, we also see Him as the Deliverer, the Banner of God, His glorious Arm, the Man-Child; and finally as the Sign of God. It should be noticed that He is not called *the Servant* in this section: *the servants* who partake of His Spirit and character being prominent.

Striking and stirring scenes are here shown to us, with Christ as their centre; suddenly and swiftly they pass before our eyes, hastening to their appointed end. These things, however, can only be rightly understood as Christ's con-

nection with them is grasped, for it must be remembered that the great Subject of scripture is Himself.

It has often been pointed out that like a certain government rope which can be recognized all over the world because of a red cord which passes through its centre, so the inspired Scriptures can be known, because, from beginning to end, that which speaks of the atoning blood of Christ is there; from Genesis to Revelation the red line is seen uniting the whole Book. There is, however, the water-line as well as the blood-line shown by the Spirit throughout the sacred Scriptures, all pointing to the blessed Son of God who came by water and blood; "not by water only, but by water and blood"; and the Spirit, the water, and the blood are the threefold "witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son. And this is the witness that God has given to us, eternal life; and this life is in His Son." The believer, therefore, in having the Son, has life in Him whom the Holy Spirit glorifies; for the water and the blood have met his fallen state and guilt; and now, having the Spirit, he can rejoice in the One who is the Subject of all the Scriptures, and the Object of his own heart and mind.

The events, and other things in the Bible also, can be now rightly understood; for instead of studying them apart and forming separate systems, or schools of opinion about them, they are seen in their relation to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the divine Subject, showing the interwoven unity of all the Scriptures. The Spirit who inspired their writing is come to us who believe to glorify Christ.

Two detectives once called upon me, hoping that I might be able to assist

them in tracing a criminal, by discovering the suppliers of a sheet of note-paper upon which he had written a letter.

The most I could do, however, was to tell them who were the makers of the paper which I learnt from the design of the makers' watermark in the centre of the sheet, and which was plainly visible when held up to the light. In like manner the true believer, who is in the light, is capable of discovering in the woven unity of the sacred Scriptures the divine design which is "CHRIST." Those who are in darkness cannot see this, whether they be boastful scholars or illiterate and ignorant men.

To know Him.

It is true that men who are still in darkness often claim Him as their Leader or Example, and yet do not accept Him as He is made known in the Scriptures. The socialist claims Him as a good man, but refuses to receive Him as "the true God and eternal life." Many social, political, and religious leaders, kings and rulers readily acknowledge Him as "a" Light amidst the darkness of the world, without receiving Him exclusively as "the" Light of the world.

Those who receive Him as the Scriptures reveal Him in faith become the sons of light. The repentant sinner feeling the burden of his sins, accepts Him as his personal Saviour, and there is joy in heaven over such. Wherever two or three are gathered to His name alone, He is in their midst; and they may know Him there as their Centre and their all. The individual believer who loves Him and keeps His Word, may know His abiding presence. What a great honour to be granted to us in a world like this, an honour only to be surpassed by our being taken out of the world by the Son of God, and received into the Father's house. To know Him is the greatest wealth and wisdom we can possess. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the

mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, saith the Lord."

Darkness and Death: Light and Liberty.

To the slothful believer who had fallen asleep at Ephesus it is said: "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." It is from these first three chapters (58., 59. and 60.) of our section, the Holy Spirit takes this thought and applies it now. Its importance is very great, for it explains who the Light of Isaiah 60. 1-3 is.

The professing people of God—the Jews—were asleep, "in darkness", and "as dead men"; as to them it is said to the prophet, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet" (chap. 58. 1). This urgent call is to a suitable moral and practical condition. "Then," we read, "shall *thy light* break forth as the morning," then shall "*thy light* rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday" (58. 8-10); but, like the rest of men, they had all sinned; and away from God, "their feet ran to evil" (59. 7), and the way of peace they knew not. But they are brought to realize their state and to confess, "*we wait for light*, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We are in desolate places *as dead men*" (59. 9, 10). They were at their wits' end.

It is just here the Lord brings light and liberty and salvation. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him" (59. 16). It is always the way—"man's extremity is God's opportunity." Let us, however, remind ourselves that the fulfilment of this verse is seen in the salvation of Israel. It cannot *now* be said, "there is no man;" for there is a Man at the right hand of God, who is the Head of the assembly; and He maintains the interests of God; therefore no power can prevail against

the assembly. It cannot *now* be said, "there is no intercessor." Christ who died for us, has been raised up again; and is "also at the right hand of God, who *intercedes for us*" (Rom. 8. 34). Unlike the leaders in Israel who failed and changed because of weakness and death, the One great Leader of believers to-day never fails, and continues for ever. He is able to save His own completely; and *He is "always living to intercede for them"* (Heb. 7. 25). He is the prevailing Intercessor to-day; and, like Himself, His intercession is perfect.

In the day, however, when He brings light and liberty to Israel, He will come in power and majesty. The armour of light shall clothe Him, and His own inherent righteousness shall sustain Him; He shall "put on righteousness as a breastplate" also; "and an helmet of salvation upon His head"; garments of vengeance, and zeal shall be His clothing. But though this brings blessing to Israel, it will mean "fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies" (59. 17. 18). This will liberate Israel from oppression, and cause the fame of the Lord to spread abroad.

Christ and the Bible.

(E. ADAMS).

THE Lord Jesus Christ has declared God to us; He, the Only-Begotten Son, is the revealer of the Father. What the Father is has been brought into light by Him. He is called "the Word." The title "Word of God" is used both of the living and the written Word, and this suggests certain resemblances between Christ and the Bible.

We have, first of all, certain verbal resemblances. "I am the *Bread of Life*," said the Saviour; "if any man eat of Me he shall live for ever"; "Man shall not live by *bread* alone, but by every word of God," was spoken by Him of the written Word. Again, He said, "I am the *Light of the world*"; and we put alongside of this the words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is a *light* to my path." The living Word "is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him"; and we are exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." Many other verbal resemblances might be traced out between the living and the written Word.

Further, Christ and the Bible are both *Divine* and *human*. In what a remarkable manner do the Deity and humanity of our Lord display themselves at Sychar's well, where, after the Son of Man asks for a drink of water from the woman, He, as Son of God, offers her living water.

And how human are the stories of the Bible—of Boaz and Ruth, of Jacob and Rachel! At the same time what wondrous and unfathomable revelations are contained in it.

The living and the written Word resemble each other in that while they are both *Jewish*, they are at the same time both *universal*. Our Lord was a Hebrew and of the royal line; but He is the Saviour of the world. The Bible as to its human side is an eastern book, written in the east by Jewish penmen, and having an intensely Jewish outlook; while at the same time its message is universal in its application.

Lastly, the *Holy Spirit* is needed to understand both the Person and the Book. "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"; and the same Interpreter is necessary to enable us to understand the spiritual teachings of the Bible.

The Bible is the Book of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is its centre and circumference, its heart, its life, its glory. Take Christ from the Bible and what have you left? Not much of importance that is intelligible, and nothing that is essential to salvation. All through the Old Testament our attention is drawn to a coming King and a coming sacrifice. In promise and prophecy and picture we

are pointed to a coming One, whose sufferings and death and subsequent glory are depicted with minute detail. When we reach the Gospels we see that the coming One has come; we are face to face with the wondrous Person of the Christ of God. Passing on to the Acts we behold the power of the same Person exhibited in and through His disciples on earth. The Book of the Acts might fittingly be called the Acts of the risen and glorified Saviour by the Holy Spirit through His servants. In the Epistles we have our Lord's precepts, while in the Apocalypse we are pointed on to the programme of events that will take place at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What does the Lord Jesus Christ say about the Bible? He stretches one arm, as it were, over the whole of the Old Testament, and sets upon it the seal of His divine authority. "The [Old Testament] Scriptures testify of Me." "Moses wrote of Me." With these Scriptures He confuted His opponents. To them He appeals in proof of His Messiahship. And He takes up those Old Testament miracles which have aroused so much criticism and even ridicule—the Flood, Jonah and the whale, Lot's wife—and He reaffirms them as matters of fact.

And He stretches His other arm over the whole of the New Testament when He promises that further teaching to His disciples which they were not in a position to receive until His death and resurrection and the coming of the great Interpreter, the Spirit of truth, who was to lead them into all the truth.

It is the Son of God Himself who again and again declares Himself to be co-equal with the Father; it is He who underscores His atoning death; and it is He who affirms so emphatically the awful truth of eternal punishment.

In short, the Lord Jesus sets His seal upon all that all the prophets have spoken, so that the question: "Do I believe the Bible?" resolves itself into the question, "Do I believe *Christ*?" Christ and the Bible stand or fall together. The living Word and the written

Word testify to each other. Said Martin Luther, "There is only one Person, and only one Book." Blessed is he who rests his soul upon the Person, believing all that the Book says of Him. Nothing can touch him.

Proofs are in great demand to-day. Men say they will not accept that for which they have no evidence. Honest doubt is not to be rebuked. Nathaniel was an honest doubter. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" he asked. But he was open to conviction; he was ready to receive the truth; and after his interview with the Saviour it was he who gave expression to the bold confession: "Thou art the Son of God." The Lord Jesus did not call for a blind, unreasonable faith. He said, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not."

The Bible proves itself. Think of its unique position in the world, its miraculous preservation, its fertilizing effect on the mind of man, its wonderful moral power over the lives of those who receive its teachings. It bears its own credentials, it authenticates itself. It reveals God and discloses what man is, and unfolds the wondrous plan of redemption in the person and work of the God-Man.

But to the believer the strongest proof that the Bible is God's Book is the fact that he possesses the key to the Book—Christ Himself. The believer does not accept the Bible as the Word of God on the authority of any man, or church, or council. God Himself has given him the assurance that it is His Book. It is in the Bible and in the Bible alone that the converted man finds the explanation of the change through which he has passed. By believing on Christ he has the key to the Book. The truths of the Bible are bound up with the experiences of his new life. He might as well deny his very existence as deny that the Bible is God's Word. His conviction of the inspiration and authority of the written Word is unshakable, for he has a personal knowledge of its theme and life and glory—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Answers to Correspondents.

Is the Wife of the Lamb the Church ?

E.M.S.—There are many points in the description of the bride, the Lamb's wife, which is the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21.), which identify it as the church and not Israel. We will name three of the principle of these :

(1) It descends "out of heaven from God" (ver. 10). The church is undoubtedly heavenly in calling and in character, and will have been in heaven for some time, when the events of this part of Scripture take place, and, so, ready to come out of it, bearing its heavenly character and having the glory of God. Israel is earthly in calling and in character, and never will be in heaven to come out of it; all her blessings are connected with the earth.

(2) In the foundations of the walls of this city are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (ver. 14). The apostles laid the foundations of the church (Eph. 2. 20). Had the city been Israel, it must have had the twelve sons of Jacob in the foundation, and not the twelve apostles.

(3) There is no temple in it (ver. 22). The church is the dwelling-place of God, for it groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2. 21), so that it has no need of a temple within it for God to dwell in as separate from the rest of the city; it is all temple, God fills it; while Israel

will have her temple at Jerusalem, as Ezekiel plainly states.

The Apostle Paul, who was specially raised up to minister the truth as to the church, does not fail to speak of it in this character. In 2 Corinthians 11. 2, he likens the saints to a chaste virgin espoused to one husband—Christ; and there can surely be no mistaking the very definite language of Ephesians 5. 25-32.

The one connection that the holy Jerusalem seems to have with Israel is that upon the twelve gates of it are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. But this presents no difficulty. Twelve is the number of administration, and this, which was first of all vested in Israel, will, in the Millennium, be centred in the holy Jerusalem, but it will pass out to the nations of the earth through Israel. The gates of the great cities of this world are open day and night in order that supplies from all quarters of the earth may flow into them. The gates of this city will stand always open, not to receive supplies, but to minister them—the knowledge and glory of God to earth's remotest bounds, for God and the Lamb will dwell within her; but all will flow through the twelve tribes of Israel, God's earthly people, without whom the nations can have no blessing at all.

Will man have another chance of salvation in another life ?

P.—You may, as you put it, like the poet, "faintly trust the larger hope," but you will be foolish indeed if you do, for there is no gospel of the "larger hope" in the Holy Scriptures. Men have tried to find one there; some think that they have done so, but they are deceiving their own hearts and others too. Their hope is a false hope.

But why should you, or any other man, want to faintly trust a larger hope when

there is a glorious Saviour to trust in—God's beloved Son, who by His one great sacrifice has obtained eternal redemption for all who do trust Him? Why do you desire another chance in another life when God is giving you one so great and gracious now?

The gospel is sent to you now—sent without charge—God Himself having been at all the cost of it; and of the present period, He says, "Behold NOW is

the accepted time; behold NOW is the day of *salvation* " (2 Cor. 6. 2); not at a future time. Of that we read, " It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the *judgment* " (Heb. 9. 27).

Permit us to urge you to let this one

glorious God-sent gospel be enough for you, as it has been enough for millions; and do not be blinded by any one of the many deceivers which divine wisdom foretold us should enter the world (2 John).

Is there any merit in Faith ?

W. H. M. writes :

" In October issue of ' Scripture Truth ' (1913), you say under title ' Law and Grace,' ' God is all, man is nothing. It is not a mixture of God and man, it is all of God.' I would like you to say if it is quite correct to say man is nothing, since before he can be saved *he must believe*. Does not this seem that man has something to do ? "

The paper in question dealt with the Epistle to Galatians, in which it is clearly taught that no man can be justified by the works of the law (2. 16). This was in view in the above statement. The works of men in their natural condition are corrupt, like themselves; there is no merit in them, nor can they be acceptable to God. This means that if God had not intervened for the salvation of men they must have ever remained at a distance from Him and under His righteous displeasure. But God has intervened. He sent His Son, " who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father " (1. 4). Men are not asked to contribute one iota to that work; neither their good deeds or their bad, as they might speak, affect it in any way. It was a work done entirely outside of them, and not at their request or according to their will, but entirely according to the will of God.

In the gospel God proclaims to all men that on the basis of the work of Christ—

His perfect sacrifice—He can pardon and justify them. This blessing is available for all; but only those who, believing God's testimony, appropriate it by faith, enjoy the benefits of it. Is, then, their faith meritorious? Certainly not. A hungry man takes the dinner offered to him, but we do not applaud him for his faith in his benefactor. Nor does he, when filled and warmed by it, congratulate himself upon his faith in the matter, but he thanks the one who provided it for him. Even so, when a guilty and helpless sinner hears the glad tidings of God's marvellous grace and believes, we cannot applaud his faith; if he had not done so, he would have sinned fearfully against God, for he would have made Him a liar.

Justification on the principle of faith stands in complete contrast to works, and is the acknowledgment on the part of the one who believes that this blessing comes as a result of the free grace of God entirely, and not because of any merit of his. It is true that faith pleases God (Heb. 11. 6). But even as to this we must say: " 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 .

" *Put your trust in the Lord.*" (Psalm 4. 5.)

In the measure in which we truly recognize Him as our Lord and ourselves as His possession will it be easy to " put our trust " in Him. Do not we all take the charge of those things that we purchase? If the shepherd purchase a flock of sheep, does he not intend to provide for and take care of them? And the more they cost the more carefully will he tend them. Our Good Shepherd has paid for us an infinite price, and we are not merely the sheep of His pasture and the subjects of His kingdom, but we are members of that church which is the bride whom He loves. Well may we " put our trust " in Him who loves us with love unique and unparalleled !

Judgment or Judgments ?

THE following lecture, delivered in Washington, U.S.A., by Dr. W. H. Bates, and published there, has been sent to me with the remark that it affords "*proof that even in America there are some who preach sound doctrine.*"

This lecture is a clear and useful exposition of an interesting and important theme. The question of the future is one that always appeals to the heart and conscience. None can afford to ignore it. How inexplicable is the attitude of many Christians who do not seem to care, and who never seriously set themselves to study the Scriptures with the object of ascertaining what God has been pleased to say on this subject.

H. P. B.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF MATTHEW 25.

The International Sunday-school lesson of October 16, 1910 (Matt. 25. 31-46) was entitled "The Last Judgment." It was regarded as the final judgment, a general judgment, a grand assize, in which all humanity—those then living upon the earth and the rest resurrected from the dead—are to be gathered, their case adjudicated, their destiny adjudged and declared. And it was so treated in all the multitudinous expositions and lesson-helps I saw, with possibly an exception or two. But is this correct ?

1. *Is there a general judgment?* The first question (others afterward) to be determined was, Is the judgment of Matthew 25. a general judgment ?

In a Bible class taught by a justice of the United States Supreme Court, the question was asked, "Who are judged in this judgment?" With a suggestive discrimination that put interrogation points into the minds of all the class, the distinguished jurist answered: "Judgment will pass upon all who are there to be judged." To a general look of inquiry, a member instantly interjected, quoting Christ's words from John 5. 24, "He that heareth My words and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into [R.V.] judgment."

Is it so that believers shall not come into this judgment? Why not?

This judgment is, on the face of it, an

assize, a trial, an adjudication, the issue undetermined until the case proceeds and is concluded. The question of eternal life is then and there decided. This, plainly, is the record. But the believer already "hath everlasting life,"—an inalienable possession (John 10. 28, 29; 6. 39, 40, 44, 54). He is "in Christ" (Rom. 8. 1), "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2. 24). Already "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 20), the penalty of his sins was borne on the cross. There He was judged and acquitted. He is "justified from all things" (Acts 13. 39). His debts are all paid, and receipted with a carmine seal; and now shall He be brought into court to answer again for those same debts? Nay, verily.

Moreover, so far as the record goes, there are no dead people in this judgment. In order to get all the dead there, they have to be read in as the outcome of a general or simultaneous resurrection, for which I find no Scripture warrant whatever. If the Holy Spirit meant ever to reveal the fact of a general resurrection, would He not—if this is a general judgment—of all places put it in here? In Matthew's whole Gospel three facts of resurrection are mentioned: "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?" (22. 28); Christ's own resurrection (28. 6); "and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection" (27. 52, 53); but a general resurrection is nowhere so much as even remotely hinted at. To read it in here is simply gratuitous and unwarranted. No dead, therefore, in this judgment.

If there are no living church-believers and no resurrected dead, in this judgment, then doubly is a general judgment impossible.

2. *Is there a general resurrection?* In Rev. 20. 5, 6, we read of a "first resurrection," which is of the righteous dead who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Here are, plainly, two resurrections (first, of the righteous dead,

and, second, of the wicked dead) with a thousand years between them. We also read in 1 Thessalonians 4. 16: "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." Here is the first resurrection, which is of the righteous dead, and there is no mention of the dead out of Christ. If they are there, they have to be read in, for which there is no call except it be at the demands of an erroneous exegesis. When it comes to unwarranted "reading in," what limit shall be placed to the proceeding? The logical limit seems to be only the capacity of one's fertile fancy to conceive. And as to getting rid of these two literal resurrections by the "spiritualizing" process, surely this also is gratuitous and unwarranted.

That which, in my studies, longest stood in my way and presented the greatest (and what for a time seemed an insuperable) difficulty, was John 5. 28, 29—"Marvel not at this, for the hour* is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

I had been told, in my boyhood school-days, that a comma marks a pause long enough to count one; a semicolon two, a colon three, a period four. Here were certainly two resurrections—to "life" and to "damnation"—with only a comma between them; *i.e.* to say, they were practically simultaneous—a resurrection of all the righteous and wicked, and at one time: a "general" resurrection and consequently a general judgment.

The difficulty that seemed so great and insuperable was removed thus: One day I was reading Luke 4. 16-21, "And he

* This "hour" (*hora*) is by no means necessarily a sixty-minute affair. In this same connection there is an "hour" (John 5. 25) which has continued on from that time to the present. My New Testament Greek Lexicon gives, as a definition of *hora*, this: "A limited portion of time marked out by part of a settled routine or train of circumstances." In the New Testament *hora*, is translated 88 times *hour*, 11 times *time*, 3 times *season* (John 5. 35; 2 Cor. 7. 8; Philem. 15), once *high time*, once *short time*, and once *instant*. This "hour" will, of course, be long enough for the "train of circumstances" to run its course, be it longer or shorter.

came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book he found the place where it is written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

I turned back to the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, the passage that Jesus read, and found that He "sat down" at a comma. The next clause is: "and the day of vengeance of our God." The "year" of grace—the "day" of judgment. That which Jesus read was then "fulfilled" (ver. 21): the very next clause, which He did not read, separated from the other by only a comma, . . . is not yet fulfilled and is yet future. If Isaiah wrote the passage 698 B.C., then up to this year of grace 1913, 2611 years have elapsed, and how much time will yet pass before "the day of vengeance of our God," who can tell? Thus we have the Bible's own determination of the length of time that may be covered by a comma.

If this little punctuation mark already covers 2611 years, with an indefinite number of years yet to come, why should I have any trouble with the thousand years (Rev. 22. 4, 5) that are indicated by the comma separating between the resurrections of "life" and "damnation"? So, when the good Professor represents "the resurrection as but a single transaction in which there shall be a simultaneous coming forth of both righteous and wicked" (p. 16), and asks: "Are we not forced to believe that both the righteous and the wicked are raised in the same resurrection?" I answer, No, by no manner of means; far from it. Why should we be "forced" to believe what is not true? . . .

3. *Who are, and who are not, subjects of this judgment?* "All who are there to

be judged," said the Jurist. Universal mankind are popularly thought to be there. So far as the record goes, however, the personnel of this judgment consists of the judge and His retinue, His "brethren" and "the nations." But, as we have already seen, no living believers, *i.e.* those who have "believed" unto "everlasting life," and no righteous dead, are there. Are there any others who should be excluded as *subjects* of this judgment?

Christ, in the great Commission (Matt. 28. 19) said: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all [R.V.] *the nations*, baptizing," etc. In the judgment scene, according to Matthew 25. 32, "Before Him shall be gathered all *the nations*" (R.V.). Who are "the nations"?

The Greek word translated "nations," *ethnos*, (which enters into our word "ethnology") is used in the New Testament 164 times. It is rendered 93 times *Gentiles*, 64 times *nation*, 5 times *heathen*, 2 *people*. My New Testament lexicon gives, *for the plural*, this definition: "nations or people, as distinguished from the Jews." In Numbers 23. 9 we read: "From the top of the rocks I see him," *i.e.* collective Israel, and it is added, they "shall not be reckoned among the nations." Says Alford, on Matthew 25. 32: "The expression *all the nations* implies *all the nations of the world* as distinguished from *the elect already gathered to Him*, just as the Gentiles were by that name distinguished from His chosen people the Jews" (p. 176). If the foregoing be accepted, then it must be allowed that the Jews are excluded as *subjects* of this judgment. If the Jews are not in it, if there are no resurrected dead people in it, then the only ones that can be in it, simply and solely, must be the "nations"—"Gentiles"—then living upon the earth.

Thus, to our query, the answer must be: The Gentiles are, and the Jews are not the subjects of this judgment.

4. *Christ's discourse in Matthew 24. and 25.* The disciples ask him (24. 3) three questions: (1) "When shall these things be?" *i.e.* the destruction of the Jerusalem temple; (2) "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" (3) "And of the end of the world?" *i.e.* the consummation of the age.

Space does not permit an explication of the answers to these questions. . . . It must now suffice to say that in the con-

summation of the age, which involves Christ's coming again to this earth and His dealing with those upon it, there will "then" (25. 1) be a threefold testing: (a) Of profession (parable of the virgins, 25. 1-13); (b) Of service (parable of the talents, 25. 14-30); and (c) Of the Gentile nations (25. 31-46); and this third testing is only, so far as the record goes, on the ground of the Gentiles' treatment of Christ's "brethren" (25. 40) in what had been previously (certainly in a limited time) transpiring.

What is involved in that "treatment" is a subject of inquiry which cannot—need not—be entered into here. But it should be borne in mind that the treatment is the declared ground of the nation's judgment. If there is anything else, it has to be read in. And how much *has been* read in!

5. *The "Brethren"—Who? What? Why?* But who are the "brethren"? As the Jews are not, and the Gentiles are, the subjects of this judgment, and as all who are not Gentiles are Jews, but one answer seems to be possible, *viz.* the "brethren" are Jews!

There are many, many prophecies concerning the Jews yet to be fulfilled. If anything seems to be plainly taught in Scripture, it is that there shall yet be a re-gathering of Israel in Palestine. For specimen prophecies take these: Isaiah 14. 1; Jeremiah 23. 7, 8; Deuteronomy 30. 1-6; Isaiah 11. and 12.; Jeremiah 16. 14, 15; 32. 37, 38; Ezekiel 36. 24-28; 37. 21, 22. There is a prevalent practice of visiting upon the Jew very literally all the predicted judgments and denounced curses, but when it comes to the promised blessings, these are, by a "spiritualizing" process, filched away from poor Israel and handed over to the church! I decline to be a party to any such unspiritual, unscriptural, dishonorable, dishonest, felonious transaction. Give the Jew all that belongs to him, good as well as ill. Some day he will come to his own, and then he will not be the tail-ender of a gluttonous Gentilism, but the head of nations (Deut. 28. 12, 13). In this re-gathering will be the time and place of the "brethren."

Among many other things foretold will occur Israel's re-gathering and conversion—"and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11. 26)—in connection with which there will be an evangelizing (the Jew will be fully equipped with the

languages and money for it) such as the world has never seen—"a nation born in a day"!—and a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy (2. 28-32) that, I ween, shall make the Spirit-outpouring at Pentecost seem as shower-drops before a mighty rain! This evangelizing *must* be done by the Jews, for the church will then, as we shall presently see, have been removed from the earth. The Book of Matthew is the gospel of the Kingdom. The first preaching of that gospel was by John the Baptist, was continued by Christ and His disciples, and ended * with the Jewish rejection of their King. There came in its place "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20. 24)—the church's message to a lost world—which should by no means be confounded with the gospel of the Kingdom. . . . The interrupted message will be taken up and proclaimed by our Lord's Jewish brethren. Here is the place of the fulfilment of Matthew 24. 14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all [R.V.] the nations"—the Gentiles †—"and then shall the end come". As the Gentile nations treat these evangelizing "brethren" (Zech. 8. 13, 23) of Christ, accepting or rejecting their message, so they treat Him, and shall be judged accordingly. Thus is seen the relation of the brethren to, and their place in, this judgment scene.

II. THE JUDGMENT OF 2 CORINTHIANS 5.

While, as we have seen, there are no "believers" in the judgment of Matthew 25., they nevertheless have an accounting or rendering of their own for "the things done in the body" (2 Cor. 5. 10). But this is not a *krisis* judgment, an assize, when doom is decided and declared—no, no, that matter is settled when men "believe" unto "everlasting life" (John 5. 24)—but simply a time when desert is determined. Nor is it a "throne" (Matt. 25. 31; Rev. 20. 11) judgment, but a *bema* tribunal ("judgment seat," Rom. 14. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 10), which two things should not be confounded.

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and

the dead in Christ * shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). This is called the Rapture [catching away] of the church.

What is revealed in 2 Corinthians 5. 1-10, and also in 1 Corinthians 3. 9-15, is of the same persons and for the same purpose, and therefore belongs to, while presenting variant aspects of, the same scene. It is then that "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5. 10). It is then that (1 Cor. 3. 11-15) the "gold, silver, precious stones" in the superstructure builded on Christ shall "be made manifest," "revealed by fire," and the "wood, hay, stubble" material "shall be burned." The wise and worthy builder "shall receive a reward"; the unwise builder, building unworthily, though building on Christ as a foundation the same as the other, "shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Salvation is a gift: rewards are earned. The question here is not at all as to being "saved," but as to being rewarded. This "judgment" is simply and solely a tribunal of award, and it is for believers only—those translated from the earth (1 Cor. 15. 51-53) when Christ comes for His saints and those "in Christ" raised from the dead in the "first resurrection." This is a judgment, not upon the believer's person, but upon his works, awarding rewards therefor.

It may not be amiss to interject here, that this truth, apprehended and appropriated, will beget perfect quietness and assurance in the hearts of those dear Christians who are fearsome and distressed by the question of whether they shall be "saved"; and it is fitted also to produce, "yea, what carefulness; yea, what clearing of selves; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal," in regard to conduct.

As a specimen of reprehensible exegesis, reference may be made to the common use of the words, "we must all appear

* The "gospel of the kingdom" does not thereafter appear in the New Testament. The last occurrence of the phrase is Matthew 24. 14.

† The heathen nations that have not heard the gospel of the grace of God.—ED.

* Not the church saints only, but all "the dead in Christ," of whatever dispensation—those saved by a prospective as well as by a retrospective faith in Him—are in this resurrection.

before the judgment seat of Christ," in proof of a general judgment—a wrongful use because of utterly ignoring the context. Take the whole passage (2 Cor. 5. 1-10): "For *we* know that . . . *we* have a building of God," etc. Who are the "we"? Believers and believers only, of course. And in all the verses that follow, except one, there is, a round dozen of times, the very same "we," and none others; and in the excepted verse (5), "us," denoting the same persons, appears twice. These are the ones, and none else so far as the record goes, who "must appear before the judgment seat of Christ." This being so, the general-judgment notion seems to be again most effectually disposed of.

Thus is seen the relation of believers to, and their place in, such judgment as they have.

III. THE JUDGMENT OF REVELATION 20.

There remains to be considered the Great White-Throne judgment (Rev. 20. 11). This is the final judgment. How this judgment can be confounded with the judgment of Matthew 25. and that one made the last judgment, presents a problem of exegetical obfuscation that is, to me, a psychological puzzle.

1. That is at the second advent of Christ; this "a thousand years" later.

2. That is distinctly and definitely upon the earth (Joel 3. 2, 12, R.V.) where "the nations" are; in this, the earth has "fled away" (Rev. 20. 11).

3. In that, are the then living nations; in this, the dead, and they are yielded up from the sea, death, and hades (Rev. 20. 13).

4. In that, there are no dead; in this none but the dead.

5. In that, there is no hint of resurrection; in this, all are resurrected.

6. In that, there is a mixture—sheep and goats; in this, all are of one kind.

7. In that, the judged stand before Christ as "the Son of Man" (Matt. 25. 31); in this, they "stand before God" (Rev. 20. 12).

8. In that, there are no "books" of account, but the principle of judgment is the treatment of the "brethren"; in this, "books are opened" and judgment is rendered according to "those things which are written in the books," in which record there can be for uncounted myriads no possible "brethren" debit.

IV. SUMMARY OF JUDGMENTS.

The Scriptures teach *four* judgments—the first past, the others future:

1. The Judgment of the Cross (John 19. 17, 18), in which penalty was executed for sin (Gal. 3. 13; 1 Pet. 2. 24; 3. 18), and the believing sinner, because of Christ's expiatory work in his behalf, is acquitted and comes no more into condemnatory judgment (Rom. 8. 1; John 5. 24).

2. The Judgment-Seat Tribunal, when Christ comes for His saints, and recompense is made to them—the translated and the first-resurrection believers—for their works (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17; Rom. 14. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 10; 1 Cor. 4. 5; Rev. 22 12; 1 Cor. 3. 8, 13-15; 2 Tim. 4. 8).

3. The Glory-Throne Judgment, when Christ comes with His retinue of angels and saints (Matt. 25. 31; Jude 14, 15; 1 Cor. 6. 2) to judge the then living Gentile nations (Matt. 25. 32-46; Joel 3. 2, 12, R.V.; Zeph. 3. 8).

4. The Great White-Throne Judgment, when is the second resurrection, that of the wicked dead, and sentence is passed upon them (Rev. 20. 5, 11-15).

The first was at Calvary, A.D. 30; the second is in the upper regions to which the church has been translated, and occurs at the undated end of the church-age; the third is upon the earth at the end of that week; the fourth a thousand years later.

Such is, in brief, our Biblical Study on the Judgment question, in which, because of space limits, much has, of necessity, been left out. It is believed, however, that this survey has been made from authoritative, not assumed, starting points; that bearings have been determined by the celestial observations; that the lines have been run according to what and to only what is given in the record; and that the readings have been true to the divinely given data, the compass-needle not deflected by theological prejudice or philosophical speculation. I formerly implicitly believed in a general judgment, with its pre-requisite general resurrection, because I was so taught; but nevertheless the doctrine was always unsatisfactory because it made of the Scriptures, on this subject, an unintelligible, confused, labyrinthine tangle.

It is submitted that what is here set forth in outline presents an intelligible, orderly, consistent, harmonious system of the Bible's doctrine of "last things."

(Abridged).

Our Great Hope.

(J. T. MAWSON).

The first and last words from the Lord in Glory.

THE enraptured silence of the disciples of the Lord, as the cloud of glory carried Him out of their sight, was broken by the voice of two men in white apparel, saying, "This same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." On swift pinion, from the very gates of the glory into which the Lord had entered, they had come, bringing **THE FIRST MESSAGE** from Him, as the ascended and glorified Christ, to His servants on earth. So that simultaneously with His taking His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high the announcement was made upon earth of His return to it. Before the Holy Ghost came to indwell the disciples, and to lead them into all those blessed truths that were afterwards revealed; or one word of gospel was preached by them to the multitudes of sinful men, this announcement was made—**THE LORD IS COMING BACK AGAIN.**

This fact should arrest attention and lay hold of the soul of the Christian with great power, for it proves how tremendously important to the Lord is this second coming, and how He intended that it should have the first place in the thoughts of those who love Him upon the earth.

Sixty years passed by, and the last of those beloved men whose ears heard that first message from the Lord in glory was about to depart; but before he closed his service on earth the Revelation of things to come was given to him, and the last words of it from the Lord, closing up the Holy Scriptures, were a confirmation of that first announcement, "*Surely I come quickly*" (Rev. 22. 20). Yes. **THE FIRST AND LAST WORDS FROM THE LORD IN**

THE GLORY TO HIS SERVANTS ON EARTH WERE ABOUT HIS COMING AGAIN.

One of the strangest things in the history of the church is that this hope of the Lord's return was a lost hope for centuries, and that these words spoken by the Lord in the fulness of His love for His own, to cheer them during His absence, should have been so little treasured and understood. It is very strange even now, since the truth of it has been clearly ministered, that it should so little affect the lives of those who know of it, and who have received the doctrine of it, at least. And yet we have not far to seek for the solution to this strange thing; it is revealed in the Lord's words to the assembly at Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2. 4).

A Living Hope.

To be effective the truth of the Lord's coming must not be a doctrine in the head merely, but a hope in the heart. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3). And for this Christ must be supreme in the affections. "What think ye of Christ?" is still the great test of our state, and the measure of our rightness with regard to this and every other truth of God.

We have seen a young bride-to-be upon board ship eagerly anticipating the end of the voyage, and, as the port of destination came in view, foremost upon the deck, and with binoculars eagerly scanning the jetty for the loved face, and longed-for greeting of the one who possessed her heart, and the glad excitement when at last he was discovered, true to his word, waiting to receive her. The hope of meeting him

who was to be her husband was a great reality to her because she loved him and knew that he loved her.

It is here that the church on earth has failed; other things instead of Christ have filled her heart; she has left her first love, and so has ceased to long and look for her Lord, and having failed in this she has failed in everything.

But that which has been lost by the mass may be restored to the individual, for the Spirit of God is still here to make the love of Christ a reality to all who long after Him. And the Lord Himself makes a wonderful appeal to the affections of His saints in the closing chapter of Revelation when He says, "I am the root and offspring of David, THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR." He intends that the heart should be awakened by this presentation of Himself; and that in unison with the Spirit the bride shall say, "Come."

Mark well: it is the BRIDE that says "Come." The heart undivided, fully

possessed by Him who gave Himself to win her, responding to His strong and changeless love without reserve—this is characteristic of the bride. This is not true of the church to-day; it will be true of her when she is caught up to the glory: *it may be true of each one of us now.* But how shall it become true of us? As we yield ourselves to the sweet influence of His love, as we allow His words, "I have loved thee" (Rev. 3. 9), to enter our souls, and as we see Him arising in the darkness as the bright and morning star, it will become true of us.

The knowledge of His love will be our crown, the choicest thing that we possess, and this we shall hold fast, for it will be brighter and better to us than the brightest and best that a fickle world can offer.

"Behold! I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," He has said. Be it ours to reply, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22. 20).

A Song of Hope.

(W. H. SANSON).

L ORD, I am weak, and all is dark before me,
Strengthen my heart, my Guide and comfort be,
That through the days of this my desert journey,
My hand in Thine, I thus may walk with Thee.

Jesus, Thou Lord of life, and light, and glory,
Food of my soul, my sun, my shield, my song,
God's suffering Lamb, in Calvary's awful story,
Centre of praise to all the heavenly throng.

Star of the morn, I watch for Thine arising;
Speak to my heart while I my vigil keep,
Till Love's sweet call, Thy myriad saints surprising,
Claims for itself the quick and those who sleep.

Thus Thou wilt come, Thy glory all unveiling,
Thy splendour chasing all earth's clouds away;
And all Thine own, with joy Thine advent hailing,
Dwell in Thy love through everlasting day.

The Glory of the Lord.

(J. McBROOM).

Address at Forest Hill, S.E., 28th January, 1914.

Psalm 22. 1-21.

WE have been led during these few days to a deep sense of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in going down into death for us. It is this that brings us all to one level in the presence of God, and I desire to say a few words about that solemn scene which surpasses every scene. I will ask one question which will bring before us the greatness of the Person who went to the cross—Who is He who died? Who is before the mind of the Spirit of God in these words on the lips of David in Psalm 22? It is Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Let us turn together to the New Testament and read a passage as to who this blessed person is who is here seen as forsaken of God. In the second of Philipians, the Spirit of God, in seeking to exhort the saints as to what was to be expected from them in their daily life, says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, **SUBSISTING IN THE FORM OF GOD.**" That is the word. "Who being in the form of God." What does that clause convey to our minds? It surpasses our feeble conceptions. All the majesty and the glory and the might of the Deity is there. "Ye know," says the same writer, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though **HE WAS RICH,** for your sakes became poor." How marvellous was the condescension of that One who is God.

The first chapter of John's Gospel, which speaks of Him as the *Son of God*, insists that He was **GOD**, and I dwell upon that, because to-day there are many who admit He is the Son of God in some sense as a creature, who deny His true and Godhead glory. But it is in the presence of the fact of His Godhead glory that my soul falls in

adoration. He existed in the form of God. That does not mean mere semblance or appearance. The word "form" in the passage carries with it the thought of essential being, but more, it refers to all that which belongs to Deity, all that measureless, unthinkable grandeur, and greatness, and glory. He existed in the form of God, and thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God. Why? Because He is God the Son.

The Jews, when He was here, took up stones to stone Him because He bore witness to this truth, and they still will not have the New Testament Scriptures which unfold it; but the Old Testament Scriptures prove that the babe born in Bethlehem's manger was the mighty God. "Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9. 6). "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5. 2). He existed in the form of God, with all that belongs to it, all the greatness, and the train of it, a glimpse of which we get in Isaiah 6.

"**HE EMPTIED HIMSELF.**" He could not empty Himself of Godhead. One of the greatest and most blessed attributes of Godhead as we have learned it is unchangeability. When a lowly Man, sleeping upon a wooden pillow in the boat in the lake of Galilee, He was nothing less than God.⁴ We live to-day in the presence of all the brokenness and the ruin into which the church has fallen in her departure from the truth, but I say it with a measure of

triumph, that I am deeply glad to be permitted to stand in the testimony of Christ, and maintain, in one's feeble way, the greatness, and the glory, and the grandeur of *that blessed Person who is God and man in one person*, and who, the moment He becomes man, binds together the moral universe of God in His glorious person. If you want to find God, there you will find Him; if you want to find man as he ought to be, there you will find him; all that is to be found in regard to the glory of God and the blessing of man is found in Him. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and so, our souls fall in worship before the greatness and blessedness of this glorious Person.

Well may we bow our heads in the light of Calvary. In the verses I have read, this blessed Person is there despised of men, and forsaken of God. "I am a worm, and no man, and despised of the people." This is sufficient, surely, in the power of the grace of God, to put us down, and to keep us down. But while taking the place of nothingness, our souls will burst forth in praise to Him. In the language of the Apostle, "He loved *me*." Yes, each can say for himself, if there had not been another sinner on the earth, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me."

You remember that at various times during His passage through the world men sought to stone Him, but they could not stone Jesus. The death of stoning was not low enough. Oh, ponder it my soul! that in the Psalm I have read (ver. 16) we find the thought that the death of Jesus was to be *the death of the cross*—the worst, the most cruel, the most shameful death that human ingenuity could devise. Ah, but God had an intention in permitting that. We find it in Romans 8. 3, and it is this: that in that blessed, divine, glorious, worthy Person, who never sinned, who never made a mistake, that in that glorious Person He might set forth His estimate of the whole order of sinful man, and thus condemned sin in the flesh.

I look then at Psalm 22., which is in line with the sin-offering of Leviticus 4., and I see the consuming judgment of God falling upon Jesus in a substitutionary way. I see there consumed for the glory of God everything that in you and me was rebellious and obnoxious to the glory of God. Sin's lowest, worst, blackest act has brought out the great fountain of the love of God; and that act of shamefully gibbeting that blessed Man was in divine wisdom, and divine plan, and divine counsel, that by which our God would maintain and clear His own blessed glorious name and character—a character which you and I had outraged, for we had by our sins tarnished and brought dishonour on the glory of God. Oh the counsel, the plan, the wisdom, the resources of the wealth of God, all brought to light in that hour when that blessed and glorious Saviour was upon that cross.

I speak not of dogma or doctrine. Let Him come before our souls, the Creator, the Omnipotent, and the Ruler of the Universe, witness Him there in all His preciousness and excellence, forsaken of God, and despised of men. He is put upon that cross so that God might Himself clear the way whereby He might come out to you and me, and having brought us to an end in that judgment, He might begin anew, give us a new footing, a glorious footing, a divinely substantial footing on the basis of the resurrection of Christ. In that risen glorious Saviour I see objectively established the new creation for the glory of our God, where sin, nor want, nor woe can come. In John 16. 20–22 our Lord speaks of the birth of the new creation. The grave of Christ was the womb of the new creation, and John 20. gives us the birth of it.

As Balaam beheld the people of God in the vision of God the day after the brazen serpent had been lifted up, so we come in by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the ruin has been removed, and you, I, and every other saint is seen now in the risen life of the

risen Saviour; in a life which knows no stain, no breakdown, no taint, but a life which is divine in source and character, and is going up into an eternity of bliss to live with God and with Christ for ever.

Turn again to Psalm 22., for it gives us the basis of it all. A worthy servant of God who is at home now, whose name and memory we all revere, said, "The cross is the centre of all moral history." How do we understand that expression? I can think of the time when I came to the cross, and rolled my weary burden down, and joy was not a sufficient name for what I experienced then. I can understand the soul singing—

"We bless our Saviour's name—
Our sins are all forgiven."

Oh supreme delight and joy! I can think of the soul being led into the wilderness, and seeing the cross between it, and this godless world, and singing—

"This world is a wilderness wide,"

and then—

"'Tis the treasure we've found in His love,
That has made us now pilgrims below."

And I can go a little further and enter by the Spirit of God on to divine ground, according to the truth of Colossians, into the consciousness of association with the risen Saviour, in His own life, in His own relationship, as man before the Father. It is by the cross of Christ that we are formed in a new relationship, a new indissoluble bond, that while death may bring to an end—and will if the Lord tarry long enough—every link we have here naturally, we are in this new relationship with divine, eternal, unchangeable, holy affections. Thank God! He has come to us not with a half salvation, not with something that we may hang on to, but He has come to us with the outflow of His own heart. He has come to us to lift us on to the same platform as His own beloved Son.

I say sometimes that what surrounds

us to-day—Socialism, for instance—levels down. Christianity, thank God, levels up. What does it level us up to? To the level of an influential man, or a man of rank? No, thank God, but to the level of Christ. When we speak of the cross of Christ, we are all on one common level. His blessed cross brings us all down to one common level. Someone has put it: "If I were in a deep mine, and you on the top of a mountain, it would be as easy for me to reach the stars as for you to reach them," and that gives us the thought that between every man and the greatness of that blessed Man there is an infinite distance. But how it magnifies the infinite grace of our blessed God, He would make us nothing less than co-heirs with that One, who in the glory of His person is God, but in His down-stoop was Man, with all His grace and affection and tenderness and love, the Man who has drawn us near Himself. Our God would give us nothing less than this. He would level us up. We hear, ringing out of the blessed Scriptures, this truth: "That He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He who is Jehovah's fellow has stooped down into a broken-down world of confusion and death, and in doing so, He has woven, and is weaving a web of glory that will surround Him throughout the countless ages of eternity. He has entered a world of breakdown and chaos and confusion—for while all above speaks of glory and beauty and order, everything here speaks of chaos—He came, the Son, came to bring in order, as we sing sometimes—

"Lord of glory, thou didst enter
This dark world of sin and woe;
Veiled thy glory, yet 'twas witnessed
By Thine own while here below."

We are brought to that which is infinite, that which surpasses the human mind; we cannot find language great enough to give expression to our thoughts, so feeble they are. Over and over again we find the manifestation of the poverty of human language to give expression

to the greatness of this blessed, glorious, divine Person.

I would just say one word more on this Psalm 22. Do not forget this, that in the Psalms we have the expression of the heart and not doctrine. In them we get the experience of men of God like ourselves—joy and sorrow, ecstasy and despair. But this Psalm gives us the words of our blessed Lord. He gave utterance to the words of the first verse on the cross. We may say, and say truthfully, that here we get a look into what passed through that blessed heart in that dark hour. Faith can pierce that dark cloud, that dark pall; and see Him there in all the inexpressible loveliness, in all the ineffable sweetness of what He is to the Father. In that dark hour we can see Him as the altogether lovely One—"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

Now the cross is the centre of all moral history. As far as I have learned anything about that, [it is this: it is where every moral principle is adjusted. It is where everything of God comes to supremacy. It is there that every blessed principle of God asserts itself for the glory of God. It is there, mark you, as the second of Colossians says, that our Lord Jesus Christ, as it were, publicly demolished the enemy. He made a show of him openly, we are told. It was there, between the heavens and the earth, lifted up, that He triumphed gloriously, and we may well say, "The Lord is His name." . . . And the answer to it all is found in the Hallelujah Psalms. The last five Psalms begin and end with Hallelujah. Our God has decreed it. What you say, and what I say may go to the winds, but God's

word shall abide for ever. What has He decreed? That everything in the universe shall voice the praises of Jesus.

"Earth shuddered as He died,
God's well beloved Son."

The sun was in darkness, the rocks were rent, and there was an earthquake. But the day is coming when the heavens and the earth, all that hath breath, everything, with one vast, blessed holy choral strain, shall voice the praises of Jesus.

He took upon Him the form of a servant. Look at the two statements: the form of God, and the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of men, a real, blessed, glorious, holy Man, but there was an infinite distance between Him and every other man. He is God, even in His manhood He remains God. He was in the likeness of flesh of sin, but He remains in all His blessed glorious perfection as a unique Man, altogether outside the order of Adam's race, and yet a Man—blessed for ever be His name.

Oh, dear brethren, may His grace lead us at this time a little further into these glories. First of all, we must go back a little, because the incarnation of necessity precedes the atonement. If there is one truth in this blessed Book that God in His grace has given me to rejoice in, it is the truth that He who was God became Man. It is the central miracle of this Book—shall I say the central miracle of the universe? We read of emptying in connection with Him—He emptied Himself—in Philippians; it is fulness in Colossians, and all the fulness of the Godhead is there.

Matthew 11. 27.

The infiniteness of the Son's divinity was kept up in His humanity and therefore apparent humiliation, by His absolute inscrutability therein thus specially and signally maintained; while His oneness with the Father was made known in His competency to reveal, and supremacy of will in revealing, the Father. Both held their place most beautifully, maintaining the Person in the glory of communion with the Father, and the inscrutability of God thus manifested, while the Father was revealed.

J. N. D.

"I Want no other Argument."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

I WAS told the other day by a young servant of Christ that he purposed holding some meetings in a certain village where he was informed there were infidels, atheists, and other opponents to Christianity.

I was pleased to hear his proposal, and asked him how he intended to announce his meetings: whether he meant to advertise anti-infidel addresses or what? I had the impression that an advertisement of that kind might appeal to one who had had a college education, who had travelled a good deal and had been thrown into contact with all kinds of men and manners.

But to my great pleasure he replied that he hoped to preach the gospel to them, and asked me if I could suggest anything else.

"THE GOSPEL!" I thought for a moment of the infidels, atheists, and *hoc genus omne*, who might, out of curiosity, attend his meetings, and what they might expect from the lips of the young preacher. Would it not be well for him to meet them on their own ground, giving argument for argument and reason for reason? No, thought I, that might, of course, be done, and, occasionally, should be done; but, as he had chosen his subject, and had selected "the gospel," just as young David chose a stone from the brook, I said to him: "That is right, for we read that 'the gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'" (Rom. i. 16). That is where the power of God lies, not in clever arguments, nor in human reasoning, but in the gospel. For, supposing that you succeeded in out-arguing the infidel, and had proved to him the verity of your belief, so that he felt the necessity of abandoning his own line of thought, if that were all you did, you had not got lower down than the region of his brain. You had altered his views and ideas, but you had not reached his conscience

or heart. The man was still the same, His will remained unconvinced even though, mentally, he forsook his old ground. More than the mind is needed.

The gospel is not a system of argumentation, nor of "thrust and parry." It is "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and, as such, gives no quarter. It demands, and most rightly, the absolute surrender of the enemy. It is "the power of God" even though it may be resisted; but, mark, it is "the power of God unto salvation!" It wounds to heal, and kills to make alive.

The gospel is "good news"—good, not bad. The law was bad because it condemned the transgressor; but this is good because it proposes to bless him freely and fully. Only he must yield!

Yield what? His intellect? No. His mind, his reason, or what?

His will! That lies at the root of all opposition to the gospel and to God. The will is the cradle of a man's wishes, the seat and birthplace of his every bent and desire.

Get the will right and the man is right. The change from: "I want my own will" to "I desire the will of God" means the greatest of all changes. It is conversion. See it, practically, in the life of any notorious sinner, like Saul of Tarsus in sacred history, or in any one of your circle of acquaintances. His life is completely changed. How? By a total change of will. The will is always king, and how happy for the Christian to seek the "will of God."

I have never, after fifty years' experience, heard of anyone being argued into the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, or peace with God; but I have known of many who when they had heard the sweet story of the gospel—the love of God to guilty men, the death of Christ, in its saving value, and the invitation of

the Spirit to such as they—had surrendered their stubborn wills, bowed in repentance and submission, and discovered in that gospel the blessed key to peace and pardon and the settlement of all their difficulty.

The gospel assures us that "this is life eternal—to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3). And, if so, it clearly supplies the perfect antidote to atheism and infidelity, as well as, thank God, the care of every spiritual woe.

Precious gospel, so little known and so generally despised, did poor guilty man but know thy worth, but know Him who, with His redeeming worth, is thy glorious theme; had he but proved, in simple faith, thy peace-giving power,

thy light and sunshine, thy clear assurance, thy perfect suitability to all his deep, soul-disease; had he but heard in power, thy message of mercy, thy boundless grace, thy changeless terms, be his soul tossed by the heaviest storm, or tortured by the blackest of doubts; had he but seen and learned the beauties of Calvary and the glories of that blessed Saviour whom thy words depict, he would quickly discount his own thoughts, atheistic or other, and enthroned in heart and mind thy Theme and Subject—the ever blessed Lord Jesus Christ!

Thousands have done this for their joy in time and eternity.

In selecting "THE GOSPEL" for his subject my young friend was right.

The Flesh and the Spirit.

(WILLIAM BARKER)

Question.—If the Spirit is stronger than the flesh how is it that those in whom the Spirit dwells yield to the flesh so often?—D. E. L., Persia.

IT is quite true that we believers have the Spirit in us, but the flesh is there also, according to Galatians 5. 7; and these are contrary the one to the other. It is also true, in the abstract, that the Spirit is stronger than the flesh, but we shall greatly err if we suppose that the bare fact of the Spirit indwelling us is enough to secure us from yielding to the flesh. It is not so. Behold that field of waving corn. What a witness to the wisdom and power of God! But there would have been no field of corn had not the farmer cleared the ground, ploughed the land, and sown the seed. It is his toil and the mysterious processes of nature, set in motion by

God, which have brought forth this glorious harvest.

As in the natural so in the spiritual sphere. You, having believed the gospel, have the Spirit. Yes, but you must walk in the Spirit if you would not fulfil the desires of the flesh. You must sow to the Spirit if you would reap life everlasting (Gal. 6. 8). Such is the inexorable law. Not without prayer, not without feeding on the Word, not without a heart that has Christ as its object is the flesh kept in silence. Read Psalm 1.—The secret of soul-prosperity is there. In this holy business human strength is of no avail. We need the Spirit, and the Spirit is ours to give us His gracious help.

If there is one thing we need to recover it is a sense of the awfulness of sin. We must learn again that it is a stupendous thing for a man to break the law of God; that it is an awful thing for a man to fly in the face of God's prohibitions and

to work his own will; that sin is not a mere accident; that sin is not the mere spasmodic and spontaneous action of a thoughtless mind, but is a considered revolt against the will of God, and a spurning of His mercy.

Divine Strengthening.—2nd Paper.

(H. J. VINE).

1. "According to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts."—Eph. 3. 16-17.
2. "To walk worthily of the Lord, . . . strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks."—Col. 1. 10-11.

WE are to walk worthy of the Lord; to live well-pleasing to Him; and strength is given to enable us so to do. Men cannot see Christ in *our hearts*. They may see Him, however, in *our lives*, and the second side of divine strengthening has reference to this.

The Lord Jesus Christ was altogether pleasing to the Father when on earth. Inwardly and outwardly, all was harmonious. In the sweet-savour offerings (see Lev. 1. 9) we are given a beautiful foreshadowing of this. "*His inwards*" and "*His legs*," though distinguished very definitely, were nevertheless put "*together*" in the offering. The Saviour said of Himself, "I am *altogether* that which also I say to you" (John 8. 25, N.T.). This was, if we might so say, natural to Him, but it is not so with any of us, however much we may have grown spiritually; therefore prayer and waiting upon God for fresh grace and strength is continually necessary.

Inconsistencies often manifest themselves, but where the discordance is rightly felt, the soul turns to Him who can afresh give it touch and tone, strengthening and tuning it, so that the heart makes melody to the Lord.

Even Peter, who *inwardly* knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who called sinners of the Gentiles to himself, walked *outwardly* at variance with this at Antioch, so that Paul withstood him (Gal. 3. 14). And John, too, who cherished in his heart the love of Jesus for him, went off with the others when the Lord was smitten. Also Paul, whose faith and love were so strong, could, notwithstanding that, pursue a path against which he was warned by the Holy Spirit. If such dissonance was

seen in these honoured apostles, how much more so with us. True is the word, "*In many things we offend all*" (James 3. 2). Therefore we need to pray about these things, waiting upon our God and Father in the sense of His grace and love. The standard, however, must not be lowered. Christ is the standard. We must not measure ourselves by one another. That is folly. Our experience may be far below the standard, still we must not endeavour to bring it down to our experience: but seek, through divine grace and strength, that our experience may be brought up to the standard. This will be so fully one day, thanks be to God.

True Treasure.

We are strengthened, then, in the second sense of which we speak, with all power by the Holy Spirit that we may be walking here well pleasing to God. The strength given is according to *the might of God's glory*, so that we may be marked by endurance, long-suffering, joyfulness, and a spirit of thankfulness. These are very great qualities, princely valuables, enduring riches, incomparably better than this world's wealth which perishes. This must be so, seeing it takes such power and might to produce them.

To this end we are divinely strengthened. Not as the mighty men of old, who, before Christ came, were empowered like Samson to smite their enemies hip and thigh, laying thousands low in the dust at their feet. Not like David who could sing of the power by which he had "run through a troop," and "leaped over a wall," and overthrown all his foes. Neither is it the power which the preacher receives, to herald, it may be in trumpet tone, the glad tidings of grace for the guilty,

gathering the wanderers to the Saviour. None of these, right and proper in their place, are in view in the divine strengthening of which we speak.

So great is this work of God that nothing short of power according to the very might of His glory will do, even as it takes strength according to the riches of the Father's glory in the first instance. Not that we may DO some great thing as men speak: but that we may BE to the pleasure of our God and Father, outwardly as well as inwardly. He loves us so much, that He puts all this greatness into operation on our behalf, so that this priceless preciousness may be produced. He takes pleasure in His children. May we then seek progress in this direction to please Him. "A wise son maketh a glad father." "My son, if thine heart be wise, My heart shall rejoice, even Mine." "A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." "By knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." These are true treasures indeed.

It is important that we understand this exceedingly great matter, for moral wealth is little esteemed to-day. Material wealth claims the attention of most men.

Let it be remembered that even Saul had power come *upon* him, but he was far from being pleasing to God as to his own moral state. Judas, one of "the twelve," like the rest, would have the power of preaching and healing *upon* him, but he was "a demon," nevertheless. It is a new kind of power which is operating now, making us spiritual ourselves, and producing prosperity of such sort that gives delight to the heart of God. It makes Christ, His preciousness and His love, dear to our hearts, and then reproduces Him in our lives.

We are dependent upon God for it all, and we may be deeply thankful that this is so. Some there are in the affairs of this life who have others dependent

upon them. And though they would fain meet all the need of these for whom they love and care, yet it is often the case that they are unable to do so; not through lack of love, but through lack of means. It is not so with God and ourselves. His love truly is infinite, and so also are His resources and His power. Far more abundantly than we can ask or even think, He is able to do, "according to the power which works in us." This is the One we are dependent upon. What encouragement is here, even for the feeblest of His own. Let our faces be but turned in the right direction, and spiritual prosperity will surely follow.

A man once said to me, "I know what you preach is right." I asked him, "How is that?" In reply he told me that he was brought up in a district where a well-known servant of the Lord lived and laboured. He said he had watched his life, and what he saw of that convinced him of the truth. I know this servant of Christ, and he is as watchful of his state and behaviour as he is also of his service. This life preaching is open to all of us. And often those who confess Christ as a result of public preaching have been previously prepared through this. How often, too, our own souls have been cheered and elevated by intercourse with some gentle saint of God, to whom Christ is everything, but who has not been called to public service. Great, very great indeed is this side of the truth. This living fruitfulness, this wealthy treasure brings true blessing to others and glory to God.

The Might of God's Glory

And what can be said of *the might of His glory* through which all this is brought to pass. If we consider the creation which God has constructed, we see some display of His might. The **works** which men have piled up, with such skill and power, pale into insignificance in the presence of His handiwork. They are dwarfed before the great works of God. Those far-

spanning heavens were spread out by His fingers. With their glittering hosts—the shining stars and planets and moons and nebulae and comets flaming—they speak of the might of Him who made them all. Yea, the blazing constellations together, and the milky procession of heavenly bodies without number bear witness to His power. And the deep foundations of the earth were laid by Him: He also raised up the mighty mountains which tower above. Their ponderous mass are but an atom in His sight. The flowing river and restless sea are waters of His fashioning. The heavens and the earth alike are telling forth His power.

So also did the deliverance of groaning Israel from the cruel slavery of Egypt. Marvellous things He did in their sight as He laid bare His mighty arm. Pharaoh was raised up “for this same purpose,” that He might show His power to them, and that His name might thus be declared throughout all the earth (Rom. 9. 17). He smote the sea and cleaved them a dry path through the watery deep. He gave them drink from the rock, and rained them down bread from heaven. He sustained them in a wilderness, and He planted them in a land of plenty. All this tells of His power.

The nations of the earth also are His. Their thrones, their times, and their boundaries also, are appointed by Him. Like the waters of the sea, they must stay where He wills; they cannot pass His commandment. His is the might and the power seen in all these things.

It is, however, in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that the greatest exhibition of His power is seen. Christ had taken upon Himself the settlement of the question of sin. That involved His death. But was there a power great enough in the universe to take Him out of death? Here is a tremendous issue, for Satan “has the might of death” (Heb. 2. 14, N.T.). Could Christ be raised from among the dead? Yes, thank God! And He has been raised! He is now the Living One,

who once became dead to effect our everlasting deliverance. It is the display of “the surpassing greatness of His power *towards us who believe*, according to the working of *the might of his strength*, which He wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead” (Eph. 1. 19–20). Here are strength, might, energy, and power all combined together to secure this momentous victory of resurrection in the face of a dreadful foe. It is here we see God’s greatest display of power. And in result a universe of glory is secured. The One who was raised is already exalted to universal supremacy; and this victorious power will continue to work “*towards us who believe*” until Christ’s body is complete, and exalted to share in His glory.

At the sight of creation power “the morning stars *sang* together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38. 7). This is the earliest singing we are told of. The next was at the sight of delivering power; when God saved Israel. Then they sang of the triumph of the Lord: “Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power!” Of “all nations,” Paul proclaimed, the power of God which made them, to dwell on the face of the earth, and “determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17. 26). But the power seen in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ outstrips them all. As He stands before us at dawn on the first day of the week, a Man in resurrection life. He is the Firstfruits from among the dead, and is the Pattern of what the rest of the harvest shall be like, in bodies immortal, incorruptible, and glorious. In heavenly and spiritual bodies clothed with honour and power we shall be like Him. Our God who has already garnered the glorious Firstfruits will not fail to gather to the glory all the rest. Our faith stands not “in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” He has secured everything in Christ raised from among the dead, who Himself now saith to His own,

“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. I. 18, N.T.).

The Result of Divine Strengthening.

But before that day, comes that day of gladness and glory; even now between His being glorified and the glorification of the assembly; the great result of divine strengthening is being brought to pass. The moral wealth of which we have spoken is already being stored. Riches of priceless worth are being treasured up by our God and Father. They will be found to praise and honour and glory in the day of Jesus Christ. Great indeed will be the accumulated result of the divine strengthening, granted to us of God according to the might of His glory. Let this be understood. For what will be left in this world, after all the subjects of this work of God are taken home to glory?

Where will Christ and His love be known in worshipping hearts then? Where will renewed minds joyfully apprehend the vast reaches of His glory? Where will patience, endurance, long-suffering, with joyfulness and thanksgiving to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, be found, then? Where, indeed? Can much of it be seen even now? whilst the salt of the earth and the light of the world are still here. What rapid corruption, what dense darkness will immediately follow the taking up of the assembly from this world to be with Christ.

Look already at the feverish restlessness of the people about us! See the godless rush for pleasure on all hands! Mark, notwithstanding, the dissatisfaction which popularly prevails! Agitation is rife in the world's religious, political, commercial, social, and even—sad to say—family circles! Impatience, greed, selfish strife, distress and disorder, spiritism and profanity, passion and pretension, are seen nearly everywhere! What a conflagration will follow all this! The ruddy fires of revolution are

ready to burst forth into flames of destruction, with terrific violence! If the assembly was caught away to heaven now, what could hinder the terrible cataclysm which thoughtful men feel is coming and scripture foretells? Knowing these things beforehand, beloved brethren, what purposefulness and prayerfulness should mark us, as those who are strengthened to be here at this present time for God's pleasure.

It is as our hearts behold the beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in His love, that this will be produced in us. Wave after wave, storm after storm beat upon His holy head; yet, even at such a time, He could raise a note of praise to the Father, who had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes (Matt. 11. 25); and again, He could say, I do always those things which please the Father. We are to “look steadfastly on Jesus.” He endured the cross, having despised the shame; for the joy of the future was before Him. And He is now “set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Endurance, long-suffering, with joyfulness and thanksgiving to the Father, marked Him in perfection.

It is because we belong to Him, because we are His co-heirs through God's grace, that we are the subjects of the work of God now; so that there may be a worthy result, for the everlasting joy and satisfaction of our God and Father. Divine strengthening is therefore ours:

1. THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH;
2. THAT CHRIST MAY BE REPRODUCED IN OUR LIVES.

That having Christ, who is the Object of God's purpose, in our hearts thus, and being established in love, we may apprehend with all the saints the glorious greatness of which He is the Centre: and that walking here as those that are His, we may do so with endurance and long-suffering, with joyfulness, giving thanks to the Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Glory and the Love of God.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19. 1). "Nature has something more than an academic value. . . . Its first office is not material but spiritual. . . . Day is dying in the west. . . . The curtains of night are transfigured with the blended shades of amber, crimson, turquoise-blue, and all the splendour of tints which defy naming. A strange longing, almost akin to homesickness, rests upon the soul as we admire the sunset and watch the day being cradled into darkness. Suddenly the optical scientist breaks the muse, saying: 'I can explain it all to you. It is nothing but the refraction of light, running at various velocities through particles of moisture suspended in the air by particles of dust.' In his learned academic fashion he can reduce a sunset to a mathematical problem. Let him speak in the classroom, but here let him hold his peace. Here we wish to hear the glory of Him whose fragrance breathes through all His work."

But men may admire nature and be utterly alienated from the God of it. We were crossing the Atlantic on one occasion and beheld just such a scene as that which is described by the writer from whom we have quoted. As the sun plunged down behind the western sea he sent splendid shafts of gold across the wave-crests—promises of light and warmth again when night should be past; and the heavens glowed and glittered with the glory of his crimson fire. We stood upon the deck of our good ship in silent admiration, and we were joined by a gentleman with an artistic temperament, who talked in rapture about that setting sun. Presently we remarked: "Sir, do you know that the God whose hand painted that glorious West loves you and us?" Our fellow-passenger stepped back a pace and looked upon us as though we

had been plague-stricken; then, without a word of reply, walked away to the other side of the ship. The sunset lost its charm for him at the mention of the God of it, and of His love.

Yet how surpassing all human thought is the love of God to men, and how wonderful is the way that it has been displayed. Look away to Calvary, for there you shall see it. The day of our Lord's life here was drawing to its close. The night, when He could no more work, was marching on apace, but His toil was almost done. Oh, the glory of that living love that poured forth its splendid light over the deep surrounding darkness! Hear the cry from the Saviour's lips: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!" Could glory be greater than that? And when at last He cried: "It is finished," and bowed His head, and hung DEAD, with spear-pierced side, upon a felon's cross, scorned and execrated by the world, then was the splendour of God's glory seen; then did His love celebrate its mighty triumph.

The Lord's life of grace and tenderness had closed; the light of the world—the Sun—had set, but it set in the full and glorious blaze of an all-victorious love, a love that could not be destroyed or conquered by the hatred and sin of the hearts of men.

The glory of that light is not transient as is the beauty of a sunset, for **CHRIST IS RISEN AGAIN**, and now it shines from the face of our exalted Lord, never to be obscured for ever—the glorious light of God fully revealed in immeasurable grace to men.

"Oh, the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face."

How infinitely and for ever happy are all who have opened their hearts to that glorious shining!

Over anxiety breeds paralysis.

Holiness in action is the highest eloquence.

“Mercy and Truth”; and “Grace and Truth.”

(JAMES GREEN).

Question.—What is the meaning of the words “mercy and truth” as we find them together in the Old Testament; especially in the Psalms where we find the two words together many times?—A. F.

THE recurrence of the couplet “mercy and truth” in the book of Psalms is indicative of the place which Israel will occupy as the witness of the mercy of God; and stands in contrast to the other couplet in John I. 14, 17, “grace and truth,” the character of the blessing which belongs to those who believe in the Son of God. On the one hand, God has concluded all Israel in unbelief that He may have *mercy* upon all (Rom. 11. 32); and on the other, the church has been called “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His *grace* in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2. 7).

Mercy is concerned with failure and sin, but it rejoiceth against judgment (James 2. 13). It takes up the case of those who are guilty on account of sin, who through their broken responsibilities have no claim upon God, and who having forfeited their privileges have no right to His promises. Mercy alone can meet the need of such, who are sinners whether Jews or Gentiles, if they are to be saved from the consequences of their sins. Precious indeed is the sovereign prerogative of God, which cannot be gainsayed, to have mercy on whom He will have mercy. No title has the sinner to this; amenable to God’s holy judgment, he can only cry “God be merciful to me a sinner”; and justified, pardoned, forgiven, he stands a debtor to mercy alone.

Grace which only occurs twice in the Psalms, once in connection with the Messiah (Ps. 45. 2), and again in relation to the dwelling-place of God (Ps. 84. 11), differs from mercy in this respect, that it is the acting of God out of Himself in boundless blessing; not only forgiving the past, but unfolding His own purposes of love according to the thoughts of His own heart.

Truth as regards Israel is the accomplishment of God’s promises to them, but for the church it is far beyond this and involves the full revelation of God; it is in this latter that the combination of grace and truth was seen for the first time in the Person of the Lord Jesus. The law had been given by Moses, Israel had failed to keep it and so forfeited all right to the promises; nevertheless these shall all be fulfilled to them by the sovereign mercy of God, in accordance with the truth of His own Word. All that has been promised, they shall be blessed with. Truth shall spring out of the earth, glory shall dwell in the land, righteousness shall look down from heaven (Ps. 85. 9–11). But how far beyond this is “truth” when connected with God’s thoughts in grace, for these are measured only by the glory of Him who is the only begotten Son, and the fulness of the grace is in accordance with the fulness of the truth of the revelation of the Father in His Person, grace upon grace bringing us into the full enjoyment of the place He is in.

But the consideration of all this brings our thoughts to the cross, for it is in the coupling of both mercy and grace with truth that the divine glory of redemption shines forth. God could exercise neither the one nor the other except in holy consistency with His righteousness and truth. It is only in these paths that He moves (Ps. 25. 10). It is this that He has prepared (Ps. 61. 7), and this He has sent forth (Ps. 57. 3) in the gift of His Son.

Solomon had foreseen that by mercy and truth iniquity is purged (Prov. 16. 6); and David knew that if salvation was to be brought nigh, mercy and truth must meet together, righteousness and peace must kiss each other. How wonderfully does the cross bring all this to

pass. There every attribute of God is seen in perfect accord, His truth maintained in all its integrity, His love set free to act in mercy to the guilty, and to the full satisfaction of His grace in boundless blessing. Never could there be greater love than that, while we were yet sinners, Christ should die for us; never such mercy as when He prayed "Father forgive them, they know not what they do"; never such a justification of truth and righteousness as that there He should make atonement as the Sin-bearer; and never such grace as that He

who was rich, yet for our sakes should come to the deep poverty of the cross, that we might become rich according to the riches of His glory. Well may Israel in the day of her coming mercy say, "Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86. 15). And well may we who were sinners of the Gentiles, equally debtors to the same mercy, raise a yet higher note of praise to the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1. 6).

Adorning the Doctrine.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2. 9, 10).

We cannot gild the refined gold or add anything to the beauty and glory of the doctrine of the Lord and the gospel of Christ Jesus. And yet we are here taught that a holy Christian life actually adorns the gospel. Its beauties and glories are brought into evidence by the good works of those who have come under its power, just as in the fragrant

rose there is displayed the life and beauty of the bush from whence it springs.

It is the more emphatic that this exhortation is addressed not to the higher classes of society, but to the lowliest and humblest. It is the slaves in the households of Rome and Corinth who are admonished to live such beautiful lives that the teaching of Christ will appeal to men and women to whom they became living epistles. May the Lord help us so to live that, like our Master, His gracious words and God's holy precepts may shine out in our lives and actions "in living characters."

An Object for the Heart.

IT is most wonderful grace on God's part which calls us to share His own appreciation of His blessed Son. When Christ was here He was an *adequate* object for the Father's heart, the heavens were opened on Him and the Father's voice was heard declaring Him to be His beloved Son in whom was found His pleasure. If He is an adequate object for the heart of the blessed God then there is enough in Him to fill our hearts—He is perfectly beautiful wherever we see Him. The arm of the Lord was discerned by few, by none indeed save where grace wrought, but He grew up before Him as a tender plant—perfectly beautiful under the eye of God and deriving all from *above*. He was as a root out of dry ground, He derived nothing from the earth. He is a blessed example of the word "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God": He *lived* by what *God was*.

The Marriage of the Lamb and the Bride's Preparation.

(J. T. MAWSON).

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.—(Rev. 19. 6-9).

GOD has given to His church a living hope, a hope which must come to a most glorious realization, for it is linked up inseparably with the everlasting supremacy of God. This hope is that of being the Lamb's wife—the one supreme object of His love in the creation of God, and the sharer of His glory as having universal dominion. To no more exalted destiny than this could God call us, and the thought of it deeply stirs the heart. And yet, if the truth as to it is rightly learned, we shall not exult in this hope because of the high and glorious place that it assigns to us, but because this great event will be the manifestation of the triumph of the Godhead over every hostile force, and the consummation of their highest counsels. This will yield a truer, deeper and more lasting joy to us than could any thought of what we shall gain.

Heaven is to be filled with divine gladness because "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and the supremacy of the Godhead—known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—will be declared in the marriage of the Lamb. Yes, out of the darkness and degradation into which sin had plunged the human race, and from the depths of that moral death in which all men lay in the power of the devil, there shall come the wife of the Lamb, sanctified and cleansed, without spot or wrinkle, all glorious and without blame, fit companion for God's beloved Son, and clothed in fine linen, clean and white: the righteousnesses of saints—a garment produced upon earth in a defiling environment, yet suited for heaven and for the wife of the Lamb.

This will be the triumph of God. It will be the triumph of the FATHER, who had determined in eternal counsels to give to His well-beloved Son a bride, made meet to be His eternal companion. It will be the triumph of the SON OF GOD, our Lord Jesus Christ, for He will see of "the travail of His soul" as He receives to Himself His church—holy and without blame—His church which He loved and for which He gave Himself. It will be a triumph for the HOLY GHOST, for as Abraham's servant brought Rebecca safely through the desert to Isaac, so shall the Holy Ghost bring the church safely out of this world to Christ, and the fine linen, clean and white, will be the result of the response to the love of Christ which has been wrought in the hearts and lives of the saints by His power.

The whole might and subtlety of the devil has been put forth from the very beginning, and is still being put forth, to frustrate the fulfilment of this central thought in the counsels of God, but all is in vain. And the moment is drawing near when "As the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundings," there shall roll to the utmost bounds of the glory of God the great and exultant shout: "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

This is the hope that lies before us, and until it is realized God's purposes of

blessing for the earth cannot be fulfilled, for they all depend upon the taking up of His inheritance by the Lord, and upon His reigning as universal King, and He will not do this without the church, who, as His wife, is to share it all with Him. It seems certain that this hope cannot be long deferred, and those words of the Lord should be sweeter to His saints now than ever: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14. 3); and "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). It is thus that the church shall be raptured from the earth, and then within the doors of the Father's house on high the long looked for marriage shall take place. The thought of it gladdens the heart, and makes us say "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," in response to His words "Surely, I come quickly."

How the Fine Linen is Produced.

It is part of the purpose of God that the wife of the Lamb shall be clothed in a glorious garment of fine linen, clean and white, on that marriage day; she is to appear adorned in the righteousnesses of saints. But how shall such a garment be produced? It were useless to look for it from men in their natural condition; nor by the legal requirements of the law could this clean and white linen be secured, for men by nature are at enmity against God, and the testing of the ages has proved conclusively that *all their righteousnesses are but filthy rags*. Then how shall the threads of these righteousnesses be spun? Upon what loom shall they be woven, and what fingers shall form them into the marriage dress?

Everything depended upon the wisdom and grace and power of God. If the wife of the Lamb was to be adorned according to His thoughts He Himself

must create the instrument for the bringing forth of the clothing, or it would never be brought forth at all. Permit me to illustrate. A man desires to build up a garment for a great occasion, that shall be unique in design and priceless in value. It is there in his mind in every detail, but he knows of no cloth upon earth that will meet his requirements, nor of any loom that can produce it. Then if he is to carry out his design he must first invent a loom capable of making the material that he wants. He brings his inventive genius into play, and after much labour and cost his loom is perfected, and under his careful control it brings forth the desired material, and his garment is finished for his own pleasure and the honour of his skill. So God must work according to His own infinite wisdom if His purpose respecting the wife of the Lamb is to be fulfilled.

But first we have the perfect pattern of this garment of God's own design in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth. As a Man here every thought and word and deed of His was as the fine linen, clean and white, for in everything He did, and in His every motive He answered fully to the mind of God. So that when the Father's approval encircled Him upon the holy mount His garments were white as the light, emblematic of the perfectly holy—and in every detail of it righteous—life that He had lived before God in a sinful world.

God's thought was to reproduce the graces of that altogether lovely life in men down here: to bring out in the practical everyday life of His saints those moral excellencies that shone in all their perfection in Jesus. But for this Christ must die, for unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. So Christ died for us, and in His death sin in the flesh was condemned, and judgment passed there upon the flesh that could produce nothing but filthy rags. But that death has also brought forth a new race of men, for

Christ is raised again, and God has quickened us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, together with Him, and as thus quickened, a new life and nature is ours; we are created in Christ Jesus; we are God's workmanship in order to bring forth these fore-ordained good works.

God has wrought Himself according to His own wisdom and wealth of grace, "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).

How supremely blessed is this thought of God, that we who are saved by grace, without works, should now be the work of His own hands, formed and fashioned by Him—created in Christ Jesus, to bring forth, in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, fine linen clean and white—the righteousnesses of saints. But this can only be by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the heart. No loom ever produced cloth by its own effort. The weaver stands over it working in the warp and the woof, and as he does this the loom works out the cloth. Here we may apply that well-known passage from Philippians 2., for it fits our subject at this point: "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both, to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" It is by the Holy Ghost that this is done, He, as the great and perfect weaver, works in all that is necessary that we might work out, in obedience and lowliness of mind, that which shall ever be for the pleasure of God—the fine linen, clean and white.

Let none say I am not up to this, for if we are God's workmanship we are fully equipped for this purpose for which He has created us in Christ Jesus. It is true that there is the flesh within us, and sin ever seeking to have dominion over us, but there is a way of deliverance from these, the details of which are quickly learnt if our love is set upon Christ, and if the purposes of God have

their right place in our thoughts; then in Christian liberty, walking in the Spirit, God's purpose in and through us will not be hindered.

The fine linen, clean and white, is not always that which appears great and attractive to the eyes of men. A man, prominent and popular, may preach to thousands and produce nothing but filthy rags, while a poor woman, unnoticed and alone, toiling for her family, or to earn her own living, too timid almost to speak to a neighbour of Christ, may be bringing forth the fine linen abundantly. It is the life lived under God's eye, and the deed judged according to its motive. It is the reproduction by the Holy Ghost of the life of Jesus in the saints. To serve the froward master with meekness and godly fear, to give the soft answer to the wrathful word; to be kind to the unthankful, forbearing and forgiving; to love the saints of God, and to serve them for Christ's sake, and to be compassionate towards the ungodly because Christ died for such; to be ready to take the low place, nay, to take it gladly, and to suffer if needs be for righteousness and the name of the Lord, patiently and without complaint—all this is the fine linen, clean and white, and no thread of it ever spun in the life of a saint shall ever be lost; it is precious and imperishable, and preserved in heaven for that great marriage day.

The church has been tested during the period of waiting, and how has she answered to the test? Sadly, indeed, if we dwell upon her public history, but there is another and a brighter side. The Holy Ghost came down to identify Himself with the church in her earthly pilgrimage, and He has not failed; and silently and surely He has carried on His work all through the centuries, producing in the saints of God likeness to Christ, and working out these righteousnesses in out-of-the-way places, amongst the poor and afflicted, who have left no record upon earthly tablets, but whose lives have been fragrant to God, and whose works were morally great.

The marriage day, when all the gracious work of the Spirit in this regard will be seen in its completion, will be, as we have said, a great triumph for Him.

The Great Centre of the Marriage day.

In speaking of the wife of the Lamb and her preparation for the marriage day it is necessary to bear in mind that the Lamb is the great and central object of that blessed festival. It is **THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB**. And while the wife's preparation for that day, and the garment she will wear are specially noticed in this scripture, and are more particularly our subject in this paper, it must not be supposed that these are her title to be in heaven as the wife of the Lamb. Revelation is the book of responsibility, and in it *everything, whether good or evil, of God or the devil, is seen in its final issue.* That which is good and of God comes into manifestation as of Him, and takes its fore-ordained place in consequence, and that which is evil and of the devil goes into the lake of fire. The garment has a prominent place in the

Book; it sets forth the character of the one who wears it, it is the revelation of that which lies at the seat of the life, the declaration of the nature within.

It is the Lamb Himself who has won the title to have the church as His wife in the glory of God. He won that title by going down into the judgment of death. It was there that His love to her was tested, but the many waters did not quench it, nor could the floods drown it. On the cross He closed up the guilty history of those who compose the church by bearing their judgment; His precious blood has atoned for ever for all their sins; His life, as raised from the dead, is theirs, a life to which neither sin nor condemnation can be attached; they are accepted in Him the Beloved, and shall appear in God's glory in His own beauty. All this He has done and secured for her, and this must ever be first, and yet that of which we have spoken is of infinite importance, and the work of the Spirit within the saints is equally part of God's great purpose for the glory of that coming glorious day.

NOTE.—It is not the righteousness of saints in this passage, but the righteousnesses (see N.T.). The Lord is our righteousness, "He is made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. 1. 30). The righteousnesses of saints are the saints' works.

Restoration and its Results.

(H. P. BARNER).

Conversations on the Book of Ruth.—II.

Q. Our last conversation brought us to the point in the narrative where Naomi was bereaved of her husband and sons. Was it this that made her anxious to return to the land of Judah?

A. Not exactly; though no doubt her sorrow made Moab a desolate wilderness for her and turned her thoughts afresh to the home that she had left. But what occasioned the desire to return was the report that reached her to the effect that the famine was over, and that once again the Lord had graciously visited His people in giving them bread.

She is stirred and attracted by the blessing of which she hears, and the immediate result is that she is seized with home-sickness and longs to be in the place where God's favour is experienced.

Q. What answers to this among the people of God to-day?

A. Very often what is used in the restoration of those whose hearts have wandered and got cold is the impression of how much they are missing. It is not only the vanity of the world, the emptiness of that which has allured them; but having had a taste of the joys

of walking in communion with God, they feel what losers they are in remaining away from Him. The Holy Spirit brings this before them and the consequence is they get *homesick*. They long for the joys that once were theirs, those foretastes of heaven which once they knew.

Q. Now what is the best remedy for home-sickness?

A. Mr. Leighton Parks tells us how that on one occasion when away from home he wrote to one of his boys, telling him how lonely and homesick he felt, and asked, "Do you know of any cure for, home-sickness?" A day or two later the answer arrived: "Yes; the best cure is to *come home!*"

When Naomi's heart turned again to the dear old homeland, she set herself in motion to go there. That is what one longs to see among Christians to-day.

Q. What do you mean by "going home"? You are not referring to the time when we shall be called away to heaven? For that surely will be our home-going in the truest sense of the word.

A. It will, indeed. But I pity the Christian who does not know what it is to *go home* sometimes in spirit. A few people, in one of the Colonies, were talking together about various matters. Young Jamie Jamieson, lately out from Scotland, sat amongst them but took no part in the conversation. His eyes had a dreamy, far-away look in them.

Somebody nudged him and said: "Why, Jamieson, what's the matter with you? What are you thinking about?" Jamie started; his reverie was broken.

"Oh," he said, "I beg your pardon. To tell you the truth, I was just thinking of the dear ones in the old home in the Highlands."

Jamie had been *at home* for a few minutes, in spirit. His thoughts had been with the loved ones there. But in a far more real way *we* can "go home"

sometimes. For we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, and it is His delight to carry our thoughts away to the place where *Jesus* is, and to give our souls a taste of heaven. This is what the hymn means which says:

"If here on earth the thought of Jesu's love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above;
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings."

What a difference it would make to us if our souls dwelt more constantly in heaven! How it would nerve us for the conflict here! How it would lighten and brighten the journey! How easy it would make it to drop the things of earth out of our hearts!

Q. How do you account for Naomi's two daughters-in-law wishing to accompany her?

A. No doubt they were attached to her, and the effect of her setting herself in motion was to set them in motion too. Her influence over them now becomes more apparent than ever it had done during the years of Naomi's sojourn in Moab. It is ever so. Those who are most likely to set the faces of others in a heavenward direction are those whose own faces are set that way. Christians who live a stagnant, low-level, Moabitish life have very little effect on others. But when aroused from their lethargy and restored in soul from their sleepy condition it is often surprising to see how they are used to arouse others.

While David was a backslider he was unable to turn any sinners to Jehovah. But his penitential prayer (Ps. 51.) shows that he expected his restoration to be followed by the conversion of others. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation," he says; "then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

Q. Whom do these three widows represent?

A. Naomi is evidently a type of a restored backslider. She returns to where she was before—the place to

which she really belonged. Ruth is like a new convert, full of zeal and hope, but about to tread a path entirely fresh, and to go whither she had never been before. Orpah resembles a mere professor. She made a promising start, and seemed determined to go with Naomi and Ruth; but she soon gave up the idea and turned back to her people and her gods.

Q. What made the difference between Ruth and Orpah?

A. Orpah, in her thoughts, never got beyond "people." She, with Ruth, said "We will return with thee unto thy people." Ruth, on the other hand, took God into account. "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" she said.

The mere professor ranges himself amongst God's people. He may desire to consort with them, thinking that they are good people and it would be well for him to be one of them. But the true convert has been mindful of God, and has acted with reference to Him. He has sought His holy presence, and measured himself under His all-seeing eye. It is not with him a question of joining certain people, but of being right with God.

Q. Is any dispensational teaching to be found in this part of the narrative?

A. The story of Naomi no doubt illustrates the case of Israel, or rather of the godly remnant of that nation who, after much trial and affliction will be brought back to their God and to their land. Their return will be the means of bringing many of the Gentiles also into relationship with the God of Israel, and receiving blessing from Him. Many a glowing prophecy speaks of these things, but it would be beside our present purpose to enter into them.

Q. But is not *this* the time of blessing for the Gentiles?

A. It is the time when any man, be he Jew or Genile, may be blessed and enriched with heavenly blessings in

Christ. But the day will come when the remnant of Israel will be re-established in the land given to their fathers, and then it will be open to "the sons of the stranger" to "join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be His servants." To them will be given a place in His house, and *within His walls*. I quote from Isaiah 56. and I would call special attention to these three *italicized* words, for they serve to emphasize the difference between the present and the future blessing of the Gentile. *Now* there is no "wall"; the middle wall of partition is broken down. Jew and Gentile are on the same ground, and blessing is offered to both through Christ. *Then* Israel will be restored to her place of special favour as God's chosen people, and blessing to the Gentiles will be through Israel, though, of course, all upon the basis of Christ's work of atonement. In that day "ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8. 23).

This ultimate restoration of the Jew, and the consequent blessing of the Gentile, would seem to be foreshadowed in the return of Naomi to her country, accompanied by Ruth, the Moabitess.

Q. Of what are we reminded by the fact of all the city being moved about them?

A. Speaking once more of Naomi and Ruth as typifying the returning backslider and the new convert, we may see in it a manifestation of that joy that finds its counterpart in the very presence of the angels over the return and repentance of the wanderer. God Himself rejoices, and His people share His gladness.

"There is joy in heaven to-night

And the angels all look on:
For it is not their's, that deep delight
Though their praise swells loud at the
glorious sight

Of another repentant one!"

Psalm 46-49.

WE have seen the saints in Psalms 42-44. driven away from the places of privilege and in much distress. In our present series there is an entire change of circumstances, brought to pass by the intervention of Messiah in grace and power in Psalm 45. The sevenfold sorrow received patiently from God's hand and recounted in verses 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20 of Psalm 44. is changed into victory, triumph, and joy; and if a mocker repeats the bitter taunt: "Where is now thy God?" he is answered: "Jehovah Sabaoth is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge" (46. 7, 11); or again in 48.: "This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide for evermore" [as the Septuagint reads, probably correctly].

The waves and billows of God's holy discipline have passed over His people (Ps. 42.) and the word has gone forth, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak to the heart of Jerusalem and say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received at Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." Christ has passed under those waves and billows and has thereby accomplished atonement, so that they become means of sanctification to the saints. Precious grace!

These considerations should enable us to enter into the language of the Psalms now before us, the first three of which are anticipative of the establishment of the kingdom in power. The God who had blessed and anointed Messiah in 45. is, in 46., "our refuge and strength," and in spite of all the suffering of the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30. 7) in the light of their new-found deliverance it is added—"a help in distresses very readily found, therefore will we not fear." But the mention

of "fear" indicates that dangers are still to be met which will demand the exercise of the power of God who "is in the midst of her" which will not be wanting in the hour of need—"at the dawn of the morning" (ver. 5. R.V.). This combination of circumstances may appear strange to those who have been accustomed to think that all hostile power will be at once subdued at Christ's second coming.

It seems clear from a comparison of prophetic Scriptures that there will be a fulfilment in antitype of the reign of David and his victories before Christ will occupy the throne in peace as the true Solomon (Micah 5. 5; Zech. 10. 5, etc.). In this Psalm the victory comes by the voice of omnipotence (ver. 6); with this may be compared Isaiah 30. 30, 31 and Revelation 19. 21. The sequence of events in these conflicts is given in the last section of the Psalm, verses 8-11, "Come," the Spirit says, "behold what desolations He hath made in the earth," but this is only the way to peace when "swords shall be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks," when righteousness, long divorced from power, shall unite with it to secure the blessing of all nations under the rule of the Son of David.

The other divisions of the Psalm close respectively with verses 3 and 7. In the first, the mountains, seas, and waters are to be taken as symbols, often found elsewhere in Scripture, of people under certain conditions as, elevated in power above others, or unformed as to government. In the second the river is mentioned as making glad the city of God. In Ezekiel it is viewed as carrying the blessings of life and fertility to others, but that is after the nations have spent their strength in vain hostility to the people of God's choice.

The moral lesson for all times is in verse 10: "Be still and know that I am God." It might seem easy to trust when God in His almightiness is for us, but Nature never learns "to let alone" (as the word is literally) and too often hinders our finding the blessing His unaided handiwork would secure to us. Truly has it been said: "Human efforts shut out God's help, they are another kind of resource and are not faith."

PSALM 47., closely connected with the preceding, gives us the gathering together of Gentiles *with* the people of the God of Abraham (such seems the best rendering of verse 9) not to form one body with a believing remnant of that people, as during the present period, with Christ in heaven as Head; but an association in dependence upon the elect nation in whose blessing and victory they are called to rejoice, as also in the manifest exaltation of Christ over all the earth. The old jealousy of Jew and Gentile is not removed as in the the church of God by Christ "making in Himself of twain, one new Man, so making peace" (Eph. 2.), but by conversion and repentance with a consequent real subjection of heart to God and His ways. The Spirit therefore calls to praise in view of manifested blessing on earth; God is gone up, with a shout of victory over His enemies, to occupy an earthly throne (ver. 5).

In contrast with this, the occasion of the Christian's praise is the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and our blessing in Him known and enjoyed only by faith. Would that we responded more suitably to such a theme. The lack of true spiritual worship in the church is evidence of how far we come short of entering into our proper Christian privileges. Thankful should we be for all the ministry to saint and sinner through the gifts Christ gives, but there is a priestly ministry Godward, and a worship of the Father on the part of sons that is sadly silent in our day.

PSALM 48. closes this little cluster of kingdom Psalms, and the prophetic

description of the circumstances of the saints of this book. It celebrates the final victory of divine power over the enemies of Israel; other phases of this conflict have been already touched upon in 45. 4, 5; 46. 6; and 47. 3. The hostile federation to which this Psalm alludes is probably that spoken of in Ezekiel 38. 39, which makes an attack on the land that had been brought back from the sword, and when they shall all of them be dwelling in safety. Hence we find, as in the two preceding Psalms, the covenant name of Jehovah introduced and He is praised in the city of our God in the hill of His holiness. Moreover, He establishes His citadel on the sides of the north facing the quarter from which the danger threatens (*cf.* Ps. 75. 6). While the armies are thrown into confusion on land, the forces, in their ships of Tarshish by sea, are broken by an east wind. [Ships of Tarshish may be understood to indicate the character of the vessels as of western type.] Those who had waited on God in this time of affliction remembering His wonders of old (44. 1-3) have now proved Him, and triumphantly exclaim "as we have heard so have we seen," and, no longer outcasts, they contemplate His mercy in the midst of His temple.

This exultant little Psalm closes with a call of the Spirit to go round Zion and take account of all her glories. The prayer of Moses is at last answered; she is seen adorned with the beauty of Jehovah, for her whole state is His work. Her site had once been ploughed like a field (Micah 3. 12), now she rises in her proper glory as the centre of the earthly kingdom of the Son of Man. Her wonderful history is to be recounted to the generation following, for she is the fullest exhibition of God's ways in government and a true lesson-book to the nations.

What voice has this for us Christians? Do we rightly use the Spirit's glowing description of the bride of the Lamb in the Apocalypse? or consider what the church is now as "in Christ?" "Show the house to the house of Israel that

they may be *ashamed of their iniquities*," was the word by Ezekiel, "and let them measure the pattern, and if they be ashamed of all that they have done show them the form of the house and the fashion thereof—that they may keep the whole form thereof and all the ordinances thereof and do them." How few feel the shame that the church is not actually what it is in the divine thought and purpose. Our state now should be a closer transcript of what we shall be presently. May the Spirit work it in us!

PSALM 49. has a very definite importance as, to use modern language, a Jewish sermon to Gentile hearers, giving an application to the subject-matter of the preceding Psalms, suitable to all times. Another Jewish believer gives the same warning to the Gentile brethren in a concentrated form—"Be not high-minded, but fear." The Psalm is really an answer by the prophetic spirit to the question of verse 5: "Why should I fear in the day of adversity when the iniquity of my supplanters compasseth me?" To hear the answer, all the peoples and all the dwellers in the world are called that they may learn wisdom.

The subject—and how appropriate to such a speaker—is the government of God in this world. The grace of redemption is referred to, but the parenthesis of

verse 8 shows that the cost is too great for man's means to purchase. In verse 15 also there is the assurance of the redemption and acceptance of the speaker; but this would leave the Gentile hearers who believed the testimony in the state of the godly centurion in Acts 10., knowing the preaching (ver. 37) but not knowing that the grace preached was for them. This, however, would work to put the Gentile in his proper place with respect to the Jew as the Lord had to say to the woman of Samaria: "Salvation is of the Jews," and cast him on the sovereign grace which sends him a message by such a channel, exposing withal the thoughts and intents of the heart. The effect would be to lead him to God in repentance. He would discern that wealth and possessions—things highly esteemed among men—tend to delude the soul with a sense of permanence which is mocked by the solemn fact that death is on all men. As forcibly expressed in verse 14, they are appointed for Sheol, like a flock of sheep with Death for their Shepherd. Moreover, however high the honour man may attain to, he knows no abiding and is like the beasts that perish (ver. 12).

The last verse of the Psalm repeats this statement with the added proviso: "and understanding not," which leaves the way of mercy open to any, rich or poor (ver. 2), to hear the word and understand it (Matt. 13. 23).

"Cast into Hell."

(S. M. ANGLIN).

Question.—Please explain Matthew 5. 29, 30. More particularly what it means to "Cast the whole body into hell."—A. T. G.

THE point of the Lord's teaching in this passage (Matt. 5. 29, 30) appears to be that if anything in this life, however valued or cherished, comes in between a person and God so as to hinder such an one from seeking His will and favour, and thus becomes an offence or stumbling-block, it is far better, yea, necessary, to sever one's life from it

(or it from the life) rather than to go on with what will ultimately lead to the person falling under, and being *altogether* cut off by, the eternal judgment of a righteous God.

This judgment embraces *the body* as well as the soul, as chapter 10. 28 clearly shows, and as is definitely stated in Revelation 20, where we learn the

solemn and awful fact that if anyone "was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." This is *after* the resurrection of the bodies of those who have died in their sins, and it will therefore be in their *bodies* that they will be judged. The word used for hell in Matthew 5. and 10. is that which expresses the lake of fire in Revelation 20 (Gehenna).

How much wiser, safer, and better, therefore, to let go or give up anything in this life which may be the cause, even indirectly, of leading any one to this awful doom, than to cling to it because it is deemed as precious as a right eye, or as useful as a right hand (*cf.* Heb. 12. 16 and 17).

I do not wish for a moment to imply that any true believer can ever come under this judgment. *Their* names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and Christ Jesus has been under the awful judgment of God for them; but the Lord would remind us that the God "with whom we have to do," is He who is able to, and certainly will, exercise this judgment as to all who die in their sins and who have not life in Christ. This should greatly impress us, and exercise us as to "what manner of persons we should be."

We see in Luke 12. 5 how the Lord *does* use this solemn truth as to God's judgment to bear upon the consciences and lives of His disciples.

The Passover Feast.

(J. A. TRENCH).

In the Synoptics, we find the Lord partaking of the Passover with His disciples, before His trial. In John's Gospel (18. 28) we find the Jews would not enter the Judgment Hall lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Thus apparently, they had not partaken of the Passover, while some time before Christ had partaken with His disciples. Kindly explain the difficulty; ought it not to have been kept at a certain time?—J. A. E.

THE solution of the apparent difficulty will, I believe, be found in the Synoptic Gospels themselves. It is that the "passover" is often used for the whole seven days "feast of unleavened bread" into which it led, and that properly began the day after the passover. Thus in Luke 22. 1, we read, "The feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover" (*cf.* Luke 2. 41, 43). Already in Exodus 12. 18, as compared with Leviticus 23. 5, 6, we see the beginning of this identification: set out in their distinctness in the latter passage, the fourteenth day (of Nisan) was the passover, the fifteenth, the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread; but in the former the feast is given from the fourteenth day, which very naturally came to be reckoned as the first day of the feast. And they are so identified in Matthew 26. 17, Mark 14. 12, Luke 22. 7. Traces of the same

may be observed in the Old Testament: as, for instance, Deuteronomy 16. 3, in the "therewith," *i.e.* the passover, counted to the whole seven days during which they were to eat unleavened bread; and in the account of Josiah's passover, 2 Chronicles 35., which in verses 7, 8 speaks of "the passover offerings" (*cf.* vers. 17, 18), while Ezekiel 45. 21 gives, "In the fourteenth day of the month ye shall have the passover. a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall ye eat." Josephus, too, in almost identical terms with Luke 22., 1, mentioned "the feast of unleavened bread which we call the passover."

Bearing in mind this very ordinary identification of the feast of unleavened bread with the passover; the passage referred to in John 18. 28 is easily understood.

The Broken Seals.

(H. NUNFRELVEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 7.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come.—(Rev. 6. 1).”

ELDERS, cherubims, and angelic hosts, in their songs and anthems had voiced the mind of heaven about Jesus, and, anticipatively, the mind of all creation (Rev. 5.).

The Father declared His mind when He exalted Him to His right hand, set a crown of glory on His brow, laid upon Him honour and majesty, and conferred a name upon Him which is above every name. It was the Father's glory to raise Him, His delight to crown Him, and His righteous answer to His perfect obedience to straightway glorify Him.

This is the preliminary to a more public display. We Christians see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, but we wait for the time when all things will be visibly and manifestly under His feet, and every eye shall see Him.

The world is ignorant of the fact that the Heir who was cast out of the vineyard (Matt. 21. 35) is now glorified in the house of the Lord, just as Athaliah and the Jewish nation were that Joash, the heir to David's throne, was concealed in the temple. A royal princess and a holy priest were alone in the secret (2 Kings 11.; 2 Chron. 22.). After being hidden six years, the king was brought forth, and the crown publicly set on his brow amid the sounding of trumpets, the voice of praise, and the acclamations of the people.

The antitype of this is seen in Jesus. Joash was saved *from* death. Jesus was saved *out of* death. Joash was unknown except by those whose home was in the house of the Lord; so Jesus is unknown except to that holy and royal company who have had their spiritual

eyes opened to see by faith and the Spirit's power His dignities and glories as He sits enthroned with the Father. The six years in which Joash was hidden reminds us of Psalm 110. 5, where our Lord Jesus is bidden to sit at Jehovah's right hand until every enemy is put under His feet. In patient grace He has occupied that seat for nineteen centuries, but each day brings us nearer the time when He shall come forth in royal state to reign.

We get intimations here and there in Scripture of this interval between Christ having come in grace and His advent in judgment. Let us travel back in thought to His first public address on a memorable Sabbath in the synagogue of Nazareth. The eighteen prayers had been said, the law and the prophets read, when the ruler of the synagogue handed Jesus the book of Isaiah. Opening it at chapter 61. He read part of verses 1, 2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel of the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,” and He closed the book, omitting the closing sentence, “*the day of vengeance of our God.*”

Why did He not finish the verse? Because He well knew that salvation's “year” would be a long one, and the “day” of vengeance delayed for nigh two thousand years, in order for God to gather out of the world a company of joint-heirs to participate in the dignities and glories of the kingdom with the true Heir. When the events recorded in Revelation 6. begin, the long paren-

thesis will have ended, and the book of grace will be closed. Then the book of judgment will be opened, and the day of vengeance come.

Historically we have reached in Revelation 6. the last week of Daniel (see Dan. 9. 26, 27). The sixty-ninth ended the day Christ presented Himself formally to Israel as their king (John 12. 18). Instead of placing upon His brow David's royal crown, they mocked Him with a chaplet of thorns. From that point, prophecy is silent as to earth, and heavenly counsels are revealed.

As the earlier seals are broken the unveiling begins of what is in store for professing Christendom *after* the true church has been raptured to heaven. They are portents of the coming storm, the dark and cloudy morn which ushers in "the day of vengeance." Judgment is God's strange work. He does not all at once pour out those burning torrents which shall sweep man to destruction. His judgments are measured, His wheels grind slowly but surely. Ever bent on man's blessing, these seal judgments only increase in intensity as men scorn them, and they fail to arrest their mad and lawless career.

In this vision we learn that men are simply instruments in God's hand, their human passions governed by unseen powers are made to do His will spite of man's boasted freedom. We are not told what motives governed the riders on the White and Red horses, but it is at the command of heaven they appear. Cyrus followed the bent of his will and became great (Dan. 8.). It is recorded on an ancient cylinder that "he marched like a cloud, and his army as the waters of a river; opposition came to nothing before him." Thus he appeared before men, but all the time he was simply an instrument to carry out God's purpose as to Babylon, and His thoughts for His ancient people Israel. It is thus with the men who are prominent in these visions. John heard a voice like the noise of thunder say, "COME!"

In response appeared a white horse—its colour a well-known symbol of victory; its rider a royal personage—for he is crowned. His conquests appear to be diplomatic rather than sanguinary, for he is only armed with a bow. Yet victory succeeds victory; his triumphant career is unchecked—he marches "conquering and to conquer," carried onward by unseen power in response to cherubic bidding.

This seal is only a lull before the storm, for again the command "COME" rings forth from the second living creature, and another horse appears. Its blood-like colour speaks of strife and violence, as also does the great sword wielded by its rider. The prominent feature in his desolating march is not simply to embroil nations, but to "take peace from the earth" by fomenting internecine strife, and stir up internal feuds, resulting in the horrors of civil war. Men under his influence will *slay one another*. Might will be the only right; every humane consideration will be swept aside as they seek to gratify their selfish personal interests even at the cost of life itself. The spirit of this is rampant to-day. For never, never did interests clash more than they do now; and the lawless spirit is increasing everywhere.

Picture what it will be when men in their mad passion to enforce their demands will spill blood like water, glut their vengeance on each other, as they did in the awful days of Robespierre and the Paris commune. No wonder a Black horse follows the Red one, or that its rider has a balance in his hand. What men sow they reap. The plough and the seed-basket have been neglected for more violent pursuits. No sowing-time means no harvest—so famine will stalk through the land. Men have been preying on each other instead of tilling the land; so food supplies will become scarcer day by day. Picture Great Britain without inland or foreign supplies of wheat and barley for a month! and the consequent hunger, starvation, and

misery among the poor, whose chief sustenance these things are!

What will be the result of the scarcity here foretold? The next horse and its rider answers that question. Behold his cadaverous hue, mark his ghostly rider, look at the pale visage of the king of terrors as he marches through the civilized world! Note the followers which compose his train and do his deadly work! One bears the sword to slay, another hunger to starve, and the victims they leave are torn by ravenous beasts. Although death may terminate their bodily sufferings, it does not end their existence, for Hades accompanied grim death, and ushered his victims into the world of departed spirits to await their final judgment.

As the fifth seal is parenthetic we will consider it later, and pass on to the sixth which describes just such a state of things as we can readily conceive produced by what we have had before us under the third and fourth seals. In the third we are told the oil and wine are not to be hurt. These are luxuries; clearly, then, the rich will not then feel the pressure in the same way as the poor; but now their turn has come.

Men maddened by hunger will take the law into their own hands; anarchy will prevail, governments will be upset, kings dethroned, the whole social system shaken from top to bottom; no class of society will be exempt: the learned, the rich, the men of arms, and the men of might will all feel the shaking of that terrible earthquake.

If we remember that sun, moon, and stars are symbols of rule as well as light-bearers (see Gen. 1. 16), and mountains and islands represent different nations with their rulers (see Jer. 51. 25), it will not be difficult to understand that the state here described is the breaking up of nations and the upsetting of all ordered government. What are known as the "Great Powers" are here spoken of as the sun. The sun becomes black; men will look in vain to the supreme rulers for light and de-

liverance in this crisis. The moon, which reflects the sun's light, is the colour of blood, indicating that all derived power will be swept away by sanguinary means. The anarchist's dagger, and the revolutionist's sword having dethroned king, kaiser, monarch, and czar; the stars, which represent those who are lesser rulers, subordinate to others, will also collapse. This is the awful picture of a world shrouded in gloom: lawlessness rampant, and ordered governments impotent to give a guiding hand in the darkness.

Terrified beyond measure, men seek a hiding-place; they call upon the mountains to fall on them—clearly proving that the literal mountains remain. What they now dread is the wrath of the Lamb, whose blood they once despised, whose offers of mercy they refused. It is countries like this highly-favoured land which are here in view; it is those who once might have found redemption in that blood but who spurned it who are now in anguish.

Men may scoff now, but Joel's prophecy will have its fulfilment during the sixth seal: "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood." This will be *before* the great and terrible day of the Lord come; so, spite of men's fears, this seal does not close the story of judgment. In it we see the black and lowering clouds premonitory of a fiercer storm; it describes preliminary judgments to that dreadful day which shall sweep over the earth when, in Person, the Lamb will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the great day of His wrath will really have come.

What a warning to men, these seals are to avail themselves *now* of the blood of the Lamb, so that they may be found in that day among those who, sheltered in heaven, celebrate the *worth* of the Lamb, and thus associated with Him in glory shall never know the *wrath* of the Lamb.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Person of the Lord.

IN answering the following questions relating to the Person of our Lord, we desire to keep in mind the saying of an old and God-inspired writer: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what is His Son's name if thou canst tell? Every *word of God* is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. *Add not to His words*, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30. 4-6).

We can only know the Person of our Lord as He is revealed to us, and that which is revealed of Him is given to us in the words of God in the Holy Scriptures. His words are pure, and they alone can enlighten us; and by them we must abide. In doing so they will be a shield and buckler to us, protecting us from the subtlety of the devil and from the specious reasonings of the many deceivers that have gone forth into the world to destroy the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Human explanations are more or less faulty, and human words often misleading, but the Holy Ghost can make clear to us the *words of God* for the salvation and edification of our souls.

E.E.P.—The statement that you quote believing it to be the orthodox view, "Jesus Christ, God in the form of man," does not express the truth as to the Lord's incarnation if *form* means, as you suppose, appearance only. Angels in olden days had appeared in the *form* of men, but they were not men, but the "Word became flesh." He was here in the world, dwelling among men, actually a man, and yet He never ceased to be what He was throughout eternity—"Over all, God, blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5).

You question the fact of His Deity while here upon earth, but read the Gospels, and you will see that many of His words would be blasphemy, and many others madness, if He were not God. You can easily test this by putting such sayings in the mouth of any other man. Take one instance only: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28.) What mere man could so call to himself the multitudes with their multifarious needs?

He was actually and truly man, though His humanity was altogether unique, for He was sinless. He was miraculously conceived of the Virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. As man He suffered all the vicissitudes and contradictions and sorrows that a life of obedience to God in a world of rebels involved.

He filled the relationships of man with God in absolute obedience to God His Father, and with His neighbour in fulness of mercy; for He loved the Lord His God with all His heart, and went beyond the law's requirements in regard to His neighbour for He laid down His life to redeem him.

How He could be actually and really man and yet never less than God the Son in the bosom of God the Father; or how God and man could be united in Him lies entirely outside our understanding, for these are some of the mysteries of our holy faith. He Himself has declared, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, and NO MAN KNOWETH THE SON, BUT THE FATHER" (Matt. 11. 27), and there He stopped. There is that in Deity, and in the eternal relationship of the Persons in the Godhead which is infinitely beyond the comprehension of the creature, and this applies specially to the Son. It must necessarily be so, and surely we would not have it other-

wise, for He would be less than He is to us if it were not so. And faith bows in worship where reason rightly rests from its activities.

The Father and the Son.

You ask "Must not the Father be greater than, and have existed before, the Son?" Having come as man, and taking the place of obedience as the Father's sent One, the Lord Himself said, "My Father is greater than I." But remember that He became man voluntarily in His surpassing compassion for men and to fulfil eternal counsels (Heb. 10. 7-9). Nevertheless, in His own Person, the eternal Son is co-equal with the Father, and the Father has decreed that this shall be universally acknowledged, and to this end He has "committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 22, 23).

The Lord Jesus is the one Person who has come forth from the Godhead into manhood in order to declare to sinful and rebellious men the fulness of the love of God. But as so coming He was despised and rejected of men; they dishonoured Him, treated Him as a felon, and even less than a man, for He said amid their execration, "I am a worm and no man." And He is still dishonoured by those who deny His Deity; and by those who would put Him upon the same level as the old philosophers, or make Him merely a leader of men, or an example for them; and by those who deny the reason for His coming, namely, to make full expiation for sins by His perfect sacrifice upon the cross. Yet He shall be honoured even as the Father is honoured, if not before and under the constraint of grace, then at last before the great white throne, when in the eternal majesty of His own person

We would ask you to earnestly consider the following passages: Isaiah 9. 6; 50. 2-6; Micah 5. 2; Hebrews 1. 8-12.

He shall judge the dead—small and great.

The destiny of every intelligent creature throughout the vast universe of God is in His hand, and He will exalt them to their place in glory or consign them to their everlasting doom. This will not be done arbitrarily, for though man falsely witnessed against Him, and meted out unrighteous judgment to Him, He will nevertheless judge each and all with righteous judgment in that day. Hence the wisdom of heeding the divine exhortation, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2. 12).

To say, as you do, that the Father must have existed before the Son is utterly false. In these terms as used in connection with the Persons in the Godhead no question of generation arises. But even in nature no man is a father before he has a child: the relations of father and son are simultaneous. It is true that in natural life the one who becomes a father at the birth of his son had a prior existence, but clearly this cannot apply to eternal Persons. And here again we come to what is outside the range of finite human understanding; and the reasonings and conclusions of a mind darkened by sin can only lead into deeper darkness. Our part as God's creatures is to gratefully receive by faith that which He has so graciously revealed as to Himself, in Christ, who is the image of the invisible God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"The higher mysteries of His fame
The creature's grasp transcends.
The Father only His blest Name

Of SON can comprehend.
Worthy O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.

The Titles "Only Begotten" and "Firstborn."

If these titles, both of which belong to the blessed Lord, carry the thought of generation, as you say, they are contradictory and mutually destructive, for one could not be only-begotten if he were first-born, for the former word, used in this way, would exclude all other sons, while the latter supposes others.

The English word "only-begotten" does not give clearly the meaning of the word used in the original Scriptures, and if the emphasis is laid upon "*begotten*," as you are doing, it is altogether obscured.

In Hebrews 11. 17 this word is used of Isaac: he is there called Abraham's "only-begotten"; now if it were a question of generation this would not be true, for Abraham had other sons. But Isaac had no rival in his father's affections: all Abraham's thoughts centred in him—he was his darling, his only one.

Other occasions on which it is used in the New Testament are Luke 7. 12, "the *only* son of his mother"; (8. 42), "he had *one only* daughter"; (9. 38); "he is mine *only* child." Each of these instances confirm what we have said, namely, that the word means one standing alone, the sole object of the thoughts and love of the heart.

Add to this thought that of intimacy of relationship and community of nature, and you have clearly the meaning of the word as applied to our blessed Lord, for He ever did and ever will occupy a place in the Father's thoughts which is His own peculiar place. He is the Father's "Only One"—His "only-begotten Son." The passages in which the word occurs in connection with

the Lord Jesus are John 1. 14, 18; 3. 16, 18; 1 John 4. 9.

When the word "First-born" is used of the Lord at His birth into this world in Matthew 1. 25 and Luke 2. 7, it has reference to Mary, and the meaning is quite plain, as "come of a woman"; He was her "first-born" for Mary evidently had other children. But in other passages the meaning is totally different. Take Colossians 1. 15 and Hebrews 1. 6. The title in these passages is undoubtedly one of pre-eminence and glory in creation. And must not this be so in the very nature of things? If the Creator, as Colossians 1. 16 and Hebrews 1. 2 prove Him to be, comes in infinite grace within His own creation, could any other than the place of pre-eminence be His? He must be Head over all.

An illustration of the word in this sense may be seen in Psalm 89. 27, where Solomon, typical of Christ, is spoken of as "first-born" in connection with his great dignity as king, though he was David's tenth son he had the place of pre-eminence.

The word in Romans 8. 29, has in view the vast family of God's sons who are to be conformed to Christ's image, but in this family He is first-born, *i.e.* the place of dignity in the midst of them is His; He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. For this resurrection was necessary, as comes out in Colossians 1. 18, where He is spoken of as "First-born from the dead." As He must be Head over the creation into which He has come, so also He, having overthrown the power of death, must be first and Head in resurrection. Revelation 1. 5 shows Him also in this place.

"All the FATHER'S counsels claiming
Equal honours to the Son,
All the SON'S effulgence beaming,
Makes the Father's glory known.

By the SPIRIT all pervading,
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,
Crown'd with light and joy unfading,
Hail Him as the great "I AM."

The Cry upon the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" ?

You ask: "If Jesus were God why did He cry to God upon the cross?" In every other prayer recorded for us in the Gospels the Lord Jesus addressed His Father, as Father. Here alone do we find Him crying, "My God." Remember that, as we have pointed out, He became actually and truly man, and here He spoke according to what He was as a man, and as the sin-bearer in the place of sinful men.

As a man upon earth He proved Himself to be always and absolutely subject to God. In Him was no sin; He knew no sin; He did no sin. In consequence, He could go in obedience to the will of God to the cross, there to be made sin *for us*, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. He stood, Himself without any sin of His own, in the place of sinful man, to bear the righteous wrath that man's sin deserved. If He had not been man He would have had no right to stand in man's place, and bear the chastisement of his peace; if He had not been a sinless, holy man, He would have needed a Saviour Himself.

It was, then, as the one perfect and holy man, made sin and bearing sins for us, that He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" for in that awful hour the question of the relationship between the Father and the Son, which never ceased to exist, did

not enter. It was GOD, infinitely holy, unable, because of His very nature and character, to abate His claims one jot, and MAN, bowing His head as the sacrifice beneath the full weight of the terrible judgment that the inexorable justice of God inflicted. The bearing of our sin involved the hiding of God's face, but this He endured, in the infinitude of His love, that we might be saved. Here again is a mystery, deep as the darkness that enshrouded the holy Sufferer upon the cross. We cannot understand how He could be made sin—which is absolutely obnoxious to God—for us. He who was always delightful to the heart of God His Father, and never more so than in that hour, for of it He said "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life" (John 10.); who was at that time the true burnt offering also, offering Himself to God for a sweet-smelling savour, acceptable to Him (Eph. 5. 2.). But we recognize the righteous necessity. God tells us that thus it was, and, likewise that through that one perfect sacrifice and mighty work, eternal blessing flows to "whosoever will" take it. Could it be otherwise when that work was wrought out by Christ, who was not only perfect and sinless man but in His own person the eternal Son. The glory of His person has given infinite value to His work. Faith believes the testimony which God has given as to this and rejoices in it.

Miscellaneous.

C. M. Inslin.—THE AUTHORITY OF WHICH THE APOSTLE speaks as given to him by the Lord (2 Cor. 10. 8) was apostolic authority. The Apostles had a special place in connection with the founding and building up of the church given to them directly and personally by the Lord, which has not been the case

with any one since (1 Cor. 3. 10; Eph. 2. 20).

THE LOVE FEASTS of 2 Peter 2. 13 and Jude 12. were gatherings of the assemblies at which all partook of a meal together; abuses crept into these feasts (see 1 Cor. 11.), and they finally ceased to be held.

Unity and Praise.

(J. T. MAWSON).

That which shall be established and publicly manifested by the power of the Lord in His coming earthly kingdom should be characteristic of those who own His Lordship now.

SALVATION.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52. 7).

How beautiful to the eyes of the remnant of Israel, grown weary with weeping and watching, will be the advent of their Messiah's feet on the sacred crest of Olivet, for that will be the time of their salvation (see Zech. 14. 4; Matt. 24. 16). They will behold them "as if they burned in a furnace" strong to tread down their enemies and His; and the sight of them, as it greets the eyes of the watchers will make them "lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing."

We Christians have greater cause for singing than Israel will ever have, for we have heard better tidings of good than they will ever hear, and have seen those blessed feet in a more heart-moving path. We have seen them in the path of humiliation and suffering, for the Spirit of God has come to make all the ways of Jesus upon earth most beautiful in our eyes; and we know that He trod that downward and thorny path to reach us, and that He went into the depths of death to save us. We have seen those feet as the woman of the city saw them when she washed the dust of the way from them with penitential tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. How beautiful they were to her, bringing as they did the good tidings of salvation, and forgiveness, and peace! These same tidings they have brought to us; but at how great a cost!

We have seen them also as the disciples saw them when on the resur-

rection day the Lord said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. . . . And He showed them His hands and His feet." They were victorious feet that the disciples looked upon and handled, feet that had trodden down the enemy in His own stronghold, though wounded in that deadly fight, as had been announced on the earliest day of man's sin: "It [the Seed of the woman] shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. 3. 15). The disciples beheld those feet when back from the grave He brought a perfect peace to them; feet in which were the nail-prints, mute yet eloquent witnesses of the love that led Him unto death for them and for us.

EXULTATION.

"Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people. He hath redeemed Jerusalem."

"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. 52. 8).

But there is more: the Lord likened Himself to a shepherd going after the sheep that was lost "until He find it"; and He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this [Jewish] fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be ONE FLOCK, AND ONE SHEPHERD." And it is in this connection that He said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life." He laid down His life to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. What tongue shall tell of the terrible way that His blessed feet travelled in the infinite yearnings of His love to gather His sheep!

“Across His path oceans impassable weltered;
 He sank where the tempest-tossed billows
 did roll,
 And where deep called to deep amid catar-
 acts roaring
 The waters of death found their way to
 His soul.

He sank in deep mire, lone, abandoned, for-
 saken ;
 Nor in earth nor in heaven compassion
 He found ;
 He drank to the dregs the deep chalice of
 judgment,
 While the curse shook the caverns of
 chaos around.

He tasted death's waters, offensive and
 bitter,
 Yet dared He to drink, for the lost He
 would save,
 His great love upheld Him, strong infinite,
 quenchless,
 And for His lost sheep He went down to
 the grave.”

And shall He have travelled that road
 in vain ? And if Israel will sing together
 when He gathers them in Zion, having
 delivered them from the paw of the lion,
 cannot those who have been gathered of
 the Gentiles, from uttermost distance and
 danger and death, into the one flock of
 God, break forth into joy, and in happy,
 holy unison lift up the voice—

“And sing of the Shepherd that died,
 That died for the sake of the flock
 Whose love to the utmost was tried,
 Yet firmly endured as a rock ?”

Cannot they see “ eye to eye,” since He
 sets Himself before them as their
 gathering Centre, and the object worthy
 and able to fill their hearts ?

Are there any waste places in the
 flock of God where the harp is mute and
 the music still ? Are there places where
 “ the love of Christ which passeth
 knowledge ” is but a memory, or a
 doctrine, instead of a living and present
 reality ; where the wolf has scattered ;
 where pride and strife has caused the
 sheep to push with the side and shoulder,
 to push the diseased with the horns, till
 they are scattered abroad ? (Ezek. 34. 21)
 Alas ! there are. Yet there is a remedy.
 It is to hear His voice afresh ; to trace
 the way His feet have trodden and to
 turn in deep self-abasement to Him, and
 into the path in which He leads, and
 then shall we find true and practical
 unity, for seeing Him we shall see “ eye
 to eye ” ; and then shall we render true
 praise, for Himself being the theme of
 it, we shall lift the voice together, with
 the voice together shall we sing.

The Value of Prayer.

WE cannot find words weighty
 enough to express the importance
 of prayer both for holiness and service.
 St. Bernard went so far as to enunciate
 this paradox: “ And now abideth
 speech, example, and prayer, these
 three ; but the greatest of these is
 prayer.” It is a plain matter of fact
 that we can do more for God by prayer
 than in any other way ; or shall we say,
 that He can do more through us, and in
 us, also, when we give ourselves much to
 prayer. Prayer enlarges our vision and
 quickens our understanding, and brings
 us ever more intimately into the mind
 of Christ. By prayer we learn that our

strength is no substitute for God's might,
 and that our weakness is no hindrance
 to His power. By prayer our eyes are
 opened to behold the particular oppor-
 tunities which God would continually
 place in our way of serving Him. By
 prayer we may heal quarrels, allay
 envyings, remove misunderstandings,
 and bring peace and blessing where
 discord and death have been. In a
 word, prayer enables us to do what
 otherwise cannot be done, as we learn
 from the Lord's own words, “ This kind
 cometh not forth but by prayer and
 fasting.”

The Holy Spirit.

SENT BY THE FATHER (John 14.).

“ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, He shall teach you all things, and BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU ” (ver. 26).

As sent by the Father He brings to our souls in living power the words of the Lord Jesus—which words were the revelation of the Father, and in consequence we know our relationship to the Father as children, and to Christ as HIS BRETHREN. This has reference to the PAST, to the Lord's life on earth.

SENT BY THE LORD JESUS. (John 15.).

But when the Comforter is come, WHOM I WILL SEND UNTO YOU from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME (ver. 26).

As sent by the Lord the Holy Ghost bears witness of His glory at the

right hand of God, and makes this glory a reality to us so that we can triumph in His triumphs, and further (though this does not come in John's Gospel) that we may know that we are MEMBERS OF HIS BODY. This has reference to the PRESENT, to His glory on high.

COME IN HIS OWN RIGHT (John 16.).

Howbeit WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH IS COME, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak: AND HE WILL SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME (ver. 13).

As come in His own right the Holy Ghost not only makes Christ's present glory a reality to us, but His future glory also. He makes the coming of Christ to be a living hope, His coming glory to be greatly longed for, and enables us to rejoice in the prospect of being the BRIDE OF THE LAMB. This has reference to the FUTURE, the coming glories.

The World and the Children of God—A Contrast.

THE WORD—THE SON OF GOD.

“ He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT ” . . . but, WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, the glory of the only begotten of the Father—full of grace and truth ” (John 1. 10, 14).

THE HOLY GHOST.

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; WHOM THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE, BECAUSE IT SEETH HIM NOT, NEITHER KNOWETH HIM: BUT YE KNOW

HIM; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ” (John 14. 16, 17 .

THE FATHER.

“ O righteous Father, THE WORLD HATH NOT KNOWN THEE: but I have known Thee, and THESE HAVE KNOWN that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them ” (John 17. 25, 26).

“ AND WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF GOD, AND THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS ” (1 John 5. 19).

Fountains of Living Water.

(HENRY J. VINE).

“With Thee is the Fountain of Life.”

IT has been said, “When the woman of the fourth chapter of John came to Jesus, she came to the well: and when she came to the well she came to Jesus.” The Living one and “the Fountain” (N.T.) are together.

The Lord spake to her of the living water which He gives; of that which slakes the soul’s thirst so perfectly, that whosoever drinks thereof “shall never thirst for ever.” But not only does this living water satisfy: it becomes within the one who drinks “a fountain of living water, springing up into eternal life.” Eternal realities and relationships are so realized that the once thirsty sinner becomes a true worshipper of the Father in spirit and in truth. Christ the Living One is the giver of this living water.

LIFE THROUGH DEATH.

The Lord had previously spoken of His death as being a necessity first: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3. 14-15). Here it is not His death for our sins, but rather that life might be ours, instead of death through the serpent’s bite. “If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, *he lived*” (Num. 21. 9).

From this point, we are told in the next verse, “Israel set forward.” This is so with ourselves likewise. It is in the energy of life we “set forward.” In verse 17 we also find them singing at “Beer” (the well). Then Israel sang this song, “Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves.” The first time Israel sang was when the Red Sea was passed.

This is the second singing, and follows the lifting up of the brazen serpent. The earliest singing we read of was connected with *Creation* (Job 38. 7). The next with *Redemption* (Exod. 15. 1). And the third with *Life* (Num. 21. 17).

We must notice, that though Beer was “the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and *I will give them water*”; yet “*they digged.*” We see the energy of life in this. And afterwards Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan fall before them. They go from victory to victory. Balaam too, the spiritualist, the clairvoyant, fails to curse them—for God had said, “They are blessed.”

We have learned, it may be, the Red Sea aspect of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which sets forth His redemption-power. It caused our hearts to rejoice and sing of His triumph as the risen Saviour. We know that He was delivered for our offences, and that He was raised again for our justification. We know that He has overthrown the power of Satan and delivered us from his authority. But what of the brazen serpent aspect of Christ’s death?

The serpent’s bite had sent the poison of death into the very springs of our being. The question therefore of our fallen state had to be met, as well as that of our sins. Truly, the one death of our blessed Lord did both, but we have to learn the application of that death in each of these ways. The first secures forgiveness and justification for us: the second life—eternal life! He was lifted up “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ETERNAL LIFE.”

Someone says: “I know that my Saviour died for me, and I am going to heaven when I die!” Thank God! That is a very blessed thing to know.

But many say that, and yet settle down, and are apparently little different from the respectable, unregenerate religionist who knows nothing of being saved by grace. Let us seriously ask ourselves: Are we marked by spiritual energy—by life? Have we set forward? Have we sung Israel's second song? Someone perhaps answers thus: "I once had an experience of that sort, but something seems to have come in, and I am different now."

WELLS OF LIVING WATER.

Let us see if we can discover the reason. For God has not saved us in His rich grace to leave us like lifeless professors of religion. Nay, He giveth more grace that we may "lay hold of what is really life."

We will go back to an earlier type, to Isaac, the resurrection man. His father, Abraham, had opened out wells of water in his day (Genesis 21.). These wells, which were figurative of the water of life, were, however, filled up by the Philistines (ch. 26.). Satanic principles are prefigured by the activity of these Philistines. They are at work to-day, now, in heavenly places (Eph. 6. 12). They seek to hinder our progress, and stay the living energies which should mark us. Here lies the secret of much seeming deadness. This explains the apparent lifelessness of many real believers. Someone at Ephesus had gone to sleep! His eyes were closed to the bright shining of Christ! He was not dead, but he was lying down amongst the dead of the world! What a state for a real saint of God to get into! The Apostle cries to such an one, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5. 14).

In the armour of light, strong in the Lord, the feeblest saint can triumph over that of which these Philistines speak. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Now Isaac is a type of Christ in one sense. But it is important to see that

he is also a pattern of ourselves as having the life of Christ risen. It is distinctly said, "We brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise . . . children of the free" (Gal. 4. 28-31). Now Isaac progressed in spite of the enemies; and to prosper we must so take account of ourselves in this matter. His purposefulness and energy are all the more seen because of their opposition. He "set forward" to uncover the wells.

The first well unstopped was called "Esek," that is "contention"; for there was strife (Gen. 26. 20). We are to contend earnestly. *The second well* was called "Sitnah," that is "hatred," because they strove for that also. It is clear that at this point there is no thought of leisure. There is conflict. Truly, we are on the winning side; but still, healthful activity is manifested. We are brought to hate that which is opposed to the truth, that which was righteously judged at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The third well was "Rehoboth," that is "room." He now saw that liberty and prosperity were before him. It is the liberty and blessing which are ours in Christ risen. Here we find real leisure and restfulness amid scenes of abundance. *The fourth well* was called "Beersheba," the "well of the oath," for it speaks of the purpose of God in Christ; of that which was in His heart of love for us before the foundation of the world, for His own praise and pleasure.

There is definite order indicated in these wells. The order, I doubt not, according to which the Spirit of Truth leads the soul now, at this time.

Isaac did not give these living wells new names. He simply "called their names after the names by which his father had called them" (Gen. 26. 18). This is very significant and instructive. God has given us a perfect and full revelation; but on all sides there is a cry for something "new." Let us abide by what has already been revealed. It

cannot be advanced upon. Let us not heed the vain boastings about "new light," "new conceptions," "advanced thought," etc. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even ETERNAL LIFE" (1 John 2. 24-25). Why should we not enjoy these living realities in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit now? But mark well, this living fountain is the especial object of "the Philistines'" attack. "He is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son." Nevertheless, thank God, greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world; John writes, "THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL."

THE WELL OF THE LIVING ONE.

We will refer finally to Isaac as a type of Christ, the Living One, with whom is the fountain of life. After he had been offered up in figure upon the altar, and had been raised again, as we read in Genesis 22., He received His bride to Himself, as is narrated in Genesis 24. Between these two occurrences Isaac's mother Sarah, a type of Israel, had passed away, and was buried (Gen. 23.). Here we have our Lord Jesus Christ foreshadowed in a most beautiful manner. When Rebekah is being brought to Him by the servant, who is a type of the Spirit, we read: "Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-

roi" (24. 62); that is, being interpreted, "The well of the Living One." Afterwards we are told that they "dwelt by the well of the Living One" (25. 11). As we see Christ typified in these interesting verses, how suitable the precious words at the head of this paper are recognized to be: "With Thee is the fountain of life."

The world dwells by the lethal waters of sin, beside the streams of death, away from the life of God. Our dwelling-place, on the other hand, is with the Living One; beside the fountain of living plenteousness and refreshing. Life and liberty, fruitfulness and freshness, ever spring up in abundant fulness here. The blessed Lord came that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly.

The tide of time will soon sweep past; the trials and tears of this little while be gone for ever. God Himself will wipe away every trace of these things: for the former things are passed away. "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the Fountain of the water of life freely." Blessed Lord and Saviour, for ever shall it be: "WITH THEE IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE."

"As we are, so we work."

LORD LEIGHTON, speaking to a company of artists, said, "As we are, so we work." With what solemnity might not a servant of the Lord remind himself of this truth. Those who bear the light that is to illuminate the souls of sinners or the path of saints must themselves be in practice children of the light. It is not enough to preach the truth, we must preach the truth *in the love of it*.

Would we convey the ministrations

of the Spirit to men? We must ourselves be Spirit-filled. Would we declare the message with peace and power? We must "dip and season our words heart deep." Would we commend the truth to men? The truth of Christ must first be wrought in us. Our profitableness in this gracious service depends entirely upon the reality of our subjection to God and the intimacy of our communion with Him.

Appropriation.

(H. P. BARKER).

Conversations on the Book of Ruth.—III.

Q. What is the main subject of the second chapter of the Book of Ruth ?

A. It may be summed up in the word "Appropriation." Day by day Ruth goes to glean in the cornfields of Boaz. Otherwise what benefit would she have got from the rich supply of food with which she was surrounded ? She and Naomi might have starved to death in the midst of plenty.

In the same way, we who are Christians have to appropriate, each one for himself, the blessings which God has given.

Q. How do you reconcile the necessity of continual gleaning with the truth that all spiritual blessings are ours ?

A. To know that a certain blessing is ours by the gift of God is one thing; to *appropriate* it so as to get the present benefit and joy of it is quite another. The one is a question of simple faith in the Word of God that declares how God has blessed His people; the other is experimental, and can only be effected by the power of the Spirit of God.

Q. Is there any type or illustration in the Bible that would make quite clear the difference between *knowing* that a thing is ours by faith, and *appropriating* it by the Spirit of God ?

A. Take the case of the children of Israel and the land of Canaan. In the Book of Deuteronomy the promised land is spoken of again and again as belonging to Israel by God's gift. This fact was made known to them through Moses, and to believe it was a matter of simple faith on their part. If some of the sons of Israel believed not, a poor Gentile Canaanite was found who *did* believe in this revelation of God's gift to His chosen people, and who could say, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land" (Jos. 2. 9). This gift of

God was altogether apart from the efforts of the people themselves. Joshua could tell them: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel . . . I have given you a land *for which ye did not labour*" (chap. 24. 2, 13).

Nevertheless, upon the arrival of the people at the confines of the territory that God had given them, He sent them a message, saying, "*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, THAT have I given you*" (Jos. 1. 3). All was theirs, but they had to take possession of the given land, and for this, energy and courage were needed.

Q. In what way do we appropriate our blessings, or, to return to the language of our chapter, "glean in the harvest field" ? Is it in the Scriptures that we have to glean ?

A. Not exactly. The Scriptures tell us what the blessings are, and assure us that they are ours. Without the Scriptures we should have no light as to the way God has blessed us, nor should we know whether we are entitled to appropriate His blessings. But to have *light* as to these blessings in the Scriptures, and to have *the blessings themselves* as God's free and wonderful gifts, and to have the *assurance* that all are ours is not quite the same as appropriating, for present enjoyment, by the power of the Holy Spirit. He makes good *in* us what God has given *to* us, and said in His Word *about* us.

Q. Will you mention one instance of what you mean ?

A. Take the wonderful blessing of *sonship*. The Scriptures tell us about it. They assure us that it is ours, and that we who believe are indeed God's "sons." But how many Christians who are quite clear as to the relationship in which God has set them with regard to Himself fail to appropriate

that blessed relationship so as to enjoy the nearness and holy intimacy with God that belongs to it, and to have the consciousness of it, resulting in their walking and acting as those who are His sons?

Q. What were the marks that characterized Ruth as a gleaner?

A. Diligence and perseverance. She set forth in the morning (ver. 7) and laboured till the evening (ver. 17), and on reaching home beat out what she had gleaned. This she did, day after day, to the very end of the harvest (ver. 23).

Q. We read of various persons in this chapter: the maidens, the reapers, and others. Whom do they represent?

A. They all helped Ruth, and contributed to the success of her gleanings. They represent, I think, various ways in which those who glean in God's rich fields of blessing are helped.

Q. What about the maidens, mentioned in verses 8 and 23? Boaz says to Ruth: "Abide here fast by my maidens;" and we are told that "she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean."

A. The maidens were those who were doing the same thing, day by day, as Ruth herself. Did she go forth each morning to glean? So did they. Did she toil away in the fields till even? So did they. They represent therefore, may we not say, our fellow-Christians—those travelling the same way and having the same objects as ourselves.

Q. In what way did these maidens help Ruth?

A. Not by becoming, in any sense of the word, a source of supply to her. She did not get a single ear of corn from them. The way they helped her was by their *companionship*. There were probably no cornfields in Moab. Its highlands supported immense flocks of sheep (see 2 Kings 3. 4), but it is likely that the barley-fields of Judah were a

novel sight to Ruth. But the maidens of Bethlehem had long been familiar with them. The daily gleaning during the harvest had become a part of their very lives. Hence, by their companionship, their example, and their instruction, they would be able to help the newcomer as she went about her gleaning.

Q. How would you apply this to us to-day?

A. The companionship—or, if another word be preferred, the fellowship—of the Lord's dear people is of the greatest possible help and encouragement to the gleaner in the rich fields of blessing. Oh! the terrible shipwrecks that have come to pass through young Christians making companions of worldlings. It is a healthy sign when a new convert breaks with his old acquaintances and henceforth confines his friendships to those who are the Lord's.

Q. How can we avoid having dealings with worldlings?

A. We cannot avoid having *dealings* with them, in business and in the ordinary walks of life. And we are to be friendly towards them, even as Christ was the Friend of sinners. Even towards those who are enemies we are to show love, and to act in grace to all. But companionship is a different matter. David says, in Psalm 101.: "I will not know a wicked person." He does not say "I will have no dealings with," or "I will do no business with," or "I will show no kindness to," such a person, but "I will not *know*" him. That is, "I will not have him as my friend; he shall not be numbered among my companions."

On the other hand, in that beautiful Psalm 119. David says: "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee" (ver. 63). That is the right kind of company for the Christian to keep, company that will be helpful, and that will encourage him in the ways of the Lord.

Q. Is not the companionship of

worldly Christians quite as harmful as that of out-and-out worldlings?

A. Often it is more so. One Saturday evening I was running to catch a train down the crowded street of a large town. It was difficult to make my way through the throng that filled the street. But who were the people that hindered me most, do you suppose? Not those who were walking in the opposite direction. It was easy enough to pass them, as we mutually avoided one another. *The people going the same way, but not anxious to get on as quickly as myself,* these were the greatest obstacles. They made me almost lose my train. It is the same with the Christian: the

greatest hindrances in his way, the people who impede him most, are often those who, travelling in the same direction as himself, do so with laggard steps, and with no eagerness to press on in the race that is set before us.

Q. Whom do the *reapers* represent?

A. I think we must defer the consideration of this question, which is of some interest, for our next month's "conversation," for the Editor of "Scripture Truth" thinks that the shorter an article is, the better chance it has of being read. Long articles, he believes, are often passed over unread. And no doubt he is right!

Safe, Sure, Satisfied.

THE TRUE TOKEN—SAFE.

"Give me a true token" (Joshua 2. 12).

"The blood shall be to you for a token" (Exod. 12. 13).

THE TRUE RECORD—SURE.

"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (John 20. 35).

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35).

THE TRUE GOD—SATISFIED.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.

"This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5. 20, 21).

We have *safety* through the blood of Jesus.

We have *assurance* through the Word of God.

We have *satisfaction* in the knowledge of the true God.

The Saviour and the Sinner.

THE FAITHFUL MAN. Ps. 1.

"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night" (Ps. 1. 2).

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17. 4).

THE FILTHY MAN. Ps. 14.

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy. There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14. 3).

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3. 22, 23).

THE FORSAKEN MAN. Ps. 22.

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me" (Ps. 22. 1).

"He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

THE FORGIVEN MAN. Ps. 32.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32. 1).

"Your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (1 John 2. 12).

The *faithful* Man was *forsaken*, that the *filthy* man might be *forgiven*.

God's Ideal.

(JAMES GREEN).

AN ADDRESS

On Genesis 1. 26-28; Romans 8, 28-30; Ephesians 4. 17-5. 1; Colossians 3. 9-13.

SOMEONE said to me to-night, "Let us be simple." Well, the things of God are always simple. What hinders us is that we are often too big to understand them. But when God has brought us down low enough to listen to Him, then we find all is wonderfully simple. Nevertheless, God's things are far above us, for as heaven is higher than the earth so are His thoughts higher than ours.

God sets His thoughts before us, and a proper contemplation of them must have a true effect upon us. Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose a lad of artistic temperament; what would be the best way to develop it? To set him to draw straight lines and curves would doubtless be a very useful exercise, but a very wearisome one. I should not start his education in that way, but should take him to one of the best galleries, and set him before a painting by some great master, point out the excellency of its proportion and colouring, and bid him study that. Do I think that the lad would then be able to go home and make a copy of it? No, but his taste would be formed by the object he has seen; he would have before him that which is far above him, and having the ideal in his mind, his mind would be developed in that direction.

Now God desires to set before everyone of us a right ideal. You find men of the world setting an ideal before them; and how they work to reach it! As Cecil Rhodes lay dying in that little cottage by the sea in South Africa he was heard to say, "So much to do, and so little done." He had an ideal, but he did not attain to it—he was disappointed. So it is with everything in the world, whether it be fame or money or advancement in knowledge. Even these things are

never reached, never attained to the heart's satisfaction, but how they fill men with energy in the pursuit of them! Christians ought to have God's ideal before them, an ideal which is sure of realization.

I read the passage in the opening of Genesis, because there you see at the beginning what was in God's mind, and it is not subject to any change. That which God starts with is that which He is going to finish with. Things committed to men break down, but God does not alter. At the outset you have His thought about man. "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS," and let them have dominion over everything. The New Testament is the working out of this thought unto completion. God had it in His mind before the world was made to create man, and to have him wholly like Himself, and representative of Him. That is God's conception, but it was not to be accomplished in the first man who was made of dust.

Let us look at the failure, first of all. If God can just demonstrate to you and me that everything has failed on our side, that will put all our pride to one side, and leave us ready listeners as He tells us of His own purpose and how He will effectuate it. Between the first and fifth chapters sin had intruded into the fair creation of God, and man had fallen a ready prey to the adversary, so that he no longer answered to the purpose for which he was made. Genesis 5. contains the generations of Adam, but instead of begetting a son after the likeness of God, he begot a son in his own likeness, after his image—sinful and rebellious.

Now in what way was Adam made in the likeness of God? Simply in this, that there was no evil in him. He had

no knowledge of good and evil. You could not say that Adam was holy, because holiness supposes a nature that, knowing good and evil, loves good and abhors evil. God is holy, dwelling in His own spotless light He is holy. Adam had no knowledge of evil, therefore he was innocent, not holy. Then righteousness supposes that there is that which is opposite. Holiness is the love of good. Righteousness is the contrast of sin; God is righteous and because of this He must judge evil. But there was no evil present to Adam's mind to judge. You could not then speak of him as righteous, but he was innocent. There was no trace of sin in him. In that way he was like God.

But if that is likeness, what is the meaning of Adam being made in the image of God? The idea conveyed by image is that which represents. When a question was raised about the tribute money, the Lord Jesus said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" It was not material as to whether the head on the coin was like Cæsar, but it represented him. Adam was set in a place which no angel ever had. He was made the centre of a created sphere to represent God to the creation around him. But image in its full meaning is the intensification of likeness, that is, that it is so like the person that it perfectly represents him. As I might say of a picture: "That is the very image of my mother." I seem to see her—it is so like her.

Now we will see how this works out. Adam fell. He ceased to be like God in any respect because evil was there, but he did not cease to be as to his position in the image of God. Man is still the highest being in the created sphere of which he is the centre. The animal creation are still under his dominion; to that creation he is as god. In Genesis 9. 2, God says to Noah, "The fear and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . . and upon all the fishes of the sea." Man still retains the image of God in respect of his order in creation, and to slay him is to deface

God's image (Gen. 9. 6). Look at 1 Corinthians 11. 7: "For man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man." But as to the likeness? Adam begot a son in his own likeness, in the same condition of sin as he was in himself, and the whole of the Old Testament history is the development, not of the likeness of God, but of the likeness of fallen man. The moral character that belongs to all of Adam's race is that of the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts.

But then Adam was not the fulfilment of God's ideal. He foreshadowed One who was to come, for God had another Man in reserve, the Man that He always had before Him, for before the foundation of the world there was an eternal purpose, and that purpose was connected with the Lord Jesus Christ. When all the present order has passed away, that purpose of God will stand, and God will finish with that with which He began. In Colossians the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the image of the invisible God, and the Firstborn of every creature. He is the one who perfectly represents God. To see Him is to see God. To understand the thoughts of His heart is to come to the knowledge of God. To see Him forgiving sins is to know that God forgives sins. He is the Firstborn of all creation; that is, the pre-eminent one, to whom all dignity and honour in creation belongs, the one whom God has appointed as the head and centre of everything.

Now as to likeness. You may search the New Testament from beginning to end, and you will never find that He is said to be *like* God, and for a very good reason, because HE IS GOD. He is the image of the invisible God, because God has been pleased to manifest Himself in Him. That is the great secret that lies at the bottom of everything. What is the secret of piety that will claim a man for God? What is the secret that will make a man yield himself wholly to

God? It is this, God was manifest in flesh.

“God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven’s beloved one.”

Let that get into your heart, and let your prayer be, “Lord, just show me the wonder of it more, that God was manifest in Thee.”

Well now, you notice in those early chapters of the book we have been reading that Adam was not alone. But there were not two centres made. Adam was the centre, but he was not alone. In the whole creation there was not found a helpmeet for him, and so God formed a companion for him, not out of the dust of the earth, and not a selection from the animal creation, but out of Adam himself. Adam was not to be alone, but the one who was to be his glory and share the place that God had given him was part of himself.

The great thought of God is that Christ shall not be alone, and in these passages in Ephesians and Colossians the thought is brought out. The Epistle to the Romans is a very comprehensive epistle. It is full of beginnings. The beginning of every doctrine in the New Testament is in the Epistle to the Romans, just as you will find the beginning of everything in the book of Genesis. In Romans 8. 29 we read, “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.”

¶ In Romans 16. 25 the Apostle expresses a very wonderful desire: “Now to Him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery—the secret—which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest . . . to God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever!” That is where the Apostle desired to lead them on to, something he has not unfolded in that epistle. The great purpose is in chapter 8. He just touches upon it, but he does not unfold it. The way in which it is to be brought to pass is in chapter 16.,

but he leaves these mighty truths in the germ, that other epistles may unfold them in all their beauty.

Now what God proposes is, not that there should be made so many imitations of Christ, but that there should be a body formed out of Himself, brought by the Holy Spirit into union with Him, and that His life should be expressed through every member of it. Eve was not a different life. She received her life from Adam. She was formed out of himself, although the figure fails, for there is no figure of this wonderful secret that Christ is the Head of His body the church in the Old Testament at all. The type of husband and wife tells of the love that Christ has to the church and of its subjection to Him, but does not express the full thought of the purpose of God.

It is in this way that God will conform His saints to the image of His Son, because the life of the Head flows through them in the power of the Spirit. How did the Apostle seek to bring the knowledge of all this to the saints? When he had unfolded in words which the Holy Ghost taught the wonder of God’s thought, he gave himself to prayer for them, and we have to learn it in like manner. If our meeting to-night brings more before us the marvellous transcendent thought that God has in His heart, it will result in our being brought to our knees to say, “Lord, teach me. Lord, bring me down low enough that I may learn it. Lord, open my eyes that I may see it,” and that will produce a wonderful effect.

Now just see how it works out. Ephesians has more to do with the likeness of God. Look at chapter 4. 22, it should read, “Having put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts,” Christ, by His death, has brought to pass before God your severance and mine from the old man. You want to get your foot right down upon that. The thing has been done for God. The old man has been put off so far as God sees it, and all that

you and I have to do is to stand upon the place of victory that the Lord Jesus has wrought for us. We have not to gain the victory. We could not do it if we tried. The old man is far too strong for us. He has done it, and we have only to claim the victory, and although the flesh still remains in us, to refuse to allow its working to give character to our lives. What is the old man? It is the character of Adam fallen. That moral likeness in which Adam begot his son, which has been developed in his descendants, that is the old man. What is the new man? That new moral character which has come to light in Christ. The Lord Jesus personally is not spoken of as the new Man, but His character in us is the new man, because in Him there never was anything else, but in us there has been.

Notice chapter 4. 23: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Why is that put in there? Because God wants you to get His thought before you. He wants His ideal in Christ to fill your soul. You look at Him, and as you see His moral beauty, and as you realize that God has made that life yours, that Christ is your life, you will be renewed in the spirit of your mind. You will gladly take up the thought that God has connected you with Him by the Holy Spirit, and has put on you the new man, that new moral character that all came out so blessedly in the Lord Jesus Christ, and which, after God, is created in righteousness and holiness of truth. That carries you far beyond anything that belonged to Adam innocent. We come to the full conception of the likeness of God—righteousness, true holiness, and love, the things that mark God Himself. The new man is after Him, so you have: "Forgiving one another, as God also in Christ has forgiven you." And then the pattern of love: "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us."

Now, in Colossians you have the image side. When you read Ephesians keep in mind the thought of moral likeness. When you read Colossians 3. keep in

mind the thought of image—representation. That is, that you represent Christ. Verse 9: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." God has brought this wonderful thought to pass, and this new man is not only in the moral likeness of God, but is representative of Christ who is the image of God. So when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. It is ours to be renewed in this knowledge now. Alas! the present condition of the church is far from representing Christ, but the day is coming when all the saints shall be seen in glory with Him, part of Himself, His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. Then shall be seen the fulfilment of God's ideal, and Christ shall be seen in the members of His body, in all the beauty of His moral character, and fully represented as the Sent One of God. Does that cause a thrill in your heart as you think of it? Does that make you enthusiastic at such an ideal? you are going to be representative of Christ. Would not you like to go out now and set Him forth to the whole world if you could? You say, "Indeed, I would." As we sang to-night, He is—

"Worthy of homage and of praise
Worthy by all to be adored;"

Do you not wish you could make His worth known world-wide? Well, there are many things that keep you from doing it, but it is possible in a little way, as His grace possesses your heart, and as His life fills you. But you are going to be according to God's ideal, you are not going to be disappointed in it. God's great thought is, that the saints shall be representative of Christ, and that He shall be admired in all them that believe.

Every other character of man goes out when Christ is brought in. "Where there is neither Jew nor Greek." The

Greek, the learned man, is not there. Nor Jew; the religious man is not there. Circumcision, any select company, is not there. Uncircumcision, man in the flesh, is not there. Barbarian, the man that boasted in his strength and his warlike abilities, is not there. The Scythian who boasted in his refinement is not there, and the bondman and the freeman, with their social distinctions, are not there. What is there, if none of these characters that are around us in the world to-day are seen? Christ is there, and Christ is all as object, and in all as life. It is such a marvellous thought that it absolutely takes you out of yourself altogether. That is just what God intends. He wants to entrance your heart with the wonderful plan that is before Himself.

This has been called God's masterpiece, that Christ should be the centre, and that He should associate around Himself—

to be representative of Him, filled with His own life, united to Him by the Holy Spirit—those in whom He shall be seen and glorified. Then the full image, now the likeness, is being formed. We are to put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, "forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." That is what I mean by the image being the intensification of the likeness. You could not represent Him unless you were morally like Him, and to this end the present workmanship of God is directed. He is taking all the circumstances of the way, and all the little things day after day, all the detail of our lives, the rough places as well as the smooth, the sorrow and the joy, and through and in all He is working out this great ideal for Himself.

The Rest of God and the Chastening of the Lord in the Hebrew Epistle.

(J. Boyd).

THE REST OF GOD is that which is before our souls. In the past dispensation this was confined to the Land of Promise. Nor will it ever go beyond that land for the Jew as such. We are exhorted to run, with patience, the race set before us, looking off unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12.). The goal, for us, is the place He has entered into for us. In Psalm 16. we get the joy that was set before Him, and there we get Him treading the whole path of faith. I do not doubt it is that Psalm that is in the mind of the writer in chapter 12. He entered upon the path, saying, "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." And the goal before Him is set forth in the closing words of that Psalm: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy: at Thy right hand

there are pleasures for evermore." This is the joy that was set before Him. He said to His disciples, "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father" (John 14. 28). This is the goal before our souls.

It is plain that the Land of Promise was the place in which Israel was to find rest at the end of the wilderness journey. Moses said to the people, while they were yet in the desert, "Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety" (Deut. 12. 9, 10). At the dedication of the temple Solomon says, "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest to His people Israel, accord-

ing to all that He promised" (1 Kings 8. 56). But neither under the reign of David nor Solomon did the people ever find rest; therefore we hear the Lord saying through Isaiah, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build Me? and where is the place of My rest?" (chap. 66. 1). Psalm 132. comes in when every link of the people was broken; and in answer to the prayer of David God approaches them in the grace of His heart. The Philistines had taken the ark of God. He "delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand" (1 Sam. 4.; Ps. 78. 61). The neck of the priesthood was broken, and "Ichabod" written on everything. But the Lord was well able to look after His own interests and safeguard His own glory. The enemy were as glad to get quit of the Ark as they had been to capture it. The foe is judged, David enthroned, and Zion chosen as His rest for ever; and there the blessing is commanded—"life for ever more."

But all this refers to the earthly people, and to Israel's inheritance, which is earthly, and does not in the least touch the heavenly side of things, to which we are called. I do not mean we have nothing to do with the earthly: we have to do with *everything*, for Christ has to do with everything, and with Him are all our associations. But our position is a heavenly one, and the place our Priest has determines our place, for He lives before the face of God, that He may safely bring us through all the dangers of the way, until we arrive in that place where is found "*fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.*" Therefore in chapter 12., where we have the glorious principles of the world to come brought before us, we are said to have come not only to Mount Sion, but to the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And when the glories of that city are unfolded before our wondering eyes in Revelation, we see in it the throne of God and of the Lamb. The throne

established upon Zion takes in under its sway nothing but the people of Israel and the nations of the earth; but that which is established in the heavenly city takes all that is in heaven and upon earth. In Revelation, I admit, we have it only in its relations to earth, but inasmuch as it is the Bride of Christ, under whose feet "all *things*" are placed, its influence must be felt throughout the whole creation.

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD is to help us on our way. He does it in love, and by its means the will of the flesh is broken down, the cords that would bind us to earth are loosened, and heaven becomes more to our hearts. Thus we are made partakers of His holiness. The Lord deals with us in grace, and rather than allow us to come short of His purpose for us, He allows the enemy to disturb our earthly tranquillity. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings" (Deut. 32. 11), so does the Lord deal with those He loves, His object being to lead us to where He rests in His love. Such passages as those in chapter 6. 4-8, and 10. 26-31 are not on the line of chastisement at all, but refer to the utter and final rejection of apostates from Christ.

In chapter 11. we have the "cloud of witnesses" to the power of faith. They have become witnesses to us of the power of that faith through which they overcame every obstacle that rose up to hinder them. But the Spirit of God would have our eye directed to Him who has left the imprint of His blessed feet upon every inch of the path, from beginning to end; who has reached the goal; who makes intercession for us, and who furnishes all the grace and strength that is needful to carry us through to the end. Our ear is to be open to His Word; our hearts full of confidence in God; our hands held up in prayerful dependence on Him; our knees strengthened by the consolations of the Lord, and our feet firmly planted in the narrow way that leads to life.

Studies in the Psalms.—Second Book

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 50, 51.

THESE Psalms have already been referred to as exhibiting the purpose of the Spirit to deepen the work of God in the souls of the Jewish saints who will be in the circumstances set forth in the preceding Psalms of this second Book. Their importance in this respect will be manifest as we proceed.

PSALM 50., the first of these, is attributed to Asaph the seer (2 Chron. 29. 30). Eleven others by the same writer are found in the third Book; they have a character of their own, teaching lessons of deep moral value. In the one before us, the bold and striking language is evidently most suitable to the great theme of the breaking of God's silence and His public intervention in the history of this world. In verse 21, as to the sinful ways of His people in the past He says, "I kept silence"; now "GOD, GOD, JEHOVAH hath spoken and calls the earth from East to West" to witness His settlement of accounts with Israel. Again, in verse 3, "Our God will come and will not keep silence." Also in verse 7, "Hear, my people, and I will speak." The speech here mentioned is evidently in reference to His appearing in glory; in Hebrews 1. and 12. His speaking is in grace and is recognized only by faith. This call is addressed to him that has ears to hear, that he may hear.

We are on other ground in Psalm 50., in which sins are thoroughly searched out (ver. 16, etc.) and the nation divided into two great classes of good and evil. The ground on which alone pardon can be brought to us is embraced by the righteous and acknowledged by God; it is He that says: "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." To them He makes known the insufficiency of ritual, even though divinely appointed, to provide any basis

of relationship with Himself. His grace leads Him to seek to be known as a Deliverer and not as an exactor (see ver. 15). It is a Saviour God who secures the worship of a saved people. Other worship does not spring from the love which God values.

The wicked are those who declare His statutes and take His covenant in their mouth, but are utterly unholy in ways and associations; such a class acquire an evil boldness presuming on God's silence to carry out their wickedness (*cf.* Ezek. 8. 12, 9. 9). In Zephaniah 1. 12, among all the sins of which the prophet convicts the people, the misinterpretation of God's silence stands out as specially obnoxious to Him: "He will not do good, neither will He do evil." The one who knows his own heart will find occasions in times of crisis to judge a similar spirit of unbelief working in himself. In our Psalm, God exposes this character of evil, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself." Man apart from revelation cannot conceive of Deity as anything essentially different to himself except in magnitude; and hence all the gods of the heathen mythology are but enlarged portraits of fallen man, the invention of a sinful imagination. The need of a revelation is thus manifested, for man cannot, even by searching, find out God. Solemnly and in mercy God gives warning to the wicked of that which an awakened conscience knows well, that He will set their sins in order before their own eyes. The same mercy affords time for consideration (ver. 22) ere judgment comes. Alas! such have refused the covenant of grace founded on sacrifice, and God has provided no other way of escape. Conversely, those who have trusted the Deliverer and His work have blessed ground for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and find as they follow

the teaching of grace (Titus 2. 11, 12), the salvation of God. Thus, as ever, grace and government harmonize in blessing the believer.

A consideration of this Psalm strongly suggests, as others have thought, that there will be a sessional judgment of Israel analogous to that of the Gentile nations in Matthew 25., but, as we have seen, the issue will be decided on other grounds.

The title of PSALM 51. tells the occasion of its utterance, but the Spirit goes far beyond the sin of David to give words whereby the repentant remnant of the Jews in a future day may confess their guilt in connection with Messiah. From this point of view verse 14 is the key and centre of the whole composition, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation." This is a petition to escape the penalty of wilful blood-shedding according to the law of Exodus 21. 13, Numbers 35., etc., and the intercession of the Lord Himself, Luke 23. 34 (see also Acts 3. 17), and will be accepted by God, here addressed as the God of my salvation. The result is, "my tongue shall celebrate Thy righteousness": the pardoned sinner praising the God of his salvation for His righteousness anticipates the teaching of Romans 3., God justifying freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. How unrighteously the writer pardoned the unrepentant Absalom, we all remember. Seven passages in Isaiah bring together God's righteousness and His salvation (45. 21; 46. 13; 51. 5; 56. 1; 59. 16, 17; 61. 10; 62. 1). Thus, prior to the manifestation of this righteousness as declared in Romans 3., we find it witnessed in these prophetic writings.

In the earlier part of the Psalm, sin is fully confessed and traced to its source in man's fallen nature (ver. 5). This confession is referred to in Psalm 32. 5, and is there followed by free pardon in grace (see 2 Sam. 12. 13). No thought of palliation is here expressed, for historically Nathan's conviction had

exposed the enormity of the sin. Prophetically it follows or coincides with Zechariah 12. 10, where they look on Him whom they have pierced. We often evade going to the bottom of things and hence never reach the complete cleansing of which the Psalm speaks and the penitent desires.

How amazingly grace teaches, and only grace can teach the soul realizing its defilement by foul sin to seek full restoration. "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." This no doubt refers to Numbers 19., and both there and here is it the defiled saint that is contemplated rather than the sinner in his first coming to God. Hence it is cleansing by water that is required, not a re-application of the blood; indeed, the latter is not found in Scripture. It is very interesting to see how all this deep experience of God and self qualifies for successful service, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." It is those whose souls have known the ploughshare of conviction who can most deeply affect others. The true knowledge of God is further manifested in the consciousness that the blood of bulls and goats will not meet the claims of God, and that what really suits Him is the "broken and contrite heart."

At this point the work of restoration to communion may be regarded as complete; accordingly the soul is led by the Spirit into prayer in connection with the counsels of God's love for His saints: "Do good in Thy good pleasure to Zion, build Thou the walls of Jerusalem." When divine love and restoring grace are realized in our souls it is of all importance that the quickened affections should flow in the same channels as His from whom they are derived, so that as Christ has His pearl of great price on earth, we all should learn to value it according to His estimation, and that till He comes to redeem by power what He had purchased in grace.

The Miraculous Gift of Tongues.

(ALGERNON J. POLLOCK).

ABOUT eighty years ago a good deal of stir was excited when tidings went forth of "spiritual manifestations" occurring among certain Christians in the West of Scotland. These tidings moved many to seek like manifestations.

Among the most eminent of these seekers was the Rev. Edward Irving, if not the founder, the most picturesque and brilliant personality connected with the Catholic Apostolic Church.

What occurred in that movement was calculated to arouse grave suspicion that it originated with Satan. Indeed, it may safely be affirmed that with intelligent Christians, who have carefully inquired into the history of the movement, grave suspicion ripened into settled conviction as to its Satanic origin.

Whenever Satan is at work, a sure sign of his activity is unsound teaching as to the person of Christ. This ominous sign was not wanting, for Mr. Irving's teaching on this subject was horrible and heretical. He was estranged from the majority of his congregation in the principal Scottish church in London by his taking up with "tongues" and "manifestations of gifts." He was excommunicated by the Presbytery of London in 1830.

Further, one of his best-known associates, Mr. Robert Baxter, described by Sir Robert Anderson, who knew him, as "a typical English parliamentary lawyer, reserved, slow of speech and noted for soundness of judgment," has put upon record his painful discovery that these tongues were inspired by Satan, and not divine in their origin at all. Mr. Baxter was prominent in connection with this new movement, but discovering it was Satanic, promptly severed himself from it.

There are gullible Christians, who

readily believe pretensions are facts, and hence are readily deceived. There are others, again, who are so prejudiced that they are not open to honest inquiry.

If we consult Scripture we shall find enough there to make us careful. For Scripture distinctly enjoins us:—

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (John 4. 1).

Read the following plain Scripture:—

"Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11. 13-15).

It is not sufficient for teachers to have pious pretensions. They may appear as an apostle of Christ, and this may prove to be the very height of their subtlety. Suppose you saw what purported to be an angel of light, and you received him thus. How astounded you would be if you were informed that you were parleying with Satan himself. And yet this is what the passage *morally* indicates.

And, further, we read a warning, given with tremendous emphasis:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4. 1-2).

Finally, we read in connection with the fast approaching manifestation of

Antichrist, the signs of which are as abundant as the falling leaf in autumn:

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2. 9).

“Tongues” in connection with this present day movement, originating in California, and spreading to Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, India, etc., are certainly a wonder.

Are they of God, or do they bear the character of “lying wonders?” This is our inquiry.

First of all we propose to examine what Scripture says on the subject, and then measure the present movement by what we find as to it in the Word of God. I desire my readers to understand that I believe in the miraculous gift of tongues as taught in the Holy Scriptures, but I would remind them that this gift was evidently given in connection with the establishment of Christianity, and evidently ceased when its special need was over. In this examination we desire to have it clearly understood that we do not confound the modern “tongues” with the gift as given at the start of Christianity, then it was a gift of the Spirit, we do not believe that the present movement bears any feature of this.

Observe also that this gift was only given in places where people of different nationalities were dwelling; and further, those who received the gifts spoke *real* languages (see Acts 2. 1-11, etc.). Often, those who prefer to speak in tongues to-day speak to none but their own countrymen. Hence the folly and uselessness of their performance. Moreover, in apostolic days and by apostolic instruction the speakers were *men*, not women.

God's purpose in giving the gift was, I doubt not, that all the nations should hear the gospel at that particular time.

With all this in mind let us examine then the Scriptures bearing on the subject.

The Old Testament is quite silent on this subject, save in Isaiah 28. 11, quoted by the Apostle Paul in 1. Corinthians 14. 21.

The Gospels contain but one reference to tongues. Mark 16. 17, says, speaking of signs that should accompany the preaching of the gospel, “they shall speak with new tongues.”

The Acts of the Apostles has three references to the subject:

(1) “They . . . began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts. 2. 4; also vers. 8, 11).

(2) “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10. 46).

(3) “They spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19. 6).

Let it be noted that the first scripture has to do with the inauguration of Christianity on the Day of Pentecost. The second with the introduction of the Gentile into the church of God. The gift of the Spirit with its then accompanying manifestation of tongues was confirmatory as to the middle wall of partition being broken down, and that the Gentile had an equal place with the Jew in the body of Christ. The third is a special case which fits in as a sort of addendum to the other two.

It is significant that in all three cases it is that of companies and not individuals. Further, the Spirit is given without the believer seeking for His indwelling. The Holy Spirit is God's seal, following and consequent on the reception of what the Apostle Paul described to the Ephesian believers (among them doubtless this third class) as “the gospel of your salvation.” Evidently there is no thought whatever in Scripture of Christians beseeching God for days and weeks for a baptism of the Spirit, and the gift of tongues. The Spirit continues to be given to believers, for He is an absolute necessity to their spiritual life, but the gift of tongues

seems to have been confined to the inauguration of Christianity.

In the *Epistles* the subject is only mentioned three times in one book, *i.e.* 1 Corinthians. It is well to enlarge on this. It is not *once* mentioned in—

Romans	Philemon
2 Corinthians	Hebrews
Galatians	James
Ephesians	1 Peter
Philippians	2 Peter
Colossians	1 John
1 Thessalonians	2 John
2 Thessalonians	3 John
1 Timothy	Jude
2 Timothy	Revelation
Titus	

It is well to give the list to impress the inquirer with the way Scripture presents the subject. What does this teach us? That important as the subject is, it is not so overwhelmingly important as the leaders of *The Tongues Movement* make it. It is the one thing they put to the forefront of everything.

Let me recapitulate. *Once* mentioned in the Old Testament, *once* in the Gospels, *thrice* in the Acts of the Apostles.

We now come to the consideration of the teaching on the subject in 1 Corinthians 12., 13. and 14. It is twice mentioned in chapter 12. in verses 10 and 28.

Note in the enumeration of the gifts in both instances the gift of tongues is put *last*. This is significant. For if we examine these gifts we find that they are given in a descending scale. In each case, whether enumerating the gifts or speaking of the persons who are thus gifted, the *spiritua* gifts come first, and the *gift of tongues* comes LAST.

In chapter 13. we are shown a more excellent way, even love, better than gift. Tongues are twice alluded to, in verses 1 and 8. We are told that though we may speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, we are as sounding brass and tinkling

cymbal. We do not know whether *tongues* in this verse refers simply to the organs of speech of men and angels, or include the gift of tongues in connection with men, but we give those who press this matter the benefit of the doubt. In the second allusion, in chapter 13. we are told that tongues shall cease.

Now we are left to the consideration of chapter 14. Read it down, and you will find it is a stern rebuke by the Apostle addressed to the Corinthians who were exaggerating the importance of tongues, and using it to make much of themselves.

We are far from asserting that the place the miraculous gift of tongues has in Scripture is unimportant. It played a most striking and useful part on the day of Pentecost, etc. But we do wish to insist strongly that Scripture presents the truth in such a way as to check the absurd lengths and prominence the early Christians appear to have given it at Corinth.

For the Apostle told the Corinthians he would rather they prophesied than spoke with tongues. As to himself, he thanked God that he spoke with tongues more than them all, yet he would rather speak five words with his understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Edification is the leading thought in the chapter. If an unbeliever came into their assembly and all spoke with tongues he would say they were mad. Hence we get the direct instruction that:

“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. . . . For God is not the author of confusion.”

In a *Tongues movement* meeting on the Continent, which we attended, and at which a very prominent leader was

present, a man spoke in an unknown tongue, but there was no attempt at interpretation.

And further, these people press Scripture upon you, and urge its literal meaning with great energy. This we do not object to, but would ask *them* to bow to Scripture, and take it in its literal meaning and act upon it. For in this *same* chapter we read:

“ Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak ” (ver. 34).

Yet in the meeting we attended seven men and *five women* took part. Not more than three men, if subject to the Lord, should have spoken, and the women should have kept silence. And this is proved in the very chapter where instruction as to tongues speaking is given. And remember the chapter is one strong rebuke against the prominence these believers were giving to tongues.

By the test of Scripture this movement is condemned as disorderly. “ God is not the author of confusion.” From whence, then, does it come ?

Confusion may arise from ignorance, and can be borne with if this is so, but one cannot believe the leaders of *The Tongues Movement* are ignorant. Instructions on this subject are plain in the Scripture. No woman is to speak. Then if the Spirit of God gives this instruction, He will not lead women to be prominent in a movement. Nor will more than three men speak at one meeting, for the Scripture is emphatic when it says, “ *At the most by three and that by course,* ” that is, one following the other. And if there be no interpreter silence is enjoined.

If the Holy Spirit is so active in the midst of these “ Tongues ” gatherings one would expect deep, rich unfoldings of Scripture, the things of Christ taken and shown to us (see John 16). We can testify that all we heard were shallow, inaccurate and unscriptural ravings.

The women uttered wild, incoherent speeches, rising higher and higher in shrillness, till they sunk exhausted on their seats: the men were little better.

We felt sure that neither speaker nor hearers understood a single word of what was said. Scripture teaches that if any man speaks it must be in “ words easy to be understood.” If the speaking in a tongue had been divine, there would accompany it interpretation, and the result would have answered to 1 Corinthians 14. 9.

The whole scene was one of painful confusion, and the plain instructions of Scriptures were defied.

A contemporary published in America recently contains an article on this subject, and gives *in extenso* a statement of their doctrines extracted from the “ Apostolic Faith,” published in Portland, Oregon. It contains seventeen sections. It is significant in the face of 1 Corinthians 12. 1-3, that never once in the whole confession of faith is Jesus called Lord, or God called Father.

The writer of this article, a thoroughly reliable witness, well-known to us by good repute, says:

“ Desiring of looking into it [The Tongues Movement] first hand, I attended in all about a dozen meetings, in four different cities. . . . In company with a sober brother, I went for the first time to San Francisco. The place was crowded. A large, stout woman was leading, amid great excitement. Strangely enough, we were hardly seated when she cried out, ‘ We need to pray. Two enemies of the truth have come in. The Spirit tells me they are here to fight the truth ’ . . . One thing soon struck us forcibly. No one said Lord Jesus. No one cried ‘ Abba Father.’ Now, inasmuch as these are the two Scriptural evidences that the Holy Ghost is in control, we felt the incongruity of it all very soon. . . .

“ Presently we were electrified

by hearing, for the first time, the weird, piercing notes of a woman under 'the power,' speaking in tongues. I took careful note of every syllable, and jotted them down. 'Ku-ri-ah; Ku-ri-ah; Ku-ri-ah; Ku-ri-ah-ke.' This she repeated over and over again, till almost out of breath, whilst the rest shouted with delight at this evidence of the Spirit's control.

"She finished in an exhausted state, and from a corner came what sounded like the wail of a lost soul. Another woman, on her knees, began to intone in most melancholy tones, 'La-a-a-a-la-a-a-a-ah-la-la-la-la-ah-ah-oh-oh.' This was all; but it was accepted as the great power of God.

"At the close the leader came straight to us, and we withstood her to the face by meeting her declaration that she was living without sin with the counter-declaration that we could give her chapter and verse for a direct command of Scripture she had been disobeying all through the meeting. She challenged its production, and we referred her to 1 Corinthians 14. 34. As we read it she raved in

anger, till I felt justified in asking the ironical question, 'Are you not afraid you will lose your sanctification altogether if you get much angrier?' She cried out 'You are possessed with a devil!' and left us.

"But five men followed us as we went out and plied us with questions, thanking us for opening their eyes as they had listened to our conversation."

Workers in Norway and Sweden have testified to the writer that they have witnessed similar scenes of violence and confusion. Women are the chief speakers on such occasions. Though very many connected with this movement are ignorant of Satan's devices, we are convinced from the history and marks of this movement that it is Satanic in origin. Many most earnest in desiring God's glory have been caught in this snare. In a short article it is impossible to go largely into details, but enough has been given—samples of all we know about it—to prove that this movement is not of God. We firmly believe it is of Satan. May the Lord preserve the simple Christian from these latter-day delusions.

"My heart trusted in Him."

"Trusted" though darkness hid the light of day—

"Trusted" though lonesome seemed my ownward way—

"Trusted" though perils all around me lay—

"Trusted" in HIM.

"And I am helped."

"Helped" as a beacon flashing through the gloom—

"Helped" as a voice that echoes o'er the foam—

"Helped" as a pilot guides the vessel HOME—

"Helped" by HIM.

"Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth" (Ps. 28. 7).

(G. W. H.)

Serving the Lord.

A Parable.

A CERTAIN man had a great business with many branches, some of which were in distant cities. He desired that one of these should be well conducted, for so much depended upon the success of it. So he sent his son who had just come of age to take charge of it, and to represent him in the city where it was. For said he: "Who can render such faithful and loving service to me as my son."

Now before the son started forth he was long closeted with his father, for it was necessary that he should know how to act when away from home. His father told him that this particular business could only be rightly conducted from the central office, and that instructions which would be sent to him daily would have to be carefully followed.

There was a telephone for his use at any time, whenever, in fact, a difficulty arose, and he would always find his father ready to listen to him and advise him. Then, not as a command, but as something he greatly desired, his father told him that when the day's work was done he wished to have a special talk with him, for then he could report his successes and failures, and **THEY COULD ALSO TALK ABOUT HOME.** The father laid stress upon this last sentence, for he knew the character of the city to which his son was going, and that the only way by which he could be kept from falling into its ways was by having communications constantly with and about home.

It was a great day for the young man when he said "good-bye" to his friends at the railway station, for his father was entrusting him upon an important mission, and he was deeply affected by his loving confidence. He felt the responsibility of his position, yet he was not afraid of it, for he knew that in his communication with his father every difficulty would be solved every day.

So the days passed by; to please his father was his sole concern, and he was happy in knowing that his work was approved; but better to him than all was the time spent at the telephone when business matters were finished, the time spent in talking about home.

Now, after a while, so well did the business flourish

The Application.

ALL who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and received the Spirit of God, are sons of God (Gal. 3. 26 ; 4. 6). And all such are called to serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now while all service is the service of God and we do it as sons to a father, yet the grace for it and direction as to it are more connected with the Lord in the New Testament, and this must be remembered in the application of our parable. To every one has some work been given, that each may occupy till the Lord comes (Luke 19. 13). We have to learn, however, that without the Lord we can do nothing (John 15. 5). It is not by the wisdom or power of men that the Lord's work can be done (2 Cor. 10. 4), but the Lord's grace is always sufficient for those who serve him (2 Cor. 12. 8, 9).

We may always be in communication with the Lord and with God our Father, for we are exhorted to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication (Eph. 6. 18).

The Lord has called us friends; that means that He trusts us. He has communicated His thoughts to us, and desires still to do so (John 15. 14, 15). But our success depends entirely upon our obedience to His commands.

But we are not servants and friends only, we are

that the young man got proud of the results, and the notion crept into his head that he was a very capable fellow. He forgot that the prosperity was entirely due to his obedience to his father's instructions; and he began to think and act for himself. Worse still, he discussed the business with other tradesmen who did not wish his father's house well. They told him that his methods were out of date, and that he laboured too hard, and that if only he took their advice he would have more success in the business and more time for his own pleasure. They told him that some of his father's representatives only worked at the business one day a week, and spent the other six in pleasing themselves, that this made them very popular with their neighbours, and they advised him to do the same.

He was foolish enough to listen to their advice in many respects. The consequence was that his new methods and schemes monopolized his time, and though he did not perceive it, the business suffered, and he had less relish for those home talks.

Then there came an evening when he did not answer his father's telephone call; he was not there to answer, for he had accepted an oft-repeated invitation to join some of the young men of the city in some "quite harmless" pursuit of theirs; and that night he had no communion with home, and his father's heart was sad.

While he was away with his new friends (?) that day, some business rivals succeeded in breaking into the premises, and in stealing valuable information, and in spoiling the stock; indeed, if he had not got into communication with his father as soon as he discovered this, the damage would have been irremediable; as it was, the loss sustained was considerable, and he was to blame. He confessed all this to his father, and was freely forgiven, and the lesson served him for many a day. So he continued, sometimes very zealous and at other times careless, until at last the time came for his return home. What a day the home-going was; the father was delighted to have his son with him again, and the whole family rejoiced. How happy, too, the son was, for the days had been long and weary sometimes, and he had never been happy in the company of the young men of that distant city.

But when he had been welcomed and feasted he was again closeted with his father, for he had to give a full account of all his doings. Together they went through each day's work, and the father approved everything

children of the Father, and this we must never forget. It is our privilege to have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 3); and this will keep us from falling into the ways of the world, and from loving it (1 John 2. 15).

We must avoid pride, we must not be high-minded, but fear (Rom. 11. 20). Lowliness of mind must be the character of the Lord's servants. (Phil. 2.).

Moreover, separation from evil is necessary if we are to serve God aright, for "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15. 33); so that those who desire to be vessels meet for the Master's use must depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2. 19-22).

The friendship of the world is enmity against God (James 4. 4), and to walk in the ways of the world is to defile one's garments (Rev. 3. 4).

When failure and sin is confessed there is always forgiveness (1 John 1. 9).

The day of our home-going is ahead of us, for the Lord has promised to come again for us so that we may be with Him in the Father's house (John 14. 3). What a day of rejoicing that will be.

But there is also the judgment-seat of Christ at which all must stand (2 Cor. 5. 10). Where our whole lives and all our service will be revealed in the Lord's holy presence and according to his thoughts. All that has been for His glory will then be rewarded and that which has been for self will be burned up (1 Cor. 3. 15).

that he could; but he also pointed out where his son had failed, sometimes through carelessness, sometimes through wilfulness, but always because he neglected to communicate with his father.

Then the son saw everything just as his father showed it to him, and acknowledged that every success he had had was due to his father's wisdom, and all the failure was his own. Yet for the successes his father rewarded him, so gracious was he; while for the failure the boy suffered loss, for every day that he had lived to please himself was a lost day.

As a result of this interview the son's love for his father and his admiration for his wisdom greatly increased; he had not before known how good and gracious he was, and every difficulty was solved and all reserve was removed, and the son was qualified to serve in a wider and more responsible sphere.

Then we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13. 12); and the grace and goodness of our Lord towards us in all our wilfulness and folly will call forth adoring praise. For not till then shall we fully know how much we owe to Him.

Then shall our place in connection with the judging of the world be appointed us (Luke 19. 12-19; 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3); and we, His servants, shall serve Him, and shall see His face, and His name shall be in our foreheads (Rev. 22. 3, 4).

True Preaching.

PREACHING is of grace, not of nature, *still less of art.* It is not by taking lessons in elocution, nor by becoming a great orator, that a man wins souls; the power is God's, and not man's.

Paul was eloquent, no doubt, if by eloquence you understand earnest simplicity, and the outspokening of love which God gives; yet the world that heard him said, "He was rude of speech."

If Chrysostom or Whitefield used worldly eloquence it lessened their power, and tarnished the brightness of their true light. When Whitefield, on one occasion, described the miserable condition of a blind beggar on a dangerous road, friendless, and deserted even by his dog, and about to take that fatal step which would have hurled him down the precipice to certain destruction, he spoke with such graphic power and vividness that the whole audience of the most cultivated, refined minds

were kept in breathless silence, and Lord Chesterfield actually made a rush forward to save the poor old man; that was a marvellous triumph of eloquence, but was anybody converted by it? What different power was in his simplest declaration of the curse which rests on every sinner, and of the blessing, which from a crucified Saviour, is ready to descend on the guiltiest, when the Spirit applied it to the hearts of the Kings-down colliers, and tears made furrows on their begrimed cheeks, and careless and profligate men were changed into believers and saints.

The true servant does not wish to sway men as the great orators of the world sway their audiences, keeping them for the moment, at least, under the spell of a potent fascination; but he looks to God that He will make His truth, the glorious message of His love, come into contact with the heart, and so draw them to Himself.

(Adapted)

It is practically important to remark that worldliness, or any allowance of what is not of God by a godly man gives the weight of his godliness to the evil he allows.

J. N. D.

Daniel and the King's Meat.

(E. P. BROWN).

THE history of this servant of God is one that might be read with much profit by all who feel the state of things that prevail in the present day.

The position in which Daniel and his companions found themselves, left in the midst of an idolatrous world to witness for the God of heaven, is surely somewhat of a parallel to the Christian's present position, as in the world, but not of it—subject to the powers that be as ordained by God, but nevertheless owning Jesus as the alone Lord and seeking to serve Him.

The first thing that strikes one in reading the first chapter of Daniel is the fact that Daniel and his companions were of the "seed royal," and they were chosen specially out of all the children of Israel as those that were without a blemish and well-favoured. These are some of the characteristics of all those who by grace have been brought to the Lord Jesus Christ, to own Him as Lord. They are "the children of God," they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus (Rom. 8. 17). Cleansed from every stain of guilt and sin, they are "without blemish" in the sight of Him who has taken them into favour in the Beloved, being "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1. 4-7) Supplied with all that His rich grace can provide out of a storehouse of inexhaustible plenty, they should indeed be "well-favoured." Consider this place of surpassing favour, dear Christian, for unless it is known, appreciated and enjoyed, you will not be able to resist the blandishments of the world.

Like Daniel, we find ourselves, before the eyes of the world, in the enemy's land, which is governed by the prince of the power of the air; and like Daniel too, we are *tested*. The world, led by its wily leader, would flatter us with every attention and favour possible, serving us, in fact, with its daintiest meat, that, absorbed by its allure-

ments, we might become an ornament in its eyes and a credit to it, and behind all be unfaithful to Christ.

It is so easy to swim with the stream, to be beguiled by the plausible arguments that are presented by those who would draw us from the Christian's true place of separation from the world into its ways and associations. Daniel and his companions were tested as to how far they would abide faithful to God in Babylon. They were flattered by the king's attention and taught the wisdom and learning of his kingdom; a pattern of the kingdom of this world and its prince, even Satan. They were severely tried, and, as later events reveal, they had sorer trials still to face; but they stood the test and refused the king's dainty meats, and so were prepared to go from victory to victory by the power of God.

When they set out to withstand the allurements placed before them they were met with the question, "Why be sadder-looking than others?" It is a common thought that to serve God and have nothing to do with the world makes the children of God unhappy and miserable: people with whom nobody would have anything to do, and friendship with whom would bring disgrace. This was the argument of the prince of the eunuchs, a chief servant of the king.

Daniel had, however, learned the true secret of happiness and joy; and there are certain characteristics that mark him out as what a true servant of the Lord in this present day should be—in this world where his Master has been rejected. He was but a young man at the time, but the Spirit of God puts him with such servants as Noah and Job—men having a special place in the mind and heart of God. None are too young to witness for Christ in the world, and the temptations assail the young as well as the old.

The strength of Daniel and his com-

panions by which they were able to remain faithful to God through all the tests and trials is what we want to know, and would seem to lie first of all in their *knowledge*. They knew from the Scriptures that they had been placed where they were by God—in love; and that His thoughts toward them were thoughts of peace and not of evil. They submitted to their position and fulfilled their relationships and obligations, yet still recognizing themselves as strangers in Babylon, looking on to the fulfilment of the promises of which they had heard from God's prophets. So have we "knowledge"—the knowledge of God, the One who has blessed us and who has called us to glory.

The Scriptures are ours and out of them we may know by the Spirit the mind and thoughts of God toward us. O then, let us seek to *know God* more and more in the intimacy of that relationship that belongs to us as children of the "seed royal"—to know His mind and His thoughts. May the Scriptures have a large place in our hearts, for the more we know of them—for the love of them—the more will our hearts go out to Him the source of all our blessings. We have a bright and blessed prospect before us of spending an eternity with our Lord Jesus Christ. Why mar this prospect by settling down to the level of things in this world, forgetting God's thought in saving us and calling us out to Him-

self? Like Daniel, who kept the faith delivered to him as to the name of Jehovah being placed for Israel in Jerusalem, and turned towards that city in his prayers, we also have Christ, and in Him every blessing is centred. Towards Him we may turn and know what it is to be more than conquerors in the hour of trial, for He is our great High Priest.

Another very special feature of Daniel's strength lay in the fact that he had *purpose of heart*—*would not* defile himself with the portion of the king's meat. What a weight of meaning lies behind those little words "*would not*." What steadfastness of purpose, what confidence, are expressed in this firm stand, and are we not exhorted in Acts 11. to cleave to the Lord with *purpose of heart*? This will save us from being defiled with the things of this world in any shape or form, for it means that all our supplies are in the Lord. O what gain there is in rejecting the defiling things of the world and being content with the Lord, who is truly ten thousand times better than them all! They can only rob us of spiritual power, while He will minister it to us. God gave the testimony of His approval to the course taken by His servants. We can know the same blessedness in learning to be content with only that which pleases Him, gaining His approval, which is sweeter than tongue can tell.

"The Reward of the Inheritance."

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

Question.—What is meant by "the reward of the inheritance"?—(Col. 3. 24).

WHEN it is known that the word for "reward" is not the ordinary one so rendered, but occurs only here in the New Testament (though not infrequently in the LXX. *i.e.* Greek translation of the Old), and that it signifies recompense with the underlying thought of compensation, it will be felt how beautifully suited it is to the way that grace would light up the otherwise unenviable condition of the Christian bond-slave, as from verse 22.

Bound to his master according to the flesh for life, his obedience in all things was to be with singleness of heart fearing the Lord, a hearty service even as it would be accepted as done to the Lord. The rich compensation of his servile lot in this world would be found in the inheritance he should receive from the Lord, in marked antithesis to any ordinary portion of a slave, as may be seen from the contrasts of Galatians 4. 1-7, Romans 8. 15-17.

Suffering and Glory.

SUFFERING is not in itself a good, but it is good for us to be afflicted, if that is made good to our practical sanctification. The sorrow of the world "worketh death," but to the saint of God the dark storm-clouds form a background for the bow of promise, and thus the paradox is verified: "Adversity is a blessing, and carrieth a greater demonstration of God's favour with it than prosperity." Though we seldom learn the lesson whilst we lie in the crucible, it is nevertheless true that when the furnace is under the regulation of the great Refiner, and He is over-ruling in the process, an eternal residue of precious ore is extracted, and much of our carnal dross purged out in the laboratory of trial.

None of the footsore pilgrims to the heavenly land suffered as their Lord; His visage was so marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men; and having suffered and wept, He knows now how to sympathize and make the fiercest trial our greatest blessing, and for the glory of God.

"Weeping may endure for a night,

but joy cometh in the morning." A bright daybreak draws nigh for the children of God, when "this mortality shall put on immortality." Yes, the shadow of death shall be turned into morning for all the children of God, and death himself will bite the dust.

The voice of lamentation shall never invade that blessed land where the triumph song of the Lamb wells up from every heart, and the presence of the risen Saviour excludes all possibility of less than perfect bliss. Here is glorious compensation laid up for the saints enthroned that makes ample amends for all the tribulations of the arena. The more fierce the clash of arms and the din of battle here, the deeper the transport and the more boundless the satisfaction yonder, when the inviolable peace of the Holy City shall have folded us round.

Let us look away from this house of our pilgrimage to the things which are unseen and eternal—to the house not made with hands. Our light affliction is but for a moment; an eternal weight of glory awaits us in eternity.

When Weakness becomes Power.

THOSE who are not preachers in the technical sense of the word, but are nevertheless called to be witnesses to the truth of Christ—and every Christian is called to this—may derive help from the experience of those whom God has specially used in His service. To the last, Luther felt his knees knock together when he ascended the pulpit. Bunyan, on his way to preach, would often be seized with a strange faintness and strengthlessness, so that he could hardly drag himself to the appointed place. Spurgeon spoke of the burden of the Lord as "a burden which at times crushes my whole manhood in the dust

of humiliation." William Burns, on his first return from China, when asked what his emotions were in addressing the Chinese, answered, "Madam, the lost, and a Christ for them." It was said of Richard Baxter that "the gaining of souls for Christ was the only object for which he lived."

It is this sense of the greatness of unseen things, the utter uselessness of any fleshly wisdom or power, this compassion for the multitudes and appreciation of the fulness of Christ; this sense of absolute necessity of Divine power, that makes the servant successful, and is the pledge of blessing to come.

Answers to Correspondents.

"A Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5.).

A.S. asks for an explanation of this passage.

The Revelation is a book of symbols and figures, and here the Lord is presented to John as "a Lamb" that "had been slain." The passage is full of beauty and instruction. John had just heard that the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, had prevailed to take the book and open the seals thereof, and he looked to see this awe-inspiring and powerful Lion, but instead he beheld "a Lamb as it had been slain."

This was not imagination, for the most daring mind could scarcely have conceived this idea, which appears at first sight to be a complete contradiction: a lion—the all-powerful king of beasts, yet a lamb, weak and defenceless, as it had been slain. It carries upon the face of it the divine stamp; it is the revelation of God's thoughts, not man's—God's thoughts fully disclosed in Jesus.

It is the Lord who is THE LION OF JUDA, noble, majestic, powerful—all royalty belongs to Him; He is the King that "shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth," and dash in pieces the wicked, like a potter's vessel. But He is also THE ROOT OF DAVID, not the offspring only, but the one from whom every promise made to David proceeded, and the one in whom they were all preserved when the man to whom they were made failed completely. This brings out the Deity of Christ; that which so many are refusing to-day to their own hurt.

It was this that confounded the Jews of old; for when Jesus asked them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said: the Son of David. He saith unto them: How, then, doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou

at My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?" The incarnation supplies the answer that the Jews could not give: He who will reign as David's Son is David's Lord come in manhood, and He will manifest in His kingly glory all the excellence of His own blessed and eternal being; as we read in the prophecy, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6).

But John saw Him—a Lamb as it had been slain. He does not undertake to purge evil out of the earth by executing the judgments of God upon it, and to establish His kingdom in it solely on the ground of promises made to David, but also, and chiefly, on the ground of His death. He came to earth, meek and lowly of heart, and the people in their blindness refused to own Him as the rightful King; and He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, submissive and unresisting. By His death He bought the inheritance, and acquired the right to redeem it by power from all evil and oppression, and Revelation unfolds the way in which it will be done. The Lamb, rejected and slain by men, is exalted to supreme power, and is acclaimed worthy of that place by every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

Notice further, the Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes. Seven symbolizes perfection; being the highest indivisible number; the horns, power; and the eyes, perceptive wisdom. The Lamb that was slain is seen as being perfect in power and wisdom—the power and wisdom of God.

Has the Law been set aside ?

D.E.L.—To use the Lord's words in Matthew 5. 21, 27, 33, 43, in support of the infidel theory that the Word of God may become obsolete, and be superseded by something "more in keeping with the times," as the "New Theologians" do, is scandalous and immoral, as they would surely see themselves if they took the trouble to read the context. In verses 17, 18, the Lord says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Then the law is not set aside; the Lord came to fulfil it—to fill it out. The law was like a most beautiful portrait, and there were those whose eyes could admire and appreciate it; but when Jesus came every feature of it found living expression in Him. HE WAS THE ORIGINAL. He has filled out every jot and tittle of it, brought out its beauty, made it instinct with life. So that the opened eye now becomes fixed upon Him, the Man who lived unto God, and the King who will carry out the law in His coming kingdom for the glory of God.

The rest of the chapter shows clearly that one reason for which the law had been given was to curb and check the lusts and passions of man; to hold within bounds the evil of his fallen nature. This thought is confirmed in Paul's first letter to Timothy: "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers" (1 Tim. 1. 8, 9). Thus had it been interpreted; it had dealt with outward acts; but the Lord goes deeper and deals with the desires of the heart; with the nature that lies at the root of every transgression, and from which

all evil deeds spring, and declares, what David had learnt in his repentance, that God requires truth in the inward parts. This did not set aside the law, but it turned the light of it, which hitherto had shone upon a man's deeds, upon the deep and dark springs of his nature, as also Romans 7. shows.

In the Epistles of Romans and Galatians, however, we are distinctly told that justification is without the law. And this you think contradicts Matthew 5. 17. We hope that we may be able to show you that that is not so. The giving of the law was the declaration that God required righteousness in men, and the law was the measure of this demand, but we learn from the early chapters of Romans that this demand received no answer or satisfaction from men. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (chap. 3. 10). The result of this was that the law brought condemnation upon all who came under it, as verse 19 states: "Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." Instead of bringing a blessing, it inflicted a curse, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3. 10). Instead of justifying it condemned, not because it was not holy and good, but because men were utterly bad, they would not, they could not keep it. So we read, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3. 20). It exposes and convicts the sinner and leaves him entirely hopeless as to being right with God on the ground of his own works.

But it is at this point that God intervenes, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," and His righteousness without the law is manifested. He

has found a way by which men can be justified without the law, and to this the law and the prophets bore witness. The way that God has found is that men should be justified by His grace freely, through FAITH, instead of works.

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

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

The believer's position as justified—*i.e.* as righteous before God—does not

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

Obedience is to characterize the justified man, but it is not obedience to a law which is irksome to him, but to something that has reached his heart, and won his affection, so that he delights with every fibre of his renewed nature to yield himself to God's will; and in the Holy Spirit which has been given to him he has a power which the law never gave, by which he can, as God's servant, have his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Rom. 6. 22).

So that when we come to the eighth chapter of Romans we find that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (ver. 4).

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

Here we see the triumph of grace, and all boasting is taken from men. It is of God from first to last, and He must have all the praise; and in this matter, as in every other, we can take up the language of Romans 11. 33-36: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments,

and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

The Old Covenant.

D.E.L. Persia.—In Hebrews 8. 13 the Apostle is speaking of the old covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai, and which was connected with the law as that by which they might maintain right relations with God, and with the sacrifices, and that system of approach to God which was never intended to be permanent, but which was the shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10. 1). God did not break this covenant, but Israel did; they did not keep the law; they failed in every part of the system; and because they neither would nor could keep it, it was useless and had to

make way for a New Covenant in which there is no fault, and which is maintained in the power and grace of the Mediator of it—Christ Jesus. This covenant is entirely of grace, and will not depend upon Israel's goodness. Nevertheless under it they will do what they never did under the old: they will keep God's laws, for those laws, instead of coming to them as demand, will be written in their hearts; they will love them. The heart of stone will be taken away and the heart of flesh given to them. The Christian has this in principle now.

Miscellaneous.

L.—GOOD WORKS.—Paul does not depreciate *good* works in any of his Epistles, he constantly exhorts believers to maintain them; what he does do is to show that no man can be justified or saved by works; for no man does good until he is saved, and the observance of legal ordinances are not good works but "dead" works (Heb. 9. 14). But good works are incumbent upon the Christian; they are the outward evidence of the new life

within, and without them all professed faith is dead (James 2).

SIN.—Sin is more than the transgression of the law. There was sin in the world when there was no law (see Rom. 5. 13). 1 John 3. 4 should read "*sin is lawlessness.*" It is the refusal of man to be subject to God; the setting up of his own will in opposition to God's; his determination to go his own way.

Men forget God all day, and ask Him to remember them all night (C. H. S.).

An immature state of knowledge serves to render men susceptible to doubts, but incapable of their solution.

Do not substitute the word in fashion for the word in season.

The religious spirit of the natural man has been Satan's great instrument in his opposition to the gospel.

J. N. D.

The Angels and the Magi.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

IS it not remarkable that, in comparing the two chapters (Matt. 2. and Luke 2.) which give us an account of the earliest days on earth of our Lord, we find that the effect produced by the angelic announcement of His birth in Luke 2. was very small? It appears not to have affected the people of Jerusalem in the least.

The shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night, were the immediate recipients of that wonderful communication from heaven.

Having heard the message of the angel of the Lord—"Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord"—they heard also a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men," and were so stirred in heart as to go at once to Bethlehem in order to see the thing which the Lord had made known to them. They saw, and made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. They published it generally.

Never had child been born under such auspices, nor introduced by such angelic acclamation, but their declaration was unnoticed. The wonderful saying which the shepherds made known abroad fell on ears dull and apathetic. The public effect was nil. No one appeared to care.

Shepherds! Who would listen to them! They were poor ignorant men, visionaries of some wild delusion. Had the priests and the scribes carried the report there might have been some reason in hearing it. But shepherds—announcing a Saviour born that day, even Christ the Lord, and He too lying in a manger—impossible, incredible, and only to be ignored.

The story was so unlikely! A Saviour, the Christ, Jehovah, born and lying, forsooth! in the manger of some cattle-

shed, swaddled there in circumstances of palpable poverty! Never! A palace would be too mean for such a one! The highest dignities that earth could proffer would be unworthy of the Christ, the Saviour; but that Saviour, the Lord, Jehovah, cradled in a feeding-trough staggers conception.

Yes, the mystery of the grace of the Incarnation has always done so. Nature and reason stand bewildered. The story is either true or false. It is either the greatest act of humiliation (save, indeed, the cross) or the wildest piece of imagination that ever entered, or could enter, the brain of man. Indeed, such an invention is utterly inconceivable.

Ten thousand thanks be to God, the Manger of Bethlehem, ennobled by the presence, in infant form, of Christ the Lord, stands out in all the certainty of a fact divinely attested, and accredited by faith!

But in spite of the common indifference, we find some Simeons, and Annas, and others, even in Jerusalem, who were in expectation of redemption. Anna spake of the Redeemer to all such, and Simeon took Him into his arms, and blessed God that he had now seen His salvation.

Thus we see that the hearts of a few (alas, that there should have been so few!) were prepared to welcome the Lord. But so ever. God has wrought by minorities all along the line and made them His vessels of testimony and triumph. Study these minorities; there are many of them. Consider Noah and his seven; Gideon and his three hundred; Daniel and his three; Paul almost alone. Such minorities saved (as we say) the situation. God uses vessels that lean on Him; and such was the remnant of whom we are speaking, be they poor and unlettered shepherds, or people but little known to the world

around them. "The secret of the Lord," we read, "is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant" (Ps. 25. 14). So in this case.

But when, a year or more afterwards, there came wise men from the east (Matt. 2.) to inquire in Jerusalem for the King who had been born, guided as they were by a star which mysteriously, silently, but surely announced His birth, "Herod," we read, "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with Him."

The advent of a Saviour, proclaimed as it was by the hosts of heaven, created little or no interest, but that of a King—one born as such—in distinct rivalry to Herod and his superior, the Roman Emperor, caused trouble everywhere.

The messengers were but men—their guide a star; their nationality Gentile; and yet with credentials so meagre their testimony was universally accepted. They were reputed, Gentiles albeit, as wise men, astrologers—Magi—men who read the heavens and their portents. These, therefore, were witnesses far more reliable than illiterate shepherds would be; and so their message told. The city was troubled, from the King downwards. "Where is He," they asked, "who is born King of the Jews?" King, and only King, was their statement. Saviour and Lord they know not. The star signaled only a King—where is He?

Herod, fearful of his rival, appealed to the scribes for help. They turned to the Scriptures—that infallible guide, when truly understood, to eternal facts which are beyond the ray of a star, or the conception of man.

"Bethlehem," said the scribes; "for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou Bethlehem art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My

people Israel'" (Micah 5. 2). Thus did these scribes quote the prophet; they mentioned the "Governor," but they saw fit to leave out the wonderful words which follow: "whose goings forth have been from everlasting," (or, as it is in the margin "from the days of eternity"). They concealed the fact that this King was the Lord, Jehovah!

The wise men proceed to Bethlehem, being again led by the star, and coming to the house to which they are directed, they find the young child and Mary, His mother, and present to Him their treasures—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They fall down and worship Him.

But being warned of God as to the cruel intentions of Herod, they depart to their own country by another way. Their visit had caused disquietude and trouble in the city. Such was its effect. No King but Cæsar was wanted there, least of all that King who had been born at Bethlehem, whose goings had been "from the days of eternity." And so Herod, the mere creature of Cæsar, wreaks vengeance on all the children of Bethlehem from two years old and under, hoping to destroy his rival "King."

That King had, however, been carried to Egypt, and not only placed there beyond the power of Herod, but that another Scripture should have its fulfilment—otherwise impossible—viz., "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (*cf.* Hosea 11. 1). Ponder the words. The Son of God called out of Egypt suggests the beginning of a totally new history for Jew and Gentile, on the proven and utter breakdown of both before God. The Saviour—Christ the Lord, of Luke 2., is the blessed Son of Matthew 2. The Saviour is the King, and the Saviour-King is also Jehovah and Son of God. Wonderful harmonies, truly!

It is one of the deceits of the heart, that when we really know God's will quite well, we go to ask advice of one no more spiritual than ourselves. (*J. N. D.*)

The Rubbish-heap and the Palace Treasures.

(J. T. MAWSON)

EVERYBODY who has read Bunyan's immortal story must have felt sorry for the man with the "muck-rake," the man who, though "there stood one over his head, with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered to give him the crown for his muck-rake, did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor." Foolish man, and apt picture of those who choose the world instead of Christ.

But let us illustrate another kind of folly. Yonder is a magnificent palace: the rooms of it are filled with priceless treasures, and there is one in attendance who knows every treasure perfectly, and finds a great joy in showing them to all who care to view them; indeed, it is his business to do so. A banquet is prepared also, and the tables groan beneath the weight of the choicest viands, and the doors of the banqueting hall are open to all. But in the stable-yard there labours a man with a pitch-fork; he labours at a self-imposed task, and his labour is in vain; for if you watch him closely you will see that he does nothing but turn over and over a heap of rubbish as though he expected to find some jewel there. He finds nothing, and groans in his disappointment, and yet he continues his searching—hungry and tired, too. He is a joyless and dejected man.

Is the man a menial, stable-boy, working for a mere pittance? No, his, as we have said, it is a self-imposed task; but that is not all the truth: he is a son of the palace; his place is in its glorious rooms; he is an heir to its splendid wealth, and the banquet is spread for him, and the guide, counsellor, and friend who knows the place so well is there to show it all to him.

That man has been born again. He will tell you, if you ask him, that Jesus is the only Saviour and he has put his trust in Him for heaven at last. But he is held in the bondage of self-occupa-

tion. He has often read the words: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwells no good thing" but he does not believe it. He searches his heart and tests his power and feelings; he concentrates all thoughts on the rubbish-heap of his own evil nature, hoping that he may find some good there, or change that which is bad into good; and he is miserable because he is disappointed—a truly "*wretched man.*"

And Christ, the mighty treasure-house of every good thing, is open for him, and the Holy Spirit of God waits upon him to take of the things of Christ and show them to him, and to feed him with the fatness of God's house. But he continues to search the rubbish-heap; and he will continue to do so until he acknowledges that there is no good in him, and that all good is in Christ.

"But you don't mean that I am nothing but a rubbish-heap?" said a young lady who was miserable with self-occupation, after listening to my parable; and the tone in which she said it proved that her pride had been touched. She did not believe that she was quite as bad as that.

The learning of the inherent and unmendable badness of the flesh is a bitter lesson; it were quickly learnt if the truth of God as to it were fully believed, but until it is learnt we are not wholly free to be led by the Holy Ghost into the knowledge of the glories of Christ, yet only on this line is the full liberty and joy of the Christian life known.

Christians, God's richest treasures lie open for you, the fulness of His grace is revealed in Christ; waste not the time in a vain search for good in the rubbish-heap in which no good dwells, but lift your eyes to Him who rightly sits in heaven's highest throne—your Saviour and mine. He is the preciousness, and He waits to be everything to you that the Word of God says He can be.

Christ: the Divine Resource.

(FRANK B. HOLE).

IN all the long history of the conflict of good and evil never once has God been taken by surprise. In the pages of the Old Testament we trace the progress of that conflict over the space of four thousand years, during which period to all appearances every fresh joining of battle resulted in the worsting of good through the general failure of the persons or the people who were taken up by God as His servants and warriors. So universal was this failure that by the time the days of Malachi were reached it seemed as though good would have to retire from the unequal contest to make room for an outpouring of resistless judgment by which the evil might be swept away. Hence the closing words of the Old Testament, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4. 6).

The New Testament, however, opens with the reappearance of good livingly personified in Jesus, and at once the tide of battle was turned, and through lowliness and humility, even unto the suffering of death, was the impregnable position of **REDEMPTION** taken up. There mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other; and from thence will they ultimately go forth to final victory.

All through the black night of defeat which the Old Testament so faithfully chronicles, the children of faith were cheered by the twinkling star-light of Messianic promise, and as the centuries slowly passed, these promises concerning **THE CHRIST** not only increased in number but became clearer and more definite in outline, so that such a record as Hebrews II. presents became a possibility. Of such it could be said, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." If they were so animated and affected by what they dimly saw, shall

not we who live in the sunshine of New Testament revelation—we

"whose souls are lighted by wisdom from on high"

—shall not we gain fresh strength and courage by seeing the way in which God Himself always fell back upon His Resource in Christ: the way in which every fresh disaster encountered in the long-drawn-out testing of the first man only served to throw into fresh relief the excellency and stability and triumph that should be found when there should be revealed the "second Man," the Lord out of heaven.

Though Messianic predictions and allusions, in type and song and prophecy, lie scattered over Old Testament pages much as the stars of heaven besprinkle the black face of the night sky, yet all are not of the same distinct and important type; just as, to pursue the analogy, all stars are not of the first magnitude. One striking fact, however, will be noticed; several of the greatest prophecies, true stars of the first magnitude, shone forth in moments of great crisis, when some cherished thought of God, entrusted for a moment to some representative of the "first man," had failed. Let us briefly trace a few examples.

The greatest of all Old Testament crises was the fall of Adam as recorded in the early chapters of Genesis. In this first man was expressed the original thought of God for man; so much so that, set in innocence as head of creation, he becomes a type of Christ, just as when fallen he becomes His greatest contrast. This splendid creature, the intelligent head of creation, its connecting link with the Creator, became the object of the malignant attack of evil, through Satan its originator. The deceiver began by casting doubt upon the word of God; this accomplished, he easily sowed seeds of distrust of God, which soon bore their sad fruit in an open act of rebellion

against God. Thus was the wreck of the first creation accomplished in the ruin of its head. The top link—connecting the chain of creation with its Creator—being snapped, the whole chain fell away.

This was a crisis indeed! The fall being an accomplished fact, a whole train of dire results was set in motion, and of these we read in Genesis 3. 14-19, first in regard to the serpent, then the woman, and then the man. In all those solemn words which fell from the lips of the Lord God there is only one ray of hope. No word was said as to the recovery or re-instatement of Adam; no hope held out that in future ages, by means of education and progress, the results of that day might be reversed. In the beginning of His pronouncement, however, the Lord God did predict the appearance of the Seed of the woman, saying, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (ver. 15).

This first prophecy of the coming Messiah was not entrusted to human lips, as were subsequent ones; it was uttered directly by God Himself. At least four of the great facts of the gospel may be discerned enfolded in its words.

1. The coming Deliverer should be Man. He should be "her *Seed*."

2. He should be a Man of a unique kind, and not one born according to the ordinary laws of human generation. God spoke not of "*their seed*," or "*his seed*," but of "*her Seed*." In these words were involved the truth of the "*virgin birth*," at which modern scepticism so ostentatiously stumbles.

3. The coming Man should enter the arena of conflict, and, turning the tables, should vanquish the victor. In bruising—or crushing—the serpent's head, He would smite him a death-blow in the very centre of his intelligence and power.

4. This great coming victory should not be achieved without personal loss and suffering to the Victor. In the bruising of the heel of the Seed of the

woman we have one of those marvellous germ-thoughts of which Genesis is full: when expanded in New Testament light it presents to us the picture of the rejected Man of sorrows overthrowing the powers of darkness by dying.

" . . . the Conqueror slain,
Slain in His victory!"

No second man appeared until Christ came. Every man that trod the earth between was but Adam reproduced in the second, third, or fortieth generation, as the case might be. Only in the Messiah was this sad succession, with its accompanying entail of sin and death, broken. He was truly Man, but of another order to that of Adam, miraculously born of the virgin under the power of the Holy Ghost.

To the appearing of this Man, who is the Son of God, did the Lord God look on that fatal day of defeat and ruin. He was uplifted as the Divine Resource; and thus there blazed forth upon the darkened sky the first star of promise for the encouragement of faith.

There is no record in Genesis of any further prophecy during the ante-diluvian age, but when that dispensation had reached its close in the judgment of the flood, and a fresh period had started, marked by the establishment of government in the earth by Noah, then in connection with a fresh crisis a fresh prophecy was given. The new regime had not long prevailed when there arose in the earth a Satan-inspired system of idolatry. The first home of this frightful curse appears to have been in the Babylonian region. Its nature seems to have been the deifying of dead heroes, or rather the worshipping of Satan and his demons under cover of deified heroes. The subtle craft underlying the mythology of the Babylonian idolatry, and all the other national systems of idolatry derived from it, such as the Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman, was seen in this: that it kept in the background the dark and mysterious figure of a great and powerful god who acted as father, whilst it put in the foreground a goddess with

her son, who became the great objects of veneration. This would lead one to suppose that if no one else had understood the prophecy of Genesis 3. 15, Satan had done so; and that he prepared in advance to discount the coming of the real Deliverer by this wretched parody.

The plague of this idolatry had overspread the earth, when, out of its very home and hotbed, Abraham was called that he might become the depository of earthly blessing; and when he had proved the reality of his faith in connection with the offering up of Isaac, there was made to him a further promise in connection with his Seed, of whom Isaac, dead and risen in figure, was a type. It was said, "In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22. 18).

Reading this in connection with the context, it is evident that "the Seed of Abraham" presents to us Christ as having died and risen again, so that through Him, and in Him, the blessing of God might overspread all nations. This was the resource of God just when the devil's curse of idolatry had overspread all the nations so recently formed at the tower of Babel. Notice, too, that previously it was the crushing of the former victor; now it is the blessing of those formerly vanquished. Thus it was that another star of hope shed its beams above the dark horizon.

From this point, the call of Abraham, the divine plan unfolded with greater rapidity. There sprang up from his descendants Israel, the chosen people, who were constituted a nation when delivered from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, the apostle of the law-system. They were to be entirely separated from the surrounding nations sunken in idolatry, in order that they might be God's witness-bearers in the earth.

At the beginning of their history the fortunes of that nation were largely bound up with the individual faith and energy of Moses himself, although the

priesthood was almost immediately established. This was specially true after the incident of the golden calf, when both priest and people so lamentably failed. From that point more than ever did Moses, "faithful in all God's house," stand forth as a contrast to the rest. Numbers 12. makes very plain his special place as the great prophet of God, by whom the Lord spake, and to whom He spake "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches" (vers. 2, 8). At a later stage in Israel's history, in the declining days of the kings, the prophets again became the chief link between the people and God, but never did they have such a place of prominence as belonged to Moses, the greatest of them all.

And Moses failed! Angered beyond endurance by the irritating perversity of that stiff-necked people, the meekest man in the earth spoke unadvisedly with his lips. How grievous a sin this was may be easily seen if we remember that these hot and scorching words of anger flowed as a torrent from the mouth that had been specially set apart to convey to the people the veritable words of God upon which they might hang their souls. Another cherished thought of God had apparently come to grief, for the prophetic office, in its highest Old Testament expression, had broken down by reason of the weakness of the best of men. This was another crisis of the first magnitude.

Then it was that another great prophecy of Scripture was given. The passage that records it—Deuteronomy 18. 15-19—makes it plain that Moses received the communication from the lips of God as far back as the days of Sinai, at the start of the forty years of wandering; the public announcement of it was, however, delayed until, at the end of the forty years, he had to ascend Nebo to die because of his sin.

How suitable was this! How hearts must have quailed at the prospect; even those of men of faith, such as Joshua and Caleb! With what thrilling power,

then, must have come the revelation of the divine words:

“ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.”

“ It is well,” they must have said; “ so God is not defeated, after all.”

Thus, though the sun of Moses, obscured by failure, set while yet it was high day, as far as his natural strength was concerned, there arose upon the world this fresh star of promise concerning another PROPHET who should be the perfect exponent of the mind of God, and through whose lips there should flow nothing but the clear waters of the truth. And that Prophet was CHRIST.

As we have already noticed, the failure of the priestly office in Aaron even antedated that of the prophetic office in Moses; nevertheless, for some time after his death it seems to have maintained its importance, and been the main link between Israel and God. As an institution it persisted, of course, to the time of Christ; but under Eli and his sons it reached the lowest point of degradation, and from that point its importance declined.

The sin of Eli's sons marked another of those crises of which we have spoken. Another of these divinely-established offices had failed, and fallen into disrepute in man's hands. Rottenness and corruption had invaded it to such an extent that instead of the lips of these young men “ keeping knowledge,” so that men “ should seek the law at His mouth ” (see Mal. 2. 7), their sin was “ very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord ” (1 Sam. 2. 17). Another of these great thoughts of God was apparently to fall to the ground.

Again, however, the Lord intervened with a new message which is recorded in the same chapter, verses 27-36. An

unnamed man of God appeared with a message of judgment for Eli. God would smite his unruly house with such a curse that both the ears of all who heard it should tingle. And yet at the close of this terrible message there came a gleam of light, for he proceeded to say:

“ I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever.” (ver. 35).

So, after all, deep though the dishonour, the priesthood should not perish for ever. Another should take it up in faithfulness as pronounced as the previous unfaithfulness. Another should carry out the office according to God's mind, and be established for ever. Another star of hope shone forth for the encouragement of the faith that watched through the ever-darkening night. God was not defeated, for He had in reserve One who should be not only prophet but priest. In due time there would come the faithful priest: and that priest is CHRIST.

Subsequent to the days of Eli the kingdom was established in the midst of Israel, and after Saul the wilful king had been removed, David the man after God's heart was set up. Once again the story of failure repeated itself. The seeds of decay were sown right at the beginning. David grievously broke down, and the evil rapidly reproduced itself in his house. Another great crisis arose as once more in connection with this fresh departure all appeared to be lost.

But as before, the Divine Resource was speedily unveiled. As David at the end of his career surveyed the condition of his house with its incipient ruin, his soul was strangely moved, and he took up his lyre for the last time. The Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and this is what He said:

“ The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me, He

that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. 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. 3, 4).

After David's death, oppression and injustice came in like a flood, but for the comfort of each believing heart another star of hope had risen, by the revelation once again of the Resource of God. There would be another King, marked by absolute justice and the fear of God, and beneath His beneficent sway the earth would rejoice, being brought into the light of a new and cloudless day.

Again we may say with rejoicing all was not lost: kingly dominion shall not be for ever a ghastly failure. The true, the righteous King will come. He will be CHRIST.

And we, upon whom the ends of the ages are come, shall not we too rejoice in the contemplation of these things? We live in days that witness the break-up and dissolution of many things; some of them doubtless but human institutions which need not be deplored; others have their roots in that which is divine, and our hearts might rightly be depressed did we not know that Christ is the Resource of God. Nothing shall fail. All shall be carried to a triumphant issue. He who has become the second Man, He who has died and risen again, He who has assumed the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, will never fail nor be discouraged.

Let us remember that man is nothing, nor was he ever anything; CHRIST IS EVERYTHING. Let none of us then glory in man. We are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made everything to us in order that we might from henceforth and for ever glory in the Lord.

Worship and the Lord's Supper.

We commend the following paper by the late J. N. Darby to the earnest consideration of our readers. Worship in connection with the Lord's Supper is the highest privilege now within the reach of the saints of God; yet how little the true character of it is understood.—(Ed.).

WORSHIP is the free adoration, and for us in the holiest (Hebrews 10. 19) of those who have been brought nigh to God by sacrifice, who know God as Love, who know Him as a Father who has sought, in grace, worshippers in spirit and in truth (John 4. 23), and brought them in *cleansed* to do so.

The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10. 2).

By one offering Christ has perfected them for ever; such is Scripture truth (Heb. 10. 14), and then they worship, adore, praise in the sense of divine favour and a Father's love.

They have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the

new and living way He has consecrated for them through the veil (Heb. 10. 19). It is not that Christ is doing it in heaven actually in the triumphant church, and they on earth in the militant. They enter *in spirit into the holiest*, in heaven itself, to worship *there*.

They do not offer the sacrifices in order to enter the holiest; they are within in virtue of the one sacrifice of Christ, and this is the place that the symbols of Christ's broken body and blood in the Lord's Supper have in worship.

The worshippers are in spirit in heavenly places, Christ is in spirit in their midst, as it is written, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. 2. 12), and they own and remember the blessed and perfect

sacrifice of Christ by which they can so worship, and by which they have entered in.

Doubtless they feed on Christ in spirit; but that is not the point we are on now.

The Christ that is represented in the Eucharist is a Christ with a broken body, and the cup is His shed blood; it is not a glorified Christ in heaven. It is *His death*, a broken body and the blood separated from it; it is life given up in this world that is before us. We may in spirit eat, also, the old corn of the land—*i.e.* be occupied with a heavenly Christ—assuredly we may, and blessedly so; but it is not Christ in that place that is set forth in the symbols, the bread and the cup.

We eat His flesh and drink His blood, the blood is separate from the body; not only the Manna which is for the desert and ceased in Canaan, the bread which came down from heaven, but the additional and necessary truth of His death. Hence His going up is only spoken of in John 6. as an additional subsequent truth.

We worship as belonging to heaven, and own that by which we got there, that perfect, blessed work which He, who could speak what He knew there, and testify what He had seen, could tell what was needed that we might have the heavenly things, and not only tell what was needed, but, in infinite love, accomplish it.

But no such Christ as the one whose symbols lie before us in the Lord's Supper exists now (*i.e.* Christ is no more dead, He lives for evermore).

It is specifically, solely, and emphatically as a dead Christ that He is remembered there. They were to do *that*, that is, to use the emphatic symbols of His death, in remembrance of Him.

Hence it is the centre of worship, because hereby we know Love, because He laid down His life for us. Here He glorified the Father for us, so that we can enter into the holiest.

Then the veil was rent and the way opened; but here was the perfect work accomplished, by which we, as risen together with Him, can say we are not in the flesh. In the heavenly Christ we say, by the Holy Ghost, we are in Him and He in us. It is as being of Him, being united to Him, He in our midst in grace, that we remember a dead Christ. We do not, in the joy and glory in which we have a part through and with Him, forget that lovely work in which He bore the sorrow and drank the cup of wrath.

We remember with touched affections the *lowly, rejected Christ, now that we are in heavenly places through His solitary humiliation.* The offering Him up now (as in the Mass) is a presumptuous denial of Christianity.

The remembering Him, that divine Person, in His solitary suffering and perfect love to His Father, is the most touching of Christian affections, the basis and centre of all true worship, as the efficacy of the work wrought there alone admits us to worship at all. The drinking of the blood apart points it out as shed.

We show forth the Lord's *death*, emphatically, not a glorified Christ, but we do so as associated with Him the glorified Man, who Himself purged our sins, remembering with thankful hearts how we got there, and above all, Him who gave Himself up for us. . . . It is a singular instance of Satan's power which Romish superstition has occasioned amongst those who have carried the Eucharistic sacrifice to its full extent: the cup is denied to the laity. To comfort them under this, they are assured that the body, blood, soul, and divinity, a whole Christ, is contained under both species, that is, in the bread and in the wine. But if the blood be still in the body, there is no redemption. It is a Christ as living on earth which is thus celebrated, when He had as yet shed no blood to redeem us.

It is as evident as truth can make it to any one who respects the truth, that it is a Christ sacrificed, a Christ who has

died, a body broken and blood shed, which is celebrated in the Eucharist. . . . If so, it is not a living glorified Christ, but a dying and in real truth a dead Christ, for the blood is clearly presented as shed, and to be drunk apart.

Finally, the Christian's giving up what he has is not worship, nor is it what an intelligent Christian does. He yields himself to God as alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness. This is giving himself up to God for service, not worship. Nor is it giving up self, self-surrender. That is surely our part, but that is departing from the wickedness of self-will, from possessing ourselves in will, in spite of God. That is all given up at conversion. The Christian has

the privilege, when freed by grace, of yielding himself to God, to be the instrument of His will. That is another thing; but, though a just homage to God, it is not worship. This is adoration and praise to God for what He has done, and what He is, as standing in God's perfect favour in Christ, and in the consciousness of it by the Holy Ghost, while Christ's work through the perfect efficacy of it is that by which we are brought there; and hence the place of the Eucharist in worship, as we have seen, the memorial of His death, of His having died for us, and the truth it refers to, whether actually celebrating it or not, awakening withal every affection which refers to His love and perfect work.

The Greatness of the Saviour—Known at His Feet.

Jesus—Greater than our Sin—Salvation.

“ Behold a woman . . . which was a sinner . . . stood AT HIS FEET behind Him weeping. . . .

“ And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven ” (Luke 7. 37-48).

Jesus—Greater than our Service—Satisfaction.

“ Mary . . . SAT AT JESUS' FEET, and heard His Word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? . . .

“ Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, . . . one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her ” (Luke 10. 39-42).

Jesus—Greater than our Sorrow—Symyathy.

“ And when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down AT HIS FEET, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. . . . *Jesus wept* ” (John 11. 32-35).

Jesus—Greater than Self—Self-Surrender and Worship.

“ Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed THE FEET OF JESUS, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment ” (John 12. 3).

Helpers in the Harvest-Field.

(H. P. BARKER).

Conversations on the Book of Ruth.—IV.

Q. In our last conversation we were speaking of the various persons who helped Ruth in her gleaning. We saw that the "maidens" represent our fellow-Christians. We also read in chapter 2. of the "young men"; what have you to say of these?

A. Their work differed from that of the maidens, in that they laboured as the servants of Boaz. The results of their toil, the sheaves that they reaped, were not taken home with them in the evening, but went into the granaries of their master. They represent, I believe, those who seek to help the gleaners in the fields of blessing by the ministry of the Word, and who in this distinct way are the servants of Christ.

Q. How did the young men assist Ruth?

A. In two ways. First, they were to draw water from the well, and whenever Ruth was thirsty she was to "go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn." Secondly, they were to allow her to glean, without rebuke, even among the sheaves, and were to "let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her."

Q. What is the significance of these two means of help, in connection with the ministry of the Word to-day?

A. The drawing of the water would signify ministry that refreshes and invigorates us, enabling us to bear the burden and heat of the day, and pursue our God-appointed path with divinely-given energy. I am sure that the writers in "Scripture Truth" seek help of the Lord that they may draw water from the inexhaustible well for the refreshment of their readers.

But there is one thing to be noticed that is of particular interest to Christians

who are growing old. One hears of many efforts, special meetings, classes, etc., for the help of the young, but I do not remember ever hearing of any meeting being arranged specially to help the aged. A good deal is said as to the peculiar difficulties of young believers, but the old ones have *their* peculiar difficulties. One of the most common of these is a *failing memory*.

"I enjoy listening to a good address on some scriptural subject," says one. "It lifts me up, and does me good. But it all seems to pass from me. I cannot call to mind what I have heard when the first impression of it has passed, and I feel I am a great loser through my inability to retain in my memory what I have so much enjoyed."

I would remind such a one of this water that Ruth had to drink. She had nothing to show for it at the end of the day. She took no vessel containing any of the cool, clear liquid home to her mother-in-law. But she had been refreshed by it, and enabled to perform her work all the better for it. And that was a great thing, surely.

Q. But however bad one's memory may be, I suppose there is hardly anybody who would forget *everything* that he hears or reads. He may forget a great deal, but certain things remain with him.

A. Yes, and those things are like the "handfuls let fall of purpose." Some sentence, some illustration, some striking presentation of truth, some practical application of it, *something* sticks to one. *Let him stick to it*, for it is the handful specially meant for him! Something quite different may have struck some one else; but whatever it be that strikes us, impresses us, seizes upon our souls, let us receive it as intended specially for ourselves.

Q. We read also of "the servant that was set over the reapers." Does he represent any one who helps us in our gleaning to-day?

A. We may regard him, I think, as a type of the Holy Spirit, who represents Christ on earth, just as this chief servant represented Boaz on the harvest-field. He is the one "set over the reapers." In the Scriptures one never finds the servants of Christ set under the direction of a Committee, a Conference, a Board of Directors, or a Missionary Society. *Never!* Nor are they subject to direction by the church, or by any company of their fellow-Christians. The Holy Spirit is the One who is "set over the reapers." In the Acts we find Him directing, filling, energizing the servants of the gospel, sending them hither and thither, and sometimes forbidding them to go in the direction towards which they had set their faces.

Q. In what way did the "servant that was set over the reapers" help Ruth?

A. By introducing her to Boaz. He knew all about her past history and present pathway, her exercises and desires. And when Boaz came to visit his harvest-field he introduced her to him. In like manner, the chief way in which the Holy Spirit helps us is by bringing us to Christ (of whom Boaz is a type); by putting us in touch with Him. The Holy Spirit knows all about the twists and turns of our past history and present pathway; our exercises and spiritual desires are the fruit of His own work in our souls, and it is His mission to direct our hearts continually to Christ, that we may find in Him the fulfillment of all our desires.

Like every other man in the Old Testament who is a type of the Holy Ghost, this servant set over the reapers is nameless. The Holy Ghost is not here with a Name, to call attention to Himself. The Father has a name, which is the subject of revelation and testimony. The Son has many glorious names which

all call attention to His excellences and perfections. But the Holy Spirit is here as the Divine Servant (Luke 14. 17), the Comforter sent by the Father (John 14. 26), and by the Son (chap. 15. 26), not to bear testimony of Himself, not to call attention to Himself, not to speak of Himself, but to glorify Christ (16. 13, 14), and to testify of Him (15. 26).

Q. But is not Eliezer, in Genesis 24., a very striking type of the Holy Ghost, sent by the father to obtain a bride for the son? Does not the fact that he is named contradict what you have just said?

A. Where is he named? Genesis 24. does indeed give us a lovely type of the Holy Ghost in His mission here on behalf of the Father and the Son. But I search the chapter in vain for the *name* of the servant who went seeking a bride for Isaac. It is true that some fifty or more years previously (fifteen to twenty years before Isaac was born) Abraham had a Damascene steward named Eliezer (Gen. 15. 2). If the servant in chapter 24. is indeed this same steward, it is all the more remarkable that when he is mentioned as pre-figuring the Spirit of God in His divine work on earth, his name is dropped from the narrative.

Q. Was there any one else, besides the maidens, the young men, and the servant set over the reapers, that helped Ruth?

A. Yes, there was Boaz himself.

Q. Of whom is Boaz a figure?

A. Of Christ. He was the lord of those wide harvest-fields, and in the two last chapters of this book he comes before us, as we shall see, in a very distinct and definite way as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. In what way did Boaz help Ruth while she was a gleaner in his fields?

A. He invited her to his own table to share in that of which he himself partook. So liberal was his bounty that

after eating all she needed she had a supply left that she took home to Naomi.

Now the Lord Jesus loves to have us in His company. He is not content with encouraging us by means of His "maidens," or ministering to us by means of His "young men." He delights to have us near Himself, that in communion with Him we may be fed with the choicest food.

For what Boaz offered to Ruth was *parched corn*, the proper food of Canaan (*cf.* Joshua 5. 11). It, too, is a type of Christ—Christ subjected to every test here below, even to death and the fire of God's judgment for our sins. He is the true and proper food of our souls. It is *He* who feeds us with the finest of the wheat; it is *Himself* He feeds us with.

It is when thus fed in His company, by His own hand, that we realize how infinite is the blessing that we have in Him. Our capacity to receive may, like Ruth's, be very limited, but that which is set before us is infinite. And as we feed upon it, or rather, upon *Him*, there is always that which remains over, as it

were, and which we may pass on to others.

The cup that is held under a running tap cannot hold much water, but it can go on overflowing as long as it is there. Here lies the secret of effective ministry to others.

Some are mere students of homiletics, readers of commentaries, retailers of other men's sermons. This is not the divine way. "I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbour" (Jer. 23. 30). To be effective in ministry one must abide in the company of the Lord Jesus, and have one's own soul fed by His gracious hand. Then we can do for others what Ruth did for Naomi when "she gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed."

But in our next conversation we shall find that the God of Israel had something further in view for Ruth, in connection with Boaz, than to be merely the recipient of His bounty, wonderful as that was. She was destined to become his *bride*.

The Christ: Incarnate, and Glorified.

(W. B. WESTCOTT).

THE earth-thronged Inn, the homeless Babe,
 (Yet He who blessing brings)—
 The gates of glory opened wide
 To admit the King of Kings.

The lonely life, the path uncheered
 By loyalty or love—
 The myriad angels and the song
 Of welcome high above.

The crown of thorns, the purple robe
 (O miracle of grace!)—
 The brightness of the glory now
 Shines from His peerless face.

The cross-crowned hill of Calvary,
 The sorrow and the shame—
 Now throned on high He waits the day
 Of universal fame.

The Unity of the Spirit and the Unity of the Faith.

(HENRY J. VINE).

1. "Using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace."—(Eph. 4. 3).
2. "Until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."—(Eph. 4. 13).

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.—It is important to notice that we are not told to *make* this unity, but to use diligence to *keep* it. The unity already is; but in a practical way—not in strife, but in the uniting bond of peace, we are to walk accordingly, in love to "all the saints." There are various influences at work to mar this, but "the uniting bond of peace" is the practical answer to them all. The authority of the Lord, and the gracious direction and ministry of our exalted Head, will be abundantly realized by those who thus endeavour, apart from sects and schools, to keep the unity of the Spirit.

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, in verse 13, is another matter. The activity of the gifts has the edifying of the body of Christ in view to this end: "Until we all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." We must not confound the two. This is objective, whereas the unity of the Spirit is more subjective, involving the vital oneness of the members of the body of Christ. The unity of the Faith is something which the saints are to come to, or "arrive at," in connection with the knowledge of the Son of God.

He has made a perfect revelation, and in this, known in Him alone—in Him whose words, and ways, and works, have so fully and blessedly declared the Father, His own become one in the Father and the Son. Here indeed we need to advance, to grow in the excellent knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, into the fellowship of whom God has graciously called us.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.—Much has been said as to this which

leaves the impression on the mind that it is something to be made or something to be attained to, instead of something to be kept, as we have said, in a practical way—in "the uniting bond of peace." We must cease from denominating beloved saints of God by party and divisive names which are a shame to us. The practice is not only a careless one, but a sinful one; for we are all members of Christ's body, and we must acknowledge no other membership, even if others do. Let us then, for the sake of the One who loves all His own perfectly, speak and think of one another becomingly, and be ashamed of these party names which have no right to exist, for Christ cannot be divided. This will greatly help towards practical unity in the bond of peace. The endeavouring we are exhorted to is on this line. We are to be "using diligence," but special effort having some favoured party in view is not here contemplated. Our efforts must be governed by the truth in regard to the whole position, or they will militate against the unity of the Spirit.

It has been said, "The unity of the Spirit is that which is already formed and embraces all the members of Christ," and again, It is "the common place which pertains to all the children of God" (*W.K.*).

Another wrote, "It is not only abstractedly, but actually one, forming one body, putting each member in its place in the body"; also, on my side, "If love to all the saints is not present in my spirit, I break (the unity) . . . while keeping it up in form"; for it is "not similarity of sentiment, but the oneness of the members of the body of Christ established by the Holy Ghost" (*J.N.D.*). Where healthful diligence is

in activity as to this established unity, and also advance is being made in regard to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of our blessed Lord and Saviour as the Son of God, rich results will necessarily follow for God's glory.

"UNITY."—Twice only is the word found in our New Testament; in Ephesians 4. 3, and 13; and but once in the Old Testament. There it is significantly used in the last Song of Degrees but one; just before the Lord is blessed *in* the sanctuary, and His blessing flows *out* of Zion (Ps. 134.). Mark the Spirit's words: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133.). It is like the precious ointment which is not only upon the Head, but which

reaches to all connected with Him, whilst the fragrant perfume of it pervades all around. It is also like the dew of Hermon's height: descending, distilling, and refreshing Zion. No wonder we read, "There the Lord commands the blessing—even eternal life!" It is not surprising that this is the only place eternal life is mentioned in the O.T. except Daniel 12. 2.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for

BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER
IN UNITY."

Shall we not seek this with diligence? It is to be our portion for ever in the Father's house, with Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren.

Magna Charta in a Sack!

(W. B. WESTCOTT).

THE Deputy-Keeper of public records relates that during the first week after his appointment he discovered a number of sacks, about the size of coal-sacks, in a corridor on the top floor of the building. On making inquiry he was informed that the contents were "unsorted miscellanea." He had them sorted, and out of one of the sacks came the famous document signed by King John and the barons at Runnymede! It seems almost incredible that the famous Charter of English liberty should be so unceremoniously treated. That which our ancestors secured by their firm and fearless action is evidently accounted of little worth to-day, though the liberty resulting is thanklessly enjoyed.

If this be admitted as ingratitude, what shall we say of those who enjoy unhinderedly the blessings secured by the *Christians' Magna Charta*—the Word of God—and yet so shamelessly neglect it?

The nation's greatness—on the confession of the great and good Victoria—

is based upon the Bible, yet is the Holy Book treated with greater contempt than the political "Magna Charta."

We appeal to those who owe more than they can ever repay to the Word of God to read and study it, to propagate its liberating contents, and to *carry a copy of it* with them wherever they may go. How many a reader of "Scripture Truth" is, we fear, like a soldier on the field of battle without his rifle, or a fisherman on the river's bank without his rod and tackle!

Others may neglect the Bible, style its wonder-working truths, old-fashioned myths, proclaim new remedies for old diseases, but *we* will not compromise or yield one iota on the question of the accuracy and authority of Holy Scripture. By its means we have been born again, we have been led to trust in Christ, and our souls have been continually fed thereon. By God's grace we will not discard or despise the GREAT CHARTER of our peace and liberty.

The Assembly in Administration.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE assembly of God was formed on earth by the Holy Ghost not only to watch and wait for Christ from heaven, but *to be in the meanwhile expressive of His mind here below.* And that not only as to what should take place within it as to its own internal administration; and before the eyes of the world as expressive of the grace of God; but also in the sight of those mighty spiritual powers in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3. 10 is a most remarkable passage, and should greatly affect every one, who through grace forms part of that assembly. "To the intent that *now* unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the assembly the manifold wisdom of God."

Jerusalem was the place where the Lord set His name, and those who desired to know His thoughts in ancient times had to inquire at His holy temple there; but when He came to it, having in incomparable grace become incarnate, He found it corrupt and corrupting, and He, its glory, departed from it, leaving it desolate.

Jerusalem failed, and was in consequence discarded by the Lord; yet He has left a responsible witness to Himself here below, not now in one favoured place, for it is "neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem"; nor is it a material building composed of "great stones and costly;" but, "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). Blessed and abiding declaration of Him who died to redeem us, who now lives on high, the Head of His body, the assembly, and the Centre of all God's counsels and ways. The knowledge of His mind, the expression of it, His authority, will, and character were to stand connected with the two or three, who were gathered to His name, instead of being, as aforetime, with the temple in Jerusalem.

The disciples of the Lord proved the blessedness of these His words during that bright Pentecostal period (Acts 2.), for then they were first fulfilled, and through the disciples grace flowed in the name of the Lord to the needy. His name was everything, and they, the assembly, were in themselves nothing, save the submissive and happy channels through whom He administered His grace to men in the power of the Holy Spirit. His name was there also for the detection and judgment of evil; and so we find that Ananias and Sapphira were cut off as soon as their sin was brought to light. This same power and authority was exercised for the putting away of evil by the assembly composed of Gentile believers at Corinth according to 1 Corinthians 5. The assembly there expressed the will of the Lord in judgment upon the transgressor in their united action. Then, when that judgment had done its work in his soul, in bringing him to repentance, the assembly expressed the will of the Lord in grace, in restoring him to his place (2 Cor. 2.).

Now this explains the meaning of the passage, "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" (Matt. 18. 18). What was done in the name of the Lord, in the assembly, as gathered to His name, was ratified in heaven, because as done in His name, it was what He would have done, had He been bodily in their midst; and in this way, as we have said, the assembly was expressive on earth of His mind.

But just as Israel failed in her witness to the presence of Jehovah with them, so has the assembly, set up in responsibility on earth, failed in the place of administration and of witness to the Lord. This was evident before the apostles passed away, for John had to write of an assembly out of which "the

brethren" were cast (3 John). No one would assert that this Diotrephesian action, even though it was bound by an assembly, was ratified in heaven; for it was contrary to the Lord's character and to His revealed will, and so could not have had His sanction; contrariwise He would give His presence and support to the cast-out ones in their isolation, even though He bore long and patiently with the assembly out of which they had been cast. But how intensely sad to find the history of Israel's failure in this respect repeated in the assembly to-day (see Isa. 66. 5; Ezek. 11. 15, 16).

Such unchristlike conduct and failure in the internal administration of an assembly was but a manifest symptom of that dread disease "departure from first love" which was to spread rapidly until the whole church became affected by it. Failure in this, the root from which every precious fruit grows, and the spring of all spiritual health and vigour, meant failure everywhere. The mind of the Lord was no longer sought when questions arose within, and the condition of things was such that it could not have been known.

The church became everything and Christ nothing; the pride and will of men became dominant; fleshly strife prevailed; and the decisions and edicts of the church were the expression of the will of powerful leaders; they were not the will of the Lord.

Yet God's thought for the assembly shall be fulfilled, for in the day of Christ's glory it shall come out of heaven as His workmanship—"that holy city, Jerusalem" (Rev. 21. 9-22). A city in Scripture symbolizes administration. The administration here shall be perfectly according to God, for the city shall descend "out of heaven from God, having the glory of God"; and the mind of the Lord shall be fully expressed through it, for, "the Lamb is the lamp thereof"; and Christ shall have in it a vessel fully competent to display

His glory to men, for "the nations shall walk by the light of it."

But mark well what is said of this city before these things are predicated of it. "Come hither," said the angel, "I will show thee the bride, THE LAMB'S WIFE." We underscore those words, for in them lies the glory and perfection of that city; and out of this fact, and what it means, flows forth everything that is suitable to a vast kingdom of which it is the centre. The church is right with Christ at last; He dwells without a rival in her affections; she knows His great love without measure, and responds to it without restraint; her whole heart is His, she is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

This is the touchstone now :

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

There can be no service rightly rendered to Him, no witness rightly given, no action rightly taken, unless He has His rightful place in the affections. The Holy Spirit will not support the saints on any other line; His first great work is to make Christ everything, and if this place is not accorded to Christ, then the Holy Spirit is grieved and His action hindered.

The word of the Lord holds good for to-day, and the blessedness of Matthew 18. 20 may still be known, but Christ must have His rightful place among those who would claim it, otherwise the claim is unholy pretension. And the Lord's name carries with it to-day the authority that it did at the beginning; His will may still be known and carried out; and what is truly done in His name on earth is assuredly bound in heaven.

If the mind of the Lord is to be carried out it must first be known, and for this there must be subjection to Him, and a condition and character in keeping with His name. This we should surely learn from the fact that Matthew 18. 20

occurs in a chapter in which the moral traits of the kingdom of heaven are clearly set forth. But if there are bitter envyings and strife, backbitings and slanderings amongst the saints; if parties are formed in the assembly, and the clash of unholy conflict is heard, even if it be in zeal for some truth of God, the devil has already gained a footing, and the decisions arrived at in such a state of things must be damaging to all concerned, and dishonouring to Christ, and will surely not be ratified in heaven. Happy would it be if it were thus seen and confessed by the saints of God on earth.

* * * *

The love of Christ was the choicest treasure that the church possessed when she started her career on earth. Sad that it should have been treated as of little worth. Yet that love abides, and may still be known in all its freshness and power by those who long after it. That this is so is proved by the wonderful appeal that the Lord makes to the hearts of His saints in the closing chapter of Revelation, when He says, "I am the root and offspring of David, **THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.**" And we gather from this Scripture that this appeal must awaken a response in those to whom it is made. The Spirit and the BRIDE say "Come." They long for Him, and for the time

when the night of failure shall give place to the morning of His glory. And in this response to the Lord, on the part of His own, there is the return to first love, and in this heart-longing for Him **THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT** assumes its primal importance. The Bright and Morning Star becomes the one hope which turns the eyes of the saints in one direction; His love binds them together in one bond, and gives them one theme and joy. Then will they no longer say to each other, "Get you far from the Lord: unto us is this land given in possession" (Ezek. 11. 15). But each who hears the Lord's voice will realize how necessary to Him are all His own, and will say to them in consequence, "Come." And in the overflowing joy of His love will cry aloud to thirsty men, "Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them" holds good even to this day. The Lord cannot forego His name; and greater than our joy in having His presence, according to Matthew 18. 20, is His joy in being there. But He cannot link His name with evil, nor will He sanction the mischief-working will of man by His presence. He is "the holy and the true." And those who would have His presence must remember this.

Laws which bind nature I admit, laws which bind God I do not.

How precious it is—even if we are not at the full height of our calling—to have an object set before our hearts which delivers us from this world, and from the influences which hide God from us. (J. N. D.)

"The Bible is the Word of the Living God: supernatural in origin; eternal in duration; inexpressible in value; infinite in scope; divine in authorship; human in penmanship; regenerative in power; infallible in authority; universal in interest; personal in application; inspired in totality" (*The Wonder of the Book*).

The Night of Judgment. The Morning of Resurrection.

The Day of Salvation. Eternal Glory.

(THOMAS OLIVER, CROYDON).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—(Rom. 12. 1).

THE NIGHT OF JUDGMENT.

IN the revelation of God there has come to light the night of judgment, the morning of the resurrection, and the day of salvation. In Psalm 42. 7 we get the night of judgment. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts; all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." This Scripture tells us of our blessed Saviour, amid the darkness of Calvary's judgment. Let us go back in spirit to Calvary. As a poor infidel that was where my heart was first won. I beheld Him, who in His sacred majesty stooped in grace to that judgment to save my guilty soul. I shall never forget the sense that filled me of the greatness of His love. I saw this blessed One, the sent One of the Father, who in His own person is the everlasting God, coming down in the tenderest grace, and stepping into the breach, bearing on my account upon the cross the unsparing judgment by God in holiness, that the grace of God might reign through righteousness towards me. No one who ever has had a glimpse of this in the power of the Spirit could refuse to respond to the grace of God.

If there is a tendency with any one of us to halt between two opinions with reference to answering to the grace of God, to the appeal in Romans 12., may God come in in His mercy to-night, and give us a fresh sight of Christ. Let us kneel at His feet, and look up into His face of surpassing loveliness, and remember that it was none other than He, who is the mighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who took pity upon us in all our distance and helplessness and

degradation and sin, and took upon Him the fashion of man that He might save us. He loved us and gave Himself for us! He said, "I do not care what I endure on your behalf." Think of our own insignificance and His greatness, and of that awful night of judgment, when all God's waves and billows rolled over Him for us! He was great enough to make God known to us, and to declare the Father's Name, and He was holy enough to bear all the judgment of a sin-hating God.

I often say in the gospel, as the Spirit of God points us to Jesus, there is not another man in all the universe of God that is the slightest use to us but Himself, the second Man out of heaven who does not belong to Adam's race at all, blessed be His Name! The most stupendous fact in the world's history is this, that the eternal Son has come out of heaven, and gone to Calvary's cross, to bring glory to God, to undo the devil's work, to set his prisoners free, and open heaven to whosoever will.

Every claim of the throne has been met, and not a drop of judgment is left for those who put their trust in Christ. Why? "All Thy waves and billows have gone over Me." May every one of us get hold of it here. There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ. Why? Because Jesus bore it all. The finished work of Christ is a wonderful thing. Christ in resurrection is the great testimony to it. May every one of us get hold of it here to-night.

THE MORNING OF RESURRECTION.

John 20. gives us the first day of the week, the morning of resurrection. No longer is the Lord the holy Victim, but the

mighty Victor, and there He stands on the other side of death and judgment, on that first day of the week. Look at verses 14, 15. "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto My Father, but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend"—that is one of the most triumphant passages in Scripture—"I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to My God and your God." What a triumph!

The first of Ephesians tells us of another side of it, where it speaks of the power of God that has taken a Man out from amongst the dead and set Him at His own right hand, the very power—the righteous power—that is going to be put forth soon to place every ransomed soul alongside of that blessed Man in heavenly glory. Here is the other side of it. In Ephesians 1. you find the mighty power of God, the righteous power of God, put forth to take that Man up. Was there ever such a story as that? The work is so complete, the claims of the throne of God have been so completely met, Satan has been so thoroughly defeated, and propitiation for sin so perfectly made, that the very righteousness of God demands that that blessed One shall be placed at His own right hand. Wonderful thing!

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

That is the morning of the resurrection, and it introduces us to the day of salvation. "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." The day of salvation is when the gospel is going out. What has been brought to

us in the gospel? We know who has brought it to us, but what is the wealth that has been brought to us? I think that there are seven things that have been brought to us in the gospel. We have the eternal forgiveness of our sins. "Through this Man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." There is *eternal life*. Why? Because we have forfeited our own lives through sin. Eternal life has been brought to us in the living One who became dead and is alive again for evermore. Then it has brought us *eternal relationship with the Father*—"I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." It has brought us the gift and *indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God*. It has brought us into union—this is the mystery of the gospel—*union with Christ* by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, come down here to baptize all believers into one body. That is the mystery of the gospel. We have become the body of Christ and shall presently be the bride of the Lamb. Then it has brought us to *the ceaseless intercession of our great Priest* at the right hand of God, to bear us along in triumph. He has not only died for us, but gone to heaven to keep us, and to bear us along in triumph to the dwelling place of God. That is brought to us in the gospel. And then, if we understand salvation, it seems to me the day of salvation goes right on to the day of glory, because we read of "full salvation," and "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." It brings us *the hope of the coming of the Lord*. This is the hope of the Christian. It is the hope set before the believer, and at last we shall be set in the very glory of God, for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. These things the gospel brings—the forgiveness of all our sins, eternal life, eternal relationship with the Father, the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, union with Christ by the Holy Spirit, the ceaseless intercession of Christ, the coming of the Lord, and then heaven itself.

THE DAY OF ETERNITY.

There is another day, the day of eternity, the day of eternal glory, and that is spoken of in the last verse of the second Epistle of Peter, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to Him be glory both now and for ever." The word there is "to the day of eternity." Let us look for a moment at what happens in the day of eternity. It is a day that will never close, for time shall be no more. I take you to Isaiah 53. 11, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." This will be absolutely fulfilled in the day of eternity. He was satisfied before time was. "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do Thy will, O God." It was His good pleasure to do that. He was satisfied in that sense. And when time shall be no more, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." What will be the great thought in His satisfaction? I believe it is this, in the end of verse 10, "And the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand." It will be seen then absolutely that the pleasure of Jehovah has prospered in His hand. God is going to be all in all. The dearest thought in the heart of Christ was that God should be all in all. In the Millennium He will be supreme; in eternity God will be supreme. Upon what does it all rest? Isaiah 53. 9, 10 gives the answer, "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." This is the great foundation upon which God in righteousness has reared this great superstructure of blessing.

In the day of eternity, when He will surround Himself with His ransomed saints, when God shall be all in all, shall we ever forget, as we gaze into His face, and know even as we are known, that the foundation of it all

was, "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me"? "His soul was made an offering for sin." Is there one of us in this company to-night that is not—from to-night onwards, anyhow—going to seek grace to respond heartily and without reserve to this infinite grace and love? To present our bodies a living sacrifice, and find out what the will of the Lord is, and walk in it in dependence upon Himself? How can we hold back? The eternal Son of the eternal God has stooped in grace to the death of the cross; His soul was made an offering for sin; grace reigns through righteousness; glory has been brought to God, and the devil defeated; propitiation has been made for our sins. Christ has become the great High Priest at the right hand of God, and He is coming again to introduce us into the Father's house. And then the day of eternity. What a day of splendour it will be when everything that is antagonistic to God will be in the lake of fire! What a day of bliss it will be! "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." The pleasure of Jehovah will be seen then to have prospered in His hand, and throughout the countless ages of eternity the wonderful thought that will govern our souls will be that all the blessing and the glory rests upon the person and work of God's beloved Son.

May God speak to us all! He kept back no part of the price. Is there anybody here keeping some part of the price back from Him who suffered and died? He bore all the judgment, and suffered all the sorrow and all the shame, in order that He might share with us every bit of blessing He has gained at the hands of His God, and He comes to us freighted with all the blessings of the everlasting God, places Himself as a slave at our feet to relieve us of everything that oppresses us, our sins and our sorrows, and we are going to shine with Him as His body and His bride in that bright day. May God speak to our souls for His Name's sake!

Psalms 52.—55.

WE come now to four Maschil Psalms, followed by five under the title of Michtam. The meaning of the latter word is much disputed among scholars, but Maschil implies the giving of instruction, and these Psalms are the instruction of the faithful as to the character of the evil they have to meet and the Spirit's way of overcoming. Historically they belong to the period of Saul's persecution of David and the rebellion of Absalom against him. These two men, along with Ahitophel and Doeg, who is mentioned in the title of our Psalm, present certain features of the coming Antichrist. In the same way that many types are required to set forth Christ, so several are used to represent the man of sin. In 1 Samuel, Doeg is always called the Edomite to show that he illustrates in a special way the iniquity of his country in its persistent hatred of God's people, and his wholesale slaughter of the priests exemplifies how this hatred expresses itself. Violence and deceit are the characters of the wickedness in our Psalm, and these come out plainly in the history of Doeg. The murder of eighty-five priests, with their city and its inhabitants, is enough to prove his might, as "the lie that was half the truth" by which he involved Ahimelech in the supposed rebellion of David witnesses his deceit. An aggravating feature of his sin is his positive love of it (vers. 3, 4). What does the soul learn of God in the presence of such a display of evil? First, and most important, that He is above it all in the supremacy of His own goodness, which abides continually. What a rest this imparts to the spirit! Secondly, that the wickedness of the enemy should be regarded in relation to God rather than as against me. The issue of that conflict cannot remain long doubtful, "God shall destroy thee for ever." Finally, the

righteous man brought from the distance, mentioned in Psalm 42, looks to flourish in the house of God like a green or spreading bay tree. Confiding in the goodness, he has proved his spirit rises in eternal praise.

PSALM 53. The atheistic character of the evil under which the godly suffer in the last days is before us in this Psalm. Man, always infidel in his will, is fool enough to say in his heart, "no God." Psalm 14., verbally so similar, is quite different in its connections (see Vol. V, p. 147). Other distinctions are the omission of the name Jehovah in Psalm 53., in accordance with the characters of the two Books already noticed. Further, in verse 5, in place of "God is in the generation of the righteous," a statement for faith to lay hold of, we read, "God has scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee. Thou hast put them to shame" (*cf.* Zech. 10. 3, etc.) because "God has despised them." This is a further step in God's dealings with the great external foe spoken of by the Prophets as the Assyrian. The previous verse tells of the saints under a heartless persecution, apparently from the party among the Jews who had received Antichrist. Verse 5 shows these persecutors in great fear on account of the invading army; the fear is needless, for God intervenes in power to save not these unrepentant sinners, but his own afflicted ones. In result the power of the enemy is broken and the cause of the faithful triumphs. But it is good for our souls to learn that God displays Himself otherwise than by judgments, and to view the patience and final victory of God in grace. He perseveringly looks for good among the children of men and finds it in the end in His own beloved Zion, from whence the salvation of Israel is to come at last, Jehovah having first come to Zion

according to Isaiah 59. 20. Then, as our Psalm tells us, Jacob (the object of grace) shall rejoice and Israel (the object of purpose) shall be glad.

If PSALM 54. is read in connection with its title, it will be seen that the enemies of verse 3 include two parties: the Ziphites and King Saul with his attendants. The Ziphites are called strangers, being possibly composed of the former inhabitants of the country; these would naturally seek to avert the persecuting zeal of Saul from themselves by giving information of David's haunts. This may explain the terms used, but the great instruction for us is the way the Spirit leads to overcome the hostility, which in itself does not differ from that already considered in Psalm 52. The man of faith is here taught to seek salvation by the Name of God, knowing that His power will be put forth in accordance with His Name in favour of those who are loyal to it. The denial of Christ is matter of special warning in 2 Timothy 2. 12, as the avoidance of such denial is commended in Revelation 3. 8. The principle underlying these Scriptures and our Psalm is of the deepest importance for all time, for it is just in proportion to the faithfulness of the saints to the name that true testimony is maintained on earth which all the power and all the grace of God are active to support.

In the second section of the Psalm, beginning with verse 4, the Spirit gives the anticipation of God's answer to the prayer of faith in the first part, and it is interesting to observe how, deliverance having been reached in virtue of the name of God, He is now praised under the name Jehovah, the proper name of His relationship with Israel.

PSALM 55. Difference of judgment has been expressed as to the point of view of the writer in this Psalm. Is he speaking as in the city, or as having escaped from it? Those who favour the former interpretation rely on the past tense of the words "said" and "seen" in verses 6 and 9. Otherwise we must regard it as describing the circumstances preceding the flight from the city and leading to it. Let my readers judge. Historically verses 12, etc., describe the defection of Ahitophel when he took sides with Absalom. From a comparison of 2 Samuel 2. 3 and 22. 34, it seems probable that he was grandfather of Bathsheba; if so, it is little wonder this man of the world failed to understand the ways of God in grace with David. Prophetically we see Antichrist breaking the covenant and turning from an assumed friendship to the bitterest enmity. Certain features, too, of Judas come into view also, and this is just the way of prophetic writings; they are not of private or isolated interpretation; in other words, they are not exhausted by application to one event.

The acute distress of the man of God is fully described in this Psalm. He sees the corruption of everything in the city where Jehovah has placed His Name, and he longs to escape; but prayer is his resource. In this he is encouraged in verse 22, "Cast thy burden on Jehovah, and He shall sustain thee: moreover He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Blessed it is to know that the battle is Jehovah's and it is His part to deal with the wicked; that of the saint is prayer: "Evening, morning and noon will I pray and cry aloud and He shall hear my voice" (ver. 17).

"There is always strength in looking to God, but if the mind rest on the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes *unbelief*. Difficulties may come in, God may allow many things to arise to prove our weakness, but the simple path of faith is to go on, not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need and find when the time arrives. The sense that we are nothing makes us glad to forget ourselves, and then it is that Christ becomes everything to the soul." (J. N. D.)

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 22.

(H. J. VINE).

Chapters 58.—66.

THE true Israel will have the Spirit of Christ; they are the true seed, the remnant, *the servants* of this section of the book. "This is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (chap. 59. ver. 21). This connection with Isaiah 11. is a very beautiful instance of the unity of both parts; it is the connection of the true Israel with the Nazarene.

At the time of the end they will keenly feel the oppression of Antichrist and others; but Christ will come as their Deliverer. He will come to Zion. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Thus the Deliverer of Israel's fame shall be sounded throughout the world. So shall they "fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun" (ver. 19). This will help us to understand the next verse, and the golden setting given to the precious truth it contains in Romans 11. It will explain many similar instances of the Holy Spirit's use in the New Testament of truth from the Old.

Isaiah 59. 20. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

Romans 11. 26. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

This is certainly not a literal quotation, it is nevertheless the exact truth which God has placed in Isaiah 59. and 60.; and this is most important, giving us the mind of God in the context, and the present application

of its principles. In Romans 11. the Holy Spirit shows us that Israel will be brought into blessing again, and others be blessed through them when apostate Christendom is cut off. This is involved in Isaiah 59. and 60.; Christ comes "to Zion," we read there; and "out of Zion" deliverance and salvation shall spread. Thus in the Psalms: "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion"; and again in Isaiah 2. 3: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law."

In reading Scripture, though we know the very words are inspired of the Holy Spirit, yet we only gather true profit as we grasp the truth, the divine verity itself, which the words are given of God to convey. The consideration of the quotations, the citations, and of the reasoned conclusions in the New Testament, drawn from the Old, would instruct us greatly in the way the Holy Spirit takes to bring spiritual substance to our understandings.

THE EVERLASTING LIGHT.

And now Isaiah 60 opens with the daybreak of brightness and glory. To delivered Israel it is now said, "Arise, shine! for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." We have already noticed the use made of this verse with its context in Ephesians 5. 14. The explanation is exactly the same as that of the verse in Romans 11., which we have just considered. The Spirit's setting of this awakening call is singularly striking. It is to the individuals who form the saved remnant of Israel in Isaiah; it is to the individual believer the Spirit uses it in Ephesus. In both cases "gross darkness" covers the peoples around; but light shines "upon" them.

It is important for us to see the divine explanation of the light that shines "upon" saved Israel after Christendom's apostasy, and upon believers now, before the complete culmination of that apostasy. We read, "*the Christ shall shine upon thee.*" This makes all plain. The Messiah of Israel is the Christ; and—wonderful fact!—He is also Jehovah, the LORD; Jesus. So we read, "the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to Thy Light and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" (60. 2, 3). The Light then, as now, will shine for all. The true Light already shines. It will not then be a light shut inside the nation of Israel; nor is there such a thing as a light shut inside the assembly now; but risen immediately "upon" them—it shines as "*the light of the world.*"

Then it is said, "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. . . . The abundance of the sea [the peoples] shall be converted unto thee" (vers. 4, 5). Then too the people of God come *flying* home; they "*fly* as a cloud, and *as the doves* to their windows" (ver. 8). Offerings will acceptably ascend to God, and He will beautify the house of His magnificence (ver. 7); He will make the place of His feet glorious (ver. 13); and they shall be "an eternal excellency, a joy from generation to generation" (ver. 15). The peace and prosperity of the metropolis is exceeding great; God says: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver . . . and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (vers. 17, 18). The people too shall prosper and be "all righteous." God will be glorified because they are the work of His hands. Even "a little one" of the remnant shall

become "a thousand," and the very smallest "a strong nation."

Nor shall the beauty, the brightness, and the excellency of that day fail or fade away. Christ has come to them; their Messiah, their Jehovah, their Lord, and their God. It is said to them, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but *the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, and thy God thy glory.* Thy Sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: **FOR THE LORD SHALL BE THINE EVERLASTING LIGHT, AND THE DAYS OF THY MOURNING SHALL BE ENDED.**"

If here upon *the earth below* the brightness beams with such blessedness,

"What will it be to *dwell above*
And with the Lord of glory reign?"

If *the earthly lot* of favoured Israel is so blessed under our Lord Jesus Christ, what shall be *the heavenly portion* of the assembly, the bride of Christ, when He presents her to Himself all fair and beautiful, amidst scenes of surpassing splendour, shining with the radiance of the divine glory? When

"The Bridegroom and the bride
Are seen in heavenly glory:
And love is satisfied."

But even then it will be no small part of our joy to see Him, the assembly's Bridegroom, ride forth in majesty, as King of kings and Lord of lords, to take Israel and the nations of the earth under His royal sway.

THE ANOINTED PREACHER.

We are not to be allowed to forget, however, Who was the divinely appointed Introducer of the glad tidings of these good things. It was the Spirit of Christ in Isaiah which said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek" (61. 1). About six centuries after

these wonderful words were written, a young Man, a humble Preacher was heard in the regions of Galilee; and His fame spread abroad. O'er hills and dales, through cities and villages, the joyful sound from His lips was heard. "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up." There He stood up for to read; and finding the place where it was written in Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor," He said, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*" (Luke 4. 14-21). This was our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the divinely appointed and anointed Preacher. The immense and immediate importance of this introduction in despised Nazareth may not then have been seen. Nevertheless, though they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" yet all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Before them stood the Preacher, proclaiming that which was prophesied long centuries before.

Nor are we to forget to whom He brings such glad tidings. Isaiah says, "*to the meek*"; to bind up "the broken-hearted," to proclaim liberty "to the captives," and the opening of the prison "to them that are bound." Again, the Holy Spirit sets *the truth* in Luke; but, as we have noticed before, not in the literal words. There we read it is "*to the poor*," for such "*the meek*" were in the condition of things which then obtained in sinful Israel. Jesus Himself was "*meek*," and He was also "*poor*." Giving of sight to "the blind" is added in Luke, for this Preacher is also the Servant upon whom the Spirit is put in Isaiah 42.—the Covenant and the Light; given "to open the blind eyes, to bring forth the prisoners" (ver. 7). What a confirmation this small addition is of Isaiah's authorship of chapters 41. to 66., for it was from the book of Isaiah that the Anointed Preacher read

that day; and He "unrolled the book" till He came to the second part. It is that part which has "*the meek*" specially in view; the first part showing the outward and political position more, the second the inward and moral.

This Preacher did not seek out the great, the prosperous, the proud princes, or the haughty rulers of this age. When John the Baptist sent to Him asking, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" He returned answer to John, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and *the poor have the gospel preached to them*, and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." What a wonderful Saviour! What a gracious preacher! Oh, blessed Lord, would that we who are called by Thy Name had more of Thy spirit—

"He did attract the wretched and the weak
His joy the wand'ers and the lost to seek."

He inaugurated the day of glad tidings. He sounded the joyful news on the mountain side and in the city street; by the shore of the lake and in the synagogue of the Jews; to the lonely sinner at the well and to the crushing crowd along the way; to the fallen and low, to the publicans and sinners, to the poor, to the meek, He made known the glad tidings of good things; and the common people heard Him gladly as He told of the grace and goodness of the heart of God, of forgiveness and salvation and blessing. It is still the day of salvation. The acceptable time has not yet run its course. The day of vengeance is not yet here. Grant to us then, O Lord, more grace and strength to spread abroad the tidings which first began to be spoken by Thyself, Thou divinely appointed and anointed Preacher of glad tidings to the poor.

White Robes.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 8.

“White robes were given unto every one of them; and it was sa'd unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”—(Rev. 6. 11).

THE priests in the tabernacle, the singers in the temple, the over-comers in Sardis, and the elders in heaven, being privileged companies, are all clothed in white robes. Easterns wore an inner garment and an outer robe. Adam's coats of skins, and the wrought gold clothing of the king's daughter (Ps. 45. 13) were inner garments, emblematical of the way God clothes a naked sinner and invests him with Divine righteousness. The outer covering was a long, flowing robe, indicative, by its texture and colour, of the rank of the wearer. Such were the fine linen garments worn by the rich man of Luke 16. 19. These outer robes were often bestowed as marks of favour and approval. Pharaoh clothed Joseph in “vestures of fine linen.” It is such outer robes, marking their Lord's approval, which are conferred upon the sufferers under the fifth seal (chap. 6.), and in which the palm-bearing company of chapter 7. are clothed. They indicate their Lord's appreciation of their testimony in an evil day. Who are the white-robed companies spoken of in chapter 6. 11 and chapter 7. 9 seeing that the white-robed company of elders embraces all the redeemed up to the rapture of the church?

To answer this question we must remember God has an earthly people to whom earthly blessings are promised; as well as a heavenly people whose portion is outside this world. To Abraham's seed after the flesh many Old Testament promises were made which are yet unfulfilled. When the last member of Christ's body is gathered out and the church raptured to glory, God will set to His hand to bless the Gentiles as such, and reinstate Israel

in their land. They will be gathered out of the nations among whom they now are scattered, and many of them will be divinely wrought upon. By what human means we know not, but they will be God's witnesses then, as Christians are now (see Isa. 43. 10; 44. 8). Their testimony will differ from ours. We live under the reign of grace. They will live under the reign of judgment. They will look for Christ's advent as King. We look for Him to come first as Bridegroom. We pray for our enemies. They will call down imprecations on them. Our cry is that of the martyr Stephen: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Their cry will be: “Avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.”

The fifth seal discloses to John's view the treatment these witnesses will receive at the hands of men. Harassed and persecuted, they will seal their confession with their blood, pour out their souls unto death, lie as sacrificial victims under the altar. Abel's blood cried and the answer came in a curse on his murderer (Exod. 4. 10, 12). They also cry for vengeance on their enemies, but they are told the set time has not come for the Lord to whet His glittering spear, tread their persecutors down in His anger, and execute the judgment written. For this they must wait, until a similar company, later on, are also slain. Meantime, having lost an earthly portion, they find rest in a heavenly scene, and to each one of them a “white robe” is given.

We learn from Revelation 20. 4-6, that this company is included in the first resurrection. The “first” resurrection commenced when our Lord left

the tomb—He is the first fruits—and will end at His coming again to reign. During the interval many companies are raised. All the redeemed who have previously died will be raised at the rapture. The martyrs slain in the interval between that event and Christ's appearing will also be included in the first resurrection. At what precise time they will rise we are not told; the fact is simply stated that they have part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20. 4-6).

We are not left in any doubt as to the time, and manner, of the resurrection of similar witnesses, slain for their testimony, in chapter 11. 11, 12. After lying three days and a half unburied, the spirit of life animates them, they stand upon their feet, and a voice bids them "Come up hither." Their enemies behold them go, and a cloud receives them out of their sight. Theirs will be a visible resurrection.

Whether the martyrs slain under the fifth seal are immediately raised and blessed, and thus the grave continuously robbed of its victory, we cannot definitely say. The first resurrection is not one act, but a series occurring at intervals; so there is nothing in Scripture against their immediate resurrection. It is the answer to their cry for vengeance which is said to be deferred, not their blessing. They enter into "rest" and receive their reward at once. Each one has a "white robe" conferred upon him. Does this "robe" indicate that they have resurrection bodies, and take their place among the white-robed companies in heaven? We do not recollect an instance where disembodied spirits are clothed with white robes. That they are called "souls" proves nothing as to their separate state. Seventy "souls" came with Jacob out of Egypt. Eight "souls" were in the Ark. All that is said is, that John saw a martyred company under the altar who had been slain for the Word of God and the testimony they held. It is the *cause* of their death, and the answer to their *cry for vengeance* being deferred, which is prominent here. The immediate and

gracious recognition of their constancy in suffering by the gift of "white robes" will cheer these sufferers in a coming day; these visions will be realities then. This book is not only for our learning, but will be the great source of comfort to the remnant during these dark days. Animated by the thought that in laying down their lives a "white robe" awaits them, they will endure affliction, and look onward to the "recompense of the reward."

We will now turn to chapter 6. Like the fifth seal it is parenthetical. Its object is to show how God secures His people, during the time of "Jacob's trouble," also the preservation of hosts of Gentiles during the great tribulation. They are preserved through unprecedented sorrows—not martyred. God intervenes, the winds of persecution are held back—symbolically the evil influences of the prince of the power of the air are restrained on every side—whilst an angel, rising from the east, seals a remnant out of all Israel for blessing. A measured—but mystical—number have their foreheads sealed. Ezekiel 9. 4 describes their moral qualifications. They are men who "sigh and cry" for the abominations found among the nation called out to maintain the worship of the one true God, who are at this time ensnared by the man of sin and render homage to him. On these mourners God will set His mark, reserve a "third part" for Himself. Refined as silver, tried as gold, purged by fire, they will be purified and made white, and in their natural bodies will be carried, Noah-like, through a deluge of suffering, eventually finding themselves on a renewed earth. When their Messiah descends to reign, they will be the nucleus of His earthly kingdom. They will raise their altar, build their temple, worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and celebrate the feast of Tabernacles.

They are not a Christian company. Christians are not sealed *by* an angel. God seals them *with* the Holy Spirit when they believe the gospel of their

salvation. Their seal is not an outward mark on the forehead. Nor are they sealed in a mass, but individually. At a specific moment between the sixth and seventh seal this company are all sealed at one and the same time. Earthly saints, not heavenly; actual Israelites out of each tribe, not Christians.

2. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.—(Rev. 7. 9).

Having *heard* the number of the sealed remnant from out of Israel's tribes, John *saw* a white-robed company with palms in their hands. Such a concourse he had never beheld on earth, a multitude too numerous to count, out of every kindred and nation under heaven, and he wonders who they are.

Much misconception exists as to this white-robed company. Some teach that they are unfaithful Christians left to go through the great tribulation; whereas Revelation 3. 10 distinctly says that Christians will be kept "from," not brought "through," that awful time. They do not sit on thrones in heaven, robed and crowned, with harps to praise, in priestly nearness to God, where no temple shuts Him in and sets the worshippers without. They stand on earth, bearing in their hands the well-known symbol of welcome to Christ as King. The palm was carved on the temple walls, made into booths at the feast of tabernacles, borne in the hand by the multitude who cried "Hosanna," when Christ rode into Jerusalem (John 12. 18). Palms are never seen in heaven, but ever connected with the earthly, royal glories of Christ.

Then God does not tabernacle *with* them. He tabernacles *over* them. Like Israel on their wilderness journey, they are shielded from the sun by day, drink of the fountains of the water of life, hunger and thirst—their oft-known portion before—now gone, and gone for ever. No tear shall dim their eye

again, the Lamb henceforth is their Shepherd and King. All this speaks of a people blessed on earth. They are seen a distinct company from the sealed among the Jews. They are not baptized into one body as now; they are not viewed as in new creation where neither Jew nor Gentile exist as such.

John has no question to ask as to the "sealed" from his own nation; his Scriptures had prepared him for the blessing of the tribes, but when he sees this new and unknown company—neither Christian nor Jewish—one of the elders voices what was passing through his mind, and in response to his inquiry: "Who are these clothed in white robes, and whence come they?" he learns that an unnumbered host of heathen will experience the virtues of the work of Christ, and with robes washed in His blood, will enter upon a scene of millennial blessing. This tells us that redemption is absolutely necessary for any to participate in earthly or heavenly blessing.

What a picture is here portrayed! How all the glowing prophecies of old will then find their fulfillment. The Gentiles will rejoice, praise the Lord, and laud Him, *with* the Jew, as from one sabbath to another, and one new moon to another, all flesh will gather to worship the Lord (see Isa. 66. 23). The voice of weeping shall be no more heard, nor the voice of crying; but the wilderness blossoming as the rose, and the light of Christ's glory filling the earth. What a holy, happy contrast this will be to the sorrow and tribulation this white-robed company passed through in the sorrowful days of Anti-Christ!

We desire to emphasize the fact that neither of these companies are Christians "who have earned the kingdom by their faithfulness"; The latter is a poor, persecuted company of heathen, the other "sealed" Israelites delivered from the foul tyrant's blasphemous grip, both privileged to enjoy a place of priestly nearness in the glorious latter day temple.

There is No Difference.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

“**E**LISHA, the man of God . . . sent to the king saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him now come to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel” (2 Kings 5. 8).

The casual reader might be tempted to think that Elisha manifested much pride and self-sufficiency in sending such a message. His action appears the more extraordinary, because everything like haughtiness was foreign to his character. Yet his was no idle boast. It is true that he assumed indeed a lofty tone, but was it not warranted? God and His chosen people had been laid open to the scorn of the heathen by the evident impotence of their representative, the king. Elisha was devoted to God's honour, and thus to see it clouded filled him with righteous indignation. The kingdom of God is not a realm of poverty. Elisha's words then attested a high degree of spiritual acumen in the service of his God.

The noble stranger was, at the very outset, to be made to feel that he had not to do with a Syrian magician but with the servant of the Most High God who has no respect for persons, and in whose presence human conceptions vanish away. Naaman had to learn that distinctions, although quite proper as pertaining to time, were destitute of merit in God's sight, and that high-sounding titles, though justly giving importance to the human mould in the region of sense, constituted no claim to God's favour.

The doctrine of human dignity and the imperial destiny of man would elevate all to the common platform of divinity according to the promise of the serpent in Eden: ye shall be as gods. But God brings all down to the platform of needy, guilty sinners, so that there is no difference. Hence in how estimable a light does the man of God in Jericho appear, for he viewed the great general

from this standpoint—a needy, helpless leper. Can all gospel preachers survey themselves in this mirror? How often does modern deportment seem to justify the idea that God, whose representatives we are, judgeth with man's judgment, that He has given preference to rank and wealth, and that He stands nearer to the noble and wealthy than to those of low degree!

But the professed servants of Christ are often little regarded as God's representatives and the ministers of His Word. This is the well-merited reward of the love of worldly pre-eminence. Even those in whose presence the standard of truth is lowered with obsequious pusillanimity despise those servants in their hearts, much as they may compliment them on their good-breeding and gentlemanly behaviour.

We do not here set aside that proper Christian behaviour which renders to all their due, “tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Rom. 13. 7); and it is well in these socialistic days to remember that not only does the Word of God say to us, “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood,” but also “Fear God, honour the king. Servants be subject” (1 Peter 2. 17, 18). This is all compatible with the noble and uncompromising dignity that a servant of the Lord should bear before all, not because he is anything in himself, but because of the word he carries and the One he represents.

Naaman had to learn the lesson that the power of God might be hidden under the simplest attire, and that it was only impotency that needed to decorate itself with pomp. Well might he question in his mind the feasibility of that lowly habitation before which his chariot was pulled up being the dwelling of a man who was to do him a service which he had sought in vain from the most distinguished physicians and priests in

the world. Although Elisha was well aware of the rank of his visitor, he was not elated. He treated him as in no way superior to the meanest subject. The prophet's eye was filled with the dazzling majesty of the One whose servant he had the honour to be, and thus all the fascinations of earthly dignity faded away.

May the Lord of glory mercifully anoint His servants' eyes with eyesalve so that they may be preserved from the prevalent spirit of Laodicea and that they may be marked by the admirable spirit of Philadelphian servants who kept His Word, did not deny His name, and thus were not stumbling-blocks in the open door of blessing to souls.

The Lord is Coming.

During the American war for the Union, a strange sight was seen in a western city. The day was very dark, and rain had been descending in torrents. But, high up on the brow of the mountain that overlooks the city, the national flag was seen waving, bathed in the only beam of sunshine that lighted the whole landscape. . . . How that flag came there was a mystery. It transpired that an exploring party had

gone up for some measurements and had chanced to set the flag there at the precise moment when that solitary rift in the clouds permitted the sunlight to flash radiance upon it. . . . Fellow believers, despite many clouds and severe storms there is always a bright gleam through the clouds, and God's golden sunbeam rests upon that Banner of our Hope — the Lord is coming quickly.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Transference of God's Earthly People from the Old to the New Earth.

W.B.—We do not know of any Scripture which tells us how or where God's earthly people will be preserved when the present earth is destroyed according to 2 Peter 3. 10, or how they will be transferred to the new earth. God's power—the power by which the church will be translated to heaven—is equal to this difficulty as well as to every other. The passage to which you refer, Isaiah 26. 20, has Israel in view

in connection with the judgments that will precede the setting up of the millennial kingdom. The Old Testament prophecies do not generally look beyond God's dealings with this present creation, though here and there no doubt the light of eternal things shines through the veil; but it is to the New Testament that we must look for the revelation of eternal things.

"Shall perish without Law."—(Rom. 2. 12).

R.W.—This part of Romans has the final judgment of men in view, as verse 16 states; and in that day all alike will be without excuse, those who had the law of God will be judged by it, while those who had it not—the heathen nations in contrast to Israel—will be

judged without it, for they also have sinned, and sinned knowingly, as verses 14, 15, and 16 show. Their consciences told them what was right and they did what was wrong, so that they are without excuse.

"I am your Man."

(J. T. MAWSON).

THERE lies the helpless cripple; for thirty-eight years no life or strength had quickened those palsied limbs into motion, and yet he had hoped, with a wonderful persistency, to be made whole. For did he not lie close to that strange pool which, troubled by an angel at certain seasons, yielded blessing to whosoever first stepped into it. But never did hope spring up into a flame in his breast but it was at once extinguished, for another forced his way in before him, and "HE HAD NO MAN" to put him into the healing waters (John 5.). And so he lay in his helplessness, and his language might well have been: "*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

How plainly illustrative is this man's case of those who long for the ability to live good lives, as they say, but who in bitter disappointment cry, "*I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I*" (Rom. 7. 14, 15).

There is no strength for good in the life that is paralysed by sin, and every hope of deliverance from this condition of misery seems broken and vain. But it is a good thing to discover that we have no resources, it is the great lesson, for man's extremity is God's opportunity, or, as the old saying quaintly puts it, "God lives at No. 1 Man's Wits' End."

The paralytic of John 5. no sooner owned to the full his absolute hopelessness than he heard the Lord's command, "*Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*" And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked; and the same day was the sabbath." The first true day of rest for him, when all his futile efforts after life and health ceased, and when he rested entirely in the grace and power of Another.

We recently heard of a native of East Central Africa who summed up this story in two sentences. They are these: The impotent man said to Jesus, "I HAVE NO MAN," and Jesus said to him, "I AM YOUR MAN." The African who so summed up the story had not only the gift of going straight to the kernel of the matter, but he must also have learnt the wonderful and soul-emancipating truth that all life, virtue, power, blessing, and deliverance for men lie in Christ, and that it is when the groaning, struggling soul ceases all his efforts and cries, "Who shall deliver me?" that he can at once give thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Oh! disappointed seeker after good, lift your eyes to Him who is raised from the dead! He is your Man, your Deliverer! and if you have believed in Him you are now to be to Him, that in the power of His Spirit, which He gives to dwell in you, you might bring forth fruit unto God.

The Christian who is walking by faith will not be suited by anything visible, for the visible does not come within the domain of faith. A man who has emigrated and has found a new home and happy associations does not lament that the sea rolls between him and his former domicile of sorrow and privation; but if his satisfaction in the new home begins to flag, he will sigh for the old. So with the Christian: when his faith and enjoyment in his new and heavenly home above begins to wane, like Israel in the wilderness, he remembers and longs for the things of Egypt.

Paul doth not say: I desire to depart and be in heaven, but to be with Christ: it is Christ's presence makes heaven. . . . It is not the Cherubim or Seraphim which makes paradise; "The Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21. 23).

“What think ye of Christ?”

THE question put by the Lord to the Pharisees of old is still the great question, and all teaching and every system of religion must be tested by it, and judged according to the answer given to it. The opinions of men, no matter how learned, cannot be trusted here, for in this matter we are entirely dependent upon a divine revelation. The Holy Scriptures alone can inform and guide us; they are authoritative and infallible, and they testify of Him.

In the first chapter of John there is clearly stated the facts of the Deity and Incarnation of the Lord, and the purpose of it, and to these great truths we here call attention.

“In the beginning was the Word” (ver. 1).

HIS ETERNAL EXISTENCE OR BEING.

“And the Word was with God” (ver. 1).

HIS DISTINCT PERSONALITY.

“And the Word was God” (ver. 1).

HIS ESSENTIAL AND PERSONAL DEITY.

“The same was in the beginning with God” (ver. 2).

HIS ETERNAL CO-EXISTENCE WITH GOD, THE FATHER.

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made” (ver. 3).

HIS UNIVERSAL CREATIVE ENERGY.

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (ver. 4).

HIS INHERENT VITALITY AND THE ENLIGHTENING POWER RESULTING FOR MEN.

“And the Word became flesh” (ver. 14).

HIS REAL AND PERSONAL INCARNATION.

“And dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (ver. 14).

THE RECTITUDE OF HIS REVELATIONS AND HIS SUITABILITY TO MAN'S NEED.

“And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten with a Father” (ver. 14).

HIS PERSONAL GLORY IN WHOM WAS MANIFESTED THE TOTALITY OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

“The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father” (ver. 18).

HIS ETERNAL AND UNCHANGING RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE, AND ONENESS IN NATURE, WITH THE FATHER.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” (ver. 29).

HIS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH SIN IN HIS DEATH AND BY HIS POWER REMOVE IT FOR GOD'S GLORY.

Hereafter “ye shall see the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (ver. 51).

HIS GLORY AS MAN WITH UNIVERSAL DOMINION.

"They went after Them unto Jordan."

(J. T. MAWSON).

"2 Kings, 7. 14, 15."

WHAT a relief it must have been to those starving Samaritans to find that Jordan was the end of their strong and remorseless foes. Traces of them there were every step of the way to that famous river, for the whole way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste; but them they found not. With what eager steps would those messengers return to tell the king! What good news their report would be to the multitudes in the city! And, set free from fear of those terrible Syrians, with what relish they would turn to the feast so suddenly and unexpectedly given them, according to the word of the man of God. And the silver and gold and raiment; the horses and the asses! It requires no vivid imagination to picture how quickly these would be appropriated by those astonished and triumphant Israelites.

Such is the end of the story so strikingly told, and so well worthy of being read, in 2 Kings 7. Story of deep interest yet of important instruction, telling in pictorial language of "the better things" which the gospel of God proclaims to us.

The Jordan typifies the death of Christ. Have we traced our foes to it and found it to be the death of them all? Every believer in that precious Saviour may do so, and rejoice in a complete and everlasting deliverance.

We had no foes more terrible than our SINS. How the guilt of them oppressed us! What a burden it was upon our consciences and souls as we staggered beneath the load of it to destruction! And the sins themselves—some of them went before us to judgment, proclaiming in trumpet tones as they went that rebels against God were coming that way, and others followed after, stealthy and sure, like a pack of sleuth hounds upon the

trail of a fugitive, or an unerring detective on the track of the criminal, and ready to witness against us in the great judgment day! But whether they went before or after, the thought of them made us shudder and fear, for we were sure that our sins would find us out. Before, behind, and on every side of us they gathered like a strong host besieging a doomed city.

What a relief it was to us when we heard the gospel—when we heard how the Son of God, whose precious name is JESUS, had come to save us from our sins, and when, by faith, we saw Him bearing His cross to Calvary as the Lamb of God, who beareth away the sin of the world! How great was the load that was laid upon Him there, for the Scripture saith "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53. 6), and "who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24). Because of our sins He suffered: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5). As the scapegoat in Israel's history carried away, in figure, the sins of that nation into a land where no man dwelt, so in His death, when the waves of judgment rolled over Him, did our Scapegoat carry away our sins. They are cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7. 19); they are to be remembered no more (Heb. 10. 17); He was delivered for our offences that we might be justified from them all (Rom. 4. 25; Acts 13. 29). How blessed for us to see Him, the Omnipotent Redeemer, going down into the dark waters of judgment with all our sins upon Him; to trace our sins to that sacred spot and to see the mighty flood roll over them and HIM. Then, on the third day, to see Him rise up without them, having made expiation for them, and able to say to us, "Peace

be unto you," and to know that now there is no condemnation for any who are in Him. In the death of Christ our sins were overwhelmed and we are free.

And DEATH also, and him that had the power of it, what merciless foes were these! No kindness throbs in the bosom of the king of terrors, no pity in the heart of the devil; this we knew well, and how the thought of it made us dread the future—the last unavailing struggle, the silent grave, and that which lies beyond! But the gospel has brought a wonderful peace to our souls, for it has told us the tidings of Him who partook of flesh and blood that, through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15). As David laid the giant in the dust of Pas-dammin and delivered Israel from the dread of him, so has our Lord delivered us; He has bruised the head of the devil; He has taken the sting out of death and robbed the grave of its victory. We

can trace our foes to His death and find in that death the end of them all.

There were other foes also—our own evil selves—the flesh; the world with its allurements and snares; sin as a master, and many others, but the death of Christ is the way of deliverance from them all, whatsoever they be.

And being set free we may now feast upon the provision of God's grace for us, for where sin abounded grace does much more abound, and the gold, silver, and raiment, the wheat and the barley all have their counterpart in blessed spiritual realities in Christianity. These are "the exceeding riches of God's grace," "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and "all the fullness of God."

Yes; when we come to Christ the famine is turned into a feast, and where we expected foes and feared to meet them, there we find a full deliverance and God's plenteous provision for our need, and exceedingly abundantly more than we are able to ask or think.

O Lord, no angel for an hour might dream
Of the great riches Thou hast given me—
The beauty and the glory that beseeem
The heritage of life I have in Thee.
My precious Saviour—Mighty God art Thou,
Thy love's a changeless everlasting NOW.

The Way of God's Grace.

IF God had exposed to us our sinful and lost condition without manifesting that love and grace which could save us out of it how hopeless we should be. If, for instance, the Scripture had only stated that we were "without strength" and no more, we should have been plunged into the bottomless pit of despair. But it does not stop there. It says, "When we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY." The dark background of our sin and helplessness is truly given, but upon it there flames the glory of the love of God. So that we can be thankful that our case was so utterly desperate, that it was beyond all human help; for this very fact made the intervention of God a necessity, and the way in which He has intervened has won our hearts. We can glory in His love, commended to us even when we were yet sinners, by the death of Christ.

(J. T. M.).

The Church Mendicant.

(WALTER B. WESTCOTT).

“FREELY ye have received, freely give” were the instructions given by Christ to His disciples when on earth. It is not revealed that after His resurrection the last word in the charge was to be altered to “beg,” but evidently His professed disciples of to-day have so interpreted it.

If anything is clear as to the design of God in saving men it is that those so delivered should be “cheerful givers,” both in things spiritual and temporal—as it is written: “That ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

How this design has been frustrated is apparent to the most casual observer. The collection is almost invariably a very prominent feature in every kind of service in almost every place of worship. Appeals for help from all and sundry are so common that they are part of the curriculum of every kind of sect. The man who lay at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple “asking alms” is now inside the building doing a trade that would rouse the envy and excite the admiration of blind Bartimaeus. The Church is little, if at all, behind the world in catering for the amusement and entertainment of the people, and the cause of God apparently needs to be furthered by the Devil.

Few have escaped the blandishments of the stall-holder at a Church Bazaar, or have not been induced to yield the unwilling contribution for a new organ, or a new church, or a new minister.

The churches would find no use to-day for the man who could not dig, and who added “and to beg I am ashamed!” The religionists of these modern days know how to dig into the pockets of the rich, and appear to glory in the fine art of begging.

An instance of the “up-to-date” methods of appealing may be here given. It is taken from an advertisement in-

serted by church office-bearers in a North country paper:—

“We have dared to ask for £1000. We have got £700 1s. 5d., and want £300 more, and something for expenses. To-day is the last day of our effort. We have spent ourselves, our energy, our ingenuity (!), and have little money left. We are sadly in need of a push up the hill. It’s stiff work at the top. . . . The men into whose hands the laborious task has fallen crave your help. . . . A POSTAL ORDER, A CHEQUE! We are within sight of our goal. But we need your cheque next post. Postal orders can be got quite readily. See the letter is posted at once, and follow it up by coming to our Bazaar.”

“It is all very well,” a reader may remark, “to ridicule the Church Mendicant, but how could any good work be carried on without money—the *sine qua non* in all such enterprise?”

Such a protest is quite just, but what is here objected to is the appeal for money to men and women whose lives are a total contradiction of the doctrines they are asked to help to spread.

That a Christian or a Christian company—and here the word “Christian” is used in its true meaning—should go cap in hand to a man of the world, who could not possibly be termed a follower of Christ, is indeed humiliating.

Must God be indebted to the world, Christ to the Devil, or the Church to the enemies of the Truth?

If the miserable argument be used that money must be got somehow, it is only necessary to reply either that God is poor, or the people of God niggardly. Dismiss the former supposition, and the latter remains, and probably the root of the mischief will be found just here.

“There is money enough,” says Dr. Josiah Strong, “in the hands of church

members to sow every acre of the earth with the seed of truth." If this be true—and who can doubt it?—let the privilege of giving to what is really the work of God be confined to those who are truly Christian.

We are for the moment looking at things as they are, and we suggest that collections be banished from the public services and that those who profess to belong to Christ contribute privately or when together in "ecclesia." The horror of the pious deacons at such a wild suggestion may be readily imagined, but never mind the deacons! The effect of such a change would be instantaneous and startling. The man in the street would rub his eyes and begin to think there must be something in "religion" after all. At present he regards the churches as huge machines for collecting money, and the officials as professional beggars. The horse-leech had two daughters crying, "Give, give," but the family of the spiritual horse-leech is beyond all computation. Do you say "It cannot be done"? Then pause for a moment and consider how far the professing church has travelled from God and the truth.

To what depths will the "ministers" descend in order to fill the churches to-day, and incidentally to fill the coffers likewise? Well might the Archbishop of York express amazement at the *religious* subjects recently advertised in a Northern town, the following amongst others: "The Two Dogs: a Social Contrast"; "Why I left the Italian Opera"; "Palace P.S.A: First Appearance of the Border Soprano"; and "Lonely Womankind: a Growing Danger." It was a positive relief, stated His Grace, to come to one at the end of the list which seemed to sum up the whole—"Humbugs—spiritual and religious."

The reporters' comment ("laughter") at this stage ought surely to have been rendered ("weeping"); for what could be more deplorable than for the professed followers of the lowly yet mighty

Nazarene to set such shameless traps for the unwary worlding?

Let us attend—in fancy—an "evangelistic service" of to-day. The choir, the stewards, the deacons, the workers—all are present. The cushioned pews, the hassocks, the paraphernalia of all well-ordered churches—nothing is missing. The Minister or Missioner comes in and the congregation is hushed to silent expectation. This is the man who shall presently preach the free grace of God from such a text as, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and HE THAT HATH NO MONEY; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk WITHOUT MONEY and without price. Wherefore do ye *spend money* for that which is not bread? . . ."

Or possibly may be selected the words, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life *freely*."

Prior to the announcement of the text, however, several hymns are usually sung, and during the last of them there is a movement amongst the stewards or deacons, and all over the great building travel the collection-plates, or boxes; and the jingle of coins—small and great—mingles with the rapturous sound of praise, or the solemn wail of an appeal to the unsaved.

Could anything be more deplorable or inconsistent! Better surely to preach in a barn or in the open air than to rear huge buildings and furnish them so luxuriously that such means must be resorted to to maintain the services.

The Church of Rome is the worst offender in the matter under consideration. The writer took shelter during a storm of rain last summer in a Roman Catholic church in France, and in the space of half an hour there were no less than *eleven collections!*

Unfortunately it is not only within doors that these appeals for money from all and sundry are to be met with: the mischief has spread into the open-air,

and here it is still more to be deplored. The man in the street is a keen observer and he has a secret—if not an openly expressed—contempt for the ardent Salvationist who pleads for “fourpence more” to make the collection up to five shillings. The common belief in the market-place is that all religious people have an axe to grind, and come out of doors to swell their coffers or promote their “cause.” This ought not to be: the world should be made to understand that the Church has something to contribute, and is in touch with infinite resources sufficient to master the need of a guilty race.

As a matter of logic and reasonable deduction; if the unregenerate are asked to support the “service” they should have some say in the matter of the “sermon.” This may be the secret of much of the time-serving ministry in many of the pulpits: men do not pay to be exposed by the truth, to be warned of coming judgment, and urged to repent. “Let us hear comfortable words, moral essays, political orations; and let sin, death, repentance, judgment, atonement, faith, be expunged from the theology we keep alive!”

Oh, the pity and shame of it all! And wherein lies the remedy? There are, beyond all question, many of God’s dear children who groan under what they consider a necessary evil. If the “Salvationist” has been referred to, it is at the same time recognized that many of the “officers” are weary of the constant begging for money, but the system demands it and would collapse like a pack of cards without it.

At all costs a solution to the problem should be found, for the “Church Mendicant” has lost its power and influence largely by reason of its lack of holy

separation and divinely constituted independence.

“You see,” said one of the Popes to Thomas Aquinas, as he showed him all the treasures of the Vatican, “the church cannot now say what it said in early times—‘*Argentum et aurum non est mihi*’ (‘Silver and gold have I none’).” “No,” answered Aquinas, “nor can it say, ‘*Surge et ambula!*’ (‘Rise up and walk!’).”

And so it is, and while many are praying for a revival, this question of the means for carrying on God’s work must be honestly faced and righteously settled, for it is one great cause of weakness. The God who could feed the millions of Israel’s hosts in the wilderness, who is to-day maintaining some of His servants who have left all and gone into the darkness of heathendom without any guarantee of support from the home-country—this God can carry on His work without any appeal being made for financial help, *and we must let Him do it.*

One word more. Is it not a fact that many Christians who sweetly sing :

“Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small :
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

are somewhat stingy and “close-fisted?”

It is written that “*God loveth a cheerful giver,*” and we may well make it a matter of prayerful consideration, and subsequent practice, that we should not permit, or allow ourselves to be connected with, a system that solicits the aid of the world in the support of the church, which, by its very call and constitution, is NOT OF THE WORLD.

May God help us to clear ourselves in this matter!

“The Only-Begotten Son.”

This surely means, not merely that God has no other Son, but that His only-begotten Son is, in virtue of His Sonship, a partaker of that incommunicable and unperishable essence which is sundered from all created life by an impassable chasm,

(Liddon).

The Unity of the Assembly.

(EDWARD CROSS).

THE unity of all believers is a very attractive subject, and naturally so, seeing that from the first they were intended to be "one," and in result they will be "one" for ever. This is the purport of the Lord's prayer (John 17.), and the ministry of the apostles is the expansion of it; so that the desire of the saints for this unity, in a practical way, will be assuredly realized in a new creation, despite the disintegrating forces that are now at work for its hindrance. Like the burning bush—ever burning, yet never burnt (Exod. 3.)—there remains the same indestructible desire for unity as was first breathed into the disciples' hearts by the Spirit of God.

Of one accord, of one and the same mind and feeling, *ὁμοθυμαδὸν* (see Acts 1. 14; 2. 1; 4. 24; 5. 12; 8. 6; 12. 25; Rom. 15. 6),—such is the word that describes the state of things in the early church, and such is the desire of the Spirit, at all times, for all believers.

The "afflictions of David," resulting in the "rest of God for ever" (Ps. 132.), is followed by Psalm 133., "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity . . . there the Lord commanded His blessing, even life eternal."

On the other hand, the confusion of tongues at Babel was the judgment of God on the pride and godlessness of that day—a judgment to which the world has never bowed, and all the wit of man has not been able to undo. At Pentecost, in the power of the Spirit, the apostles spake in the various tongues of those present, so as to be understood by all; and thus the dispersing judgment of God at Babel was upheld, while His power to unite all by one Spirit was made manifest.

There is a wild scheme to-day to set aside the judgments of God by the creation of a new jargon, making confusion worse confounded. But why

should all the world learn "Esperanto" in order to a universal communion of mankind? Why not learn English, or Russian, or any other known language? It would answer the same purpose, and more effectually. But the Esperanto scheme subserves two ends: it disavows the righteous judgment of God on the world, and it tacitly refuses Christ as the God-appointed Saviour. "There is nothing new under the sun." The circumstances of Christian times, and the history of the Church, are different from Genesis 11., but the principles at work are one and the same. A new order of things is set up in Christianity. Christ is the centre of the system, and the Spirit gathers to His name; and again, the pride and unbelief of man entrap him, and he provokes on himself the judgment of God. Instead of the beautiful picture of unity which we find at the beginning, we see to-day the jarring interests into which the Church is irreconcilably broken up; and neither is the judgment recognized as from God, so as to produce true brokenness and humility before Him, nor is the remedy taken hold of that He has provided in Christ.

Is the case then irremediable, and is there no hope? Is there no way of bringing all together again, and uniting the fragments? Is there no "Esperanto" to bridge the chasm between what is and what should be, so that once more we should be all together in a manner suitable to God? No: there is no such hope. There is no human expedient for the recovery of the church to the state from which she has fallen. The attempt would be to ignore the judgment of God on her, and to belittle the coming of the Lord as her only hope. Attempts abound for the reunion, in greater or lesser measure, of Christendom. The greatest of these forces at work to this end is Rome; working on an effete Protestantism—"having a name to live, but dead"—she will first

succeed in dominating the civil power, then to be destroyed by it (Rev. 17. 16). But out of that evil system God calls His people, so that they partake not of her sins, nor receive of her plagues (Rev. 18. 4).

Is there then no escape from this confusion? Must the cataclysm swamp all alike in one common woe? It never has been so. It is not so now. Only we must begin with GOD, and note the way He moves in such circumstances. Noah in his day got directions what he was to do; and twice over it is stated that "then Noah did according to all that God commanded him" (Gen. 6. 22; 7. 5). Thus was Noah saved, and all that were in the ark with him.

Later on we find a remnant—the escaped of Israel (Isa. 4. 2; 10. 20; 66. 19, etc.)—who are saved from the doom that falls upon the nation. True, it was "a very small remnant" (Isa. 1. 9), but deliverance was found in it, as was assured in Joel 2. 32. But this deliverance was to come by the way of the Lord's appointment, not by the way of their own devising, as we find in Acts 2. As "the day of the Lord was great and terrible on all flesh," so He would pour His Spirit on all flesh, and "whosoever would call on the name of the Lord should be saved." He was the Saviour, "the Hope of Israel" then (Jer. 17. 13); He is the only Saviour and our hope to-day (Isa. 43. 11; Acts 4. 12).

Practical unity among Christians is desired, but that unity must be subject to the Word of God and His Spirit. Unless we begin there all will be wrong from the start. In the confusion of Christendom it is useless to look for union. It would be the union of opposites. To Jeremiah it was said, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (Jer. 15. 19). No section of the church, inasmuch as it is a section, can take the place of being a gathering-centre to itself. Christ was the centre of gathering at the first, and He remains the same to-day.

But every company claims to be gathered to the Lord's name. Then, all who are *really so* will be gathered together. It is plain that no company can be gathered to His name where what is contrary to His name is allowed; either evil conduct (1 Cor. 5.), or another gospel (Gal. 1.) contrary to the faith already given to the saints (Jude 3.), or that which is subversive of "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 5. 9). Where any such are tolerated, i.e. established by statute, "the faith" is undermined, and the Spirit of God could not gather to such a centre, however much His grace might work in their midst.

But where saints are found together—not as members of any select company but as gathered to His name alone—there will be room, and necessarily so, for those who desire the unity of all true Christians to find themselves together in the faith of Christ, without any assumption as regards themselves, but simply as desiring to hold fast to His name. This will be at once the broadest and the narrowest company on earth. The broadest, because it recognizes all who are Christ's, in the fullest privileges that belong to them as such; the narrowest, because it is in separation from all that denies His name.

The desire for unity is right: but to put unity before Christ would be un-Christian: as it has been said, "It is true that the cross gathers all; but they are gathered to Christ, not to the cross."

But what are you to do with the great mass of believers, true Christians, and desirous, as you are yourself, of following the Lord? Will you not have fellowship with them?

Certainly: fellowship in the Spirit and the truth with all such. But that does not mean fellowship with the errors and systems of error, or the sectarian ways into which they have fallen; for assuredly, each differing from the other, and each setting up his "difference" as the badge of his fellowship, they cannot in so far all be right.

But then, finally, it means that they are all to join *you*, who think yourself alone right and free from error.

No, in nowise. We are none of us to join the other; but all to follow the Lord, to whom we are all joined. This would at once get rid of all sectarian differences, and recognize the unity already formed by the Spirit. Allowance would be thus made for the "otherwise-mindedness" (Phil. 3. 15) that must ever exist in our present state; patience and forbearance with one another would be called into exercise; love to Christ and devotedness to Him would be the bond of fellowship; the truth would be maintained, and evil be refused. Thus would the desire to see the practical unity of all true Christians walking in the Spirit, and in the bond of peace, be realized, so far as it is possible in our actual circumstances, until the coming of the Lord. On the other hand, the mere desire for the unity of all believers must necessarily fall short of "the unity of the Spirit," which must ever remain constant to the truth of God and His purposes in Christ. We are apt in avoiding Scylla to fall into Charybdis; and while eschewing the narrowness of sectarianism to lose sight of the uncompromising character of the truth, and thus equally to miss the path in which to follow the Lord.

The difficulty is to get people to refer to GOD, and to His Word, and to think

of Christ as the "Amen" to it. Men, thoughts, tradition, custom, ease, self-interest, fear of consequences and such-like things, each, or all together, or in turn, clog the way of the Spirit, and divert the mind from reaching *God*. "Abram believed God" is the shortest possible complete sentence, and it states at the outset the whole conduct of faith, as it is potential of all its properties. Similarly, in circumstances of trial, the Psalmist says, "My soul, wait thou only upon God" (Ps. 62.). But this, while first it isolates, then combines; it separates from all the elements of dissolution, and it coheres with its fellows in the bonds of eternal life. It is, so to speak, a chemical compound, a vital constituent, having the creative power of life inherent in itself. It waxes as it goes. All else is but a mechanical mixture, a rope of sand, a mere human entity, lacking divine consistency, and carrying with it a greater dissolution in proportion to its size. Such is the great Babylon that sets the world to wonder, first at its meretricious grandeur, then at the suddenness of its downfall; for, "in one hour her judgment is come." What a contrast to the holy city, the Bride of the Lamb, the counterpart of Him who came to do the will of God, to witness a good confession to the Truth. *God cannot change*. Woe, woe, woe, if He did. His Word abides when creatures all shall fail. The question is, "Can we trust it?"

Humility.

TRUE humility is to own the grace as entirely of God, and our place in Christ in the full sense that we are nothing in ourselves. . . . When God puts the best robe on a worthless sinner, the greatest humility is to bow and wear it, knowing that all else is unfitness and rags, and that God has given us that. . . . This is the only true humility—giving up the thought of what we are for God as perfectly bad, and taking the thought of what God is for us as perfectly good.

(J. N. D.)

The Secret of Rest.

(H. P. BARKER).

Conversations on the Book of Ruth.—V.

Q. We come now to the third chapter of Ruth. What is the main subject of which it treats?

A. We may sum it up in one word: Rest. Naomi asks "My daughter, shall I not seek *rest* for thee?" Gleaning in the harvest field is one thing, rest of heart in the knowledge of the One in whose fields we glean is quite another. For Ruth, rest did not lie in the abundance of barley that she had gathered, nor in the lavish bounty of Boaz, but in knowing his love, and having him as her bridegroom. So in chapter 3. she starts forth with a very different object from that which took her to the harvest fields day by day. Not barley, but Boaz, is now her object; not the gifts, but the giver; not the blessings but the blesser.

With us, too, the possession and knowledge of our many blessings does not in itself spell rest for our hearts. *That* lies in knowing personally the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in learning of Him how dear we are to Him.

Q. But does not every Christian thus know his Saviour?

A. As Saviour, we all know Him. But the relation between Him and His people is not merely that of the Saviour and the saved; the bountiful Giver and the happy recipients. He wants to be *much more* to us than that. Of all that He is, and can be, and wants to be to His loved ones there is no limit. After long years of growth in the knowledge of Christ, the Apostle's yearning cry was still, "That I may know Him!" (Phil. 3. 10). It is in the knowledge of Christ thus that the secret of real rest for our hearts lies.

Q. Is there not another aspect in which *rest* is spoken of in the third chapter of Ruth?

A. There is, and it is still more wonderful than that of which we have been speaking. Naomi says, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for *the man will not be in rest* until he have finished the thing" (ver. 18).

If rest for Ruth was to lie in her possession of Boaz, rest for Boaz would lie in his possession of Ruth. If rest for our hearts lies in our possession of Christ, rest for His heart (Oh, wonder of wonders!) lies in *His possession of us*.

The late J. B. Stoney had a way of asking questions to which people found it hard to reply, but which, for that very reason, impressed the mind and memory, so that the answer, eventually supplied by the questioner, proved helpful and suggestive.

One of his favourite questions was this: "When divine love has done all it possibly can do for its objects, what will it do then?"

Here was indeed a puzzle! When divine love had done all that love could do, what could possibly remain for it yet to do? The perplexing question was usually given up as insoluble. Then J.B.S. would furnish the answer: "When divine love has done all it possibly can do for its objects, *it will rest in its possession of those objects!*"

Of course, he was thinking of Zephaniah 3. 17: "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love." And just as Jehovah will rest in His love to Israel when all His gracious ways with her have reached their climax, so the Lord Jesus finds His rest in having His saints as the objects of His undying love. O blessed Lord, how dear must we be to Thee, since Thou findest Thy rest in having us, even us, as Thy companions, Thy beloved ones, Thy bride!

Q. What is the significance of the six measures of barley which Boaz poured into Ruth's veil ?

A. It is helpful to contrast these six measures with the one measure, the ephah, which she gained day by day, by means of her own toil (see chap. 2. 17). Going forth, morning by morning, to glean, and in the evenings beating out what she had gathered, a single measure was the result. But when she went forth not with barley but Boaz, not the blessing but the blesser, as her object, the result was that she received six times the amount of barley; six times as much blessing, we may say, as when she made blessing her object !

Q. How can this principle be applied spiritually ?

A. In more ways than one. Apply it to our reading of the Scriptures. Why do I read them ? Is it to get blessing to my soul ? Then no doubt I shall get it. I shall not be sent empty away if I come to the Word, not leaning on my own understanding, but looking to the Lord to instruct and bless me. But suppose I read the Scriptures in order to find Christ there; suppose my desire is to meet the Beloved of my soul, and hear His voice speaking to me in the sacred page; suppose my thought is of Him rather than of my own blessing. Shall I therefore not receive blessing ? Ay, six times as much as if I made blessing my object !

Q. In what other way can the principle be applied ?

A. Apply it, if you like, to the partaking of the Lord's supper. We do not believe, of course, in what is called the "real presence" of Christ in the bread and wine, but His "real presence" in the midst of even two or three gathered in His name for this or any other purpose is one of the most precious truths (see Matt. 18. 20).

Let us suppose we meet a brother going to partake of the Lord's Supper.

"Brother," we ask, "*why* are you going to that meeting ? "

He replies: "I am going to get a blessing. To join in the remembrance of the Lord in His death is always an inspiring thing to me. It lifts me up, cheers my soul, and I go home refreshed and blessed."

Is this so ? Does a Christian who goes to such a meeting with an object like this find the blessing that he seeks ? I believe he does. For He to whom he belongs sees the desire of his heart and will not disappoint him.

Now suppose we meet another, going to the same place.

"Brother," we ask, "what is your reason for going to that meeting ? "

"I have read," he replies, "that the Lord is present in the midst of His loved ones gathered in His name. I go to meet Him, to be in His company, to sit at His feet."

"Why do you take the Lord's Supper ? " we inquire.

"Why ? " he exclaims. "Because I love to remember *Him*. It is not so much the thought of how I have been saved by His dying that is before me; not so much my blessing, as Himself, who He is, and what He has done, the greatness of His love, and the way His love has expressed itself in death. All this stirs my heart, and moves me to go where I may, in His own presence, remember HIM."

Do you suppose that this brother obtains any blessing at the meeting to which he is going ? He is not thinking of blessing, but I venture to think he gets six times as much blessing as the one who makes blessing his object !

Q. Turning now to the last chapter of Ruth: of whom or what is the kinsman (ver. 1) a figure ?

A. Of the law. He had the prior claim upon the parcel of ground that Naomi offered for sale, and upon Ruth.

He could have done with the ground if it had not been for the fact of the purchaser having to marry a Moabitess.

The law could have established man on the earth if only he had not been a sinner. As it is, it can do nothing. It was "weak, through the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). No blessing, therefore, is to be expected in that direction.

Q. Why should Boaz wish to buy Naomi's "parcel of land" when he was already the owner of broad acres and wide estates?

A. It was not the land he cared about. But according to the custom of those by-gone times the purchaser of the land would become the bridegroom of Ruth. That was what he desired. It reminds us of how our blessed Lord (to use the language of the parable) has bought the field for the sake of the treasure that was in it. The world is the field, and He has purchased it. But in doing so, His chief thought was for His treasure, His loved ones, whether they be of Israel or of the church.

Faithful and Wise Service.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

"**W**HO then is that faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?" (Matt. 24. 45).

Two things mark a true servant, and these are faithfulness and wisdom.

He is not spoken of in this passage as either successful or gifted, but as "faithful and wise."

All may not be apparently successful, nor specially gifted, but all are expected to be both faithful and wise.

He who is "faithful" to the interests of his lord is reliable and worthy of trust; he who is "wise" is obedient and intelligent; and these are, surely, the two qualities most sought for in a servant.

Thus in 2 Timothy 2. we read that the aged Apostle charged his son in the faith to commit what he had learned to "faithful men," while he himself was to carefully "divide the word of truth." He was to be wise. The Apostle was about to leave the field of his abundant labours, where he had been counted faithful himself, as he had also been a wise master-builder in the house of God;

and in his deep solicitude for the welfare of the church for which he had spent all his energies, he counsels Timothy to esteem faithfulness and wisdom in the work and testimony of the Lord as the very highest qualifications.

Fidelity is of more value than outward and visible success, and wisdom than the most brilliant gift, as 1 Corinthians 13. shows. There may be much of what passes as success where there is little heart-faithfulness to God, little self-denial, little personal communion with the Lord, little separation from the world and its ways, little true submission to the word of God, and little prayer.

There may also be gift with little fear of the Lord, a covert love of flattery and much vainglorious self-importance, which, in result, only weaken and distract. On the other hand, where there are faithfulness and wisdom, the Master can count on the accurate accomplishment of His will. He can count not only on the portion of meat being given to the "household," but also that it is given in "due season." When faithfulness and wisdom are rightly blended together the work is not only done, but done well.

Christ in Prophecy.

(ALGERNON J. POLLOCK).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN (Revised).

Read 1 Peter 1, 10-12; Luke 24, 25-27, and 44.

THE Old Testament writers prophesied mainly about two things—the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. We learn from 1 Peter 1, 10-12 that the prophets did not understand what they wrote about, and they actually examined their own writings to understand what they wrote. Yet they penned the most wonderful prophecies the world has ever known, many of them already fulfilled. This is a great proof of inspiration.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament, some of which have been fulfilled absolutely, and the prophecy closed. But the main prophecy of the Bible is concerning Christ. It is presented in three ways: first in the prophecy of type; second in that of illustration; and third in that of foretelling. Prophecy does not always mean foretelling. It either means forth-telling or foretelling; but I am speaking now of the prophecies in the Old Testament, which spoke of things that were then future.

The prophecy of type is deeply instructive and helpful. To an unconverted person nothing seems more dreary and uninteresting than the types of the Pentateuch—and yet when we hold the key—Christ—the study of these books is most delightful and helpful.

We might liken the full shining of the truth in Christ to pure light, and the types to the breaking up of light into its prismatic colours. We get the truths of the person and death of Christ presented in one aspect from one type, and in another aspect from another type, until at length, as all these thoughts are brought together in our souls, we get some idea of the greatness of Christ, and His work.

Another thing. In the verses we read in Luke's Gospel, the Lord Jesus is seen

“expounding in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself,” and He speaks about the three sections into which the Old Testament is divided: the law, the prophets, and the psalms, saying, in John 5, 39, “They are they which testify of Me.”

Then there is the prophecy of illustration or history. In this I am not guessing at things that are not absolutely revealed to us. There are certain things in this connection that Scripture puts beyond the limit of doubt at all. For instance, take Adam—Romans 5, 14 tells us he was “the figure of Him that was to come,” a figure of Christ. Take Eve—Ephesians 5, shows us that the marriage relationship, begun in Adam and Eve, is a figure of Christ and the church. Take the great scene of the passover—We are left in no doubt as to what it typifies, for the Apostle Paul testifies that “Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us.”

On the other hand, there are many types; take, for instance, the history of Joseph, where our spiritual judgment must be brought into exercise as to what did or did not typify our Lord, and a large part of Scripture is so presented. The Bible is a book of principles. The use of it is not to convince the infidel, for the simple reason that the infidel has not got the capacity to understand spiritual arguments, or anything that is spiritual (1 Cor. 2, 14). Nevertheless, the Word is that by which his darkness may be enlightened and his soul reached, but that is altogether a different matter to convincing his intellect.

Then there is the prophecy of foretelling. Christ, I say reverently, is the great outstanding Miracle of the Bible, and I want to gather up a few of the great thoughts in the Old Testament as to Christ, and you will see them fulfilled in the New as to His person, and as to

His sufferings, and if so much has been fulfilled, it is, for the believer, positive proof that that which still remains to be fulfilled, that is to say, His coming to rule over this earth and His glory—"the glory that should follow"—will surely come to pass.

Somebody has put it like this. There are over three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Christ, His Godhead, His manhood, His birth, His life, His death, the object of His death, the consequences of His death, and, by and by, His manifestation in glory when He reigns. These three hundred and more prophecies are like rays of light, and these rays of light are not all of the same length. Some are longer than others. Some come from as far back as Moses. Others come from a shorter distance, like Micah. Others come from Isaiah; and these rays of light, shot along the centuries, concentrate upon the Babe in Bethlehem's manger. And then, as His wonderful life unfolds, these rays shine upon the path that He treads. He was the perfect answer to those prophecies, they spoke of Him, and He illuminated them, for they could not be rightly understood until He came. The brightest rays of all foretold the cross of Calvary. All those rays of light focuss there. Christ is the Antitype of those types. The Antitype is *before* the types, as the types are formed upon the Antitype. The Antitype is *after* the types, as the fulfillment of them. The Antitype is before the types—He is the Alpha; and after the types—He is the Omega. May we have in our souls an adoring sense of who the Son of God is.

Now before we read two verses in the Old Testament, let us consider a very important sentence in Scripture. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 27). It is stated that the Son reveals the Father, but it is also stated positively *that no one knows the*

Son but the Father. What does that mean? Does it mean that we do not know Christ as our Saviour and Lord (I am speaking to believers)? Certainly not. But we do well to accept absolutely the limitation that we shall never know the mystery of His person. To neglect this is to court disaster. To remember it will make us most careful not to go a hair's breadth beyond the statements of Scripture in regard to this profound and holy subject of the person of Christ. Scripture testifies to us that He is God. Scripture testifies to us that He is man. Very God and very man in one Person, but as for understanding the mystery of it, we never shall, and I adore God that there are these mysteries beyond my finite grasp, for it proves that I have to do with the Infinite. A quondam infidel, speaking of these things, said, "They are darkness to my intellect; but they are sunshine to my heart." That is a very great thing.

Now I will turn you to two verses in Isaiah. I may say that the prophecy of Isaiah presents the subject we have before us very fully. He is sometimes called the "evangelical prophet," because what he gives to us is so full in connection with Christ that it is good news indeed. He is sometimes called the "royal prophet," because he presents this truth in such a marvellous and majestic manner.

Now look at chapter 7. 10-14:

"Moreover, the Lord spoke again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O House of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary man, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Now notice that in the first Scripture I read this evening the Holy Spirit is

characterized as the Spirit of *Christ*. "The Spirit of Christ which was in them [the prophets] . . . testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." We find the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Christ—if we may so say, burdened with what is going to come forth in due time hundreds of years before it does come forth. For instance, take that matchless Psalm 22. A thousand years before the bitter cry of abandonment was wrung from the lips of Christ upon the cross, David, not understanding the fulness of the words that He wrote, penned these words: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Now here again in Isaiah, seven centuries before Christ came, the prophecy of His coming is given. Prophecy is that which utterly shipwrecks a false prophet, and absolutely confirms a true prophet, and the more extended the prophecies are the more will that rule hold good. A man might prophesy of one item, and by a lucky chance—a fluke—it might come true, but if he puts two items together, the chances are much more remote that they will come true. If he puts three, four, five, six, or if he puts a dozen together, unless he is *inspired* in his prophecy, there is not one chance in a million that He will be right. But the Scriptures prophesy not once nor twice, nor a dozen times, but, as we have been saying, over three hundred times, as to the person of Christ, His birth, His life, His death, the results of His work, His glory; and all these things have come true with the exception of the glory to come, which is yet future. How truly they are God's Word!

Now the Lord said to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth or in the height above," and Ahaz would not do it. But the Lord says, "I will give you a sign. And the sign is this: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Now there is the sign in the height and in the depth. We can conceive of no greater height than God. Jesus was "God manifest in

the flesh." We can conceive of no greater depth, in a way, than Immanuel (God with us) for the purposes for which He came into this world—even His shameful death on the tree. God's throne is in the height; Christ's cross is in the depth. It was a sign in the height above and in the depth below.

Now in this verse we have got two things. The virgin birth is greatly derided to-day. If you do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, you do not believe the Scriptures. If you do not believe in the Scriptures you have no right to call yourself a Christian at all. The virgin birth marks out the Lord as absolutely unique, as to His humanity, though in the wonderful stoop of His grace He became a *real* man—spirit, soul, and body—sin apart. He stood alone as a man here, conceived of the Virgin by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost.

You may go to the mighty Himalayan range of mountains, and you may say there is one mountain, Everest, which towers above them all. And men would put the Lord in that place—greater than all others but of the same kind. He is greater undoubtedly, but that is not the whole truth; He does not belong to that range at all, He stands absolutely of another order. He is unique, and the Spirit of God marks Him out as such.

The devil's aim is to wipe out the distinction that marks Christ off from every other man. He is very subtle. He wants to put Christ in the same class with Buddha and Mahomet and Confucius. He wants you to believe that He is a teacher amongst teachers. He will admit, perhaps, that He is the chief teacher; but, as has been truly said, the Lord Jesus Christ will not take the *first* place. *He will take ALL the place, or none at all*, and the Lord Jesus Christ stands absolutely by Himself in this as in many other respects. He was born of a virgin.

Then it says, "His name shall be called Immanuel," that is, "GOD *with us*." Now there are a great many evil religions in the world. They have been

called "crank religions," but crank religions is too good a name for them. They are devilish religions, and the energy of Satan is behind them. Some few years ago, it was sufficient to ask, Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? If the answer was, "Yes," you knew there was soundness as to the person of Christ. In the *scriptural* presentation of the word Son as applied to Christ, it ought to be sufficient, for the Jews always recognized that for Jesus to make Himself the Son of God was to make Himself equal with God; but it is not sufficient nowadays. The Millennial Dawnist, the Seventh Day Adventist, the Theosophist, the Christian Scientist will tell you they believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They use the right words, but the meaning which they attach to them is blasphemy. What they say, in effect, is this, "Yes, Jesus was the Son of God, so was Shakespeare, so is that man that reels drunk out of the public-house."

The short and sharp question you must ask is this, and require a plain "Yes" or "No": "*Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is GOD, THE SON?*" That is a true test.

Let us look at one more verse:

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9. 6, 7).

Now it is very interesting to see in Scripture how the name of Christ gradually comes out. You will remember when the man wrestled with Jacob at the brook Jabbok, Jacob said, "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy name. And He said: Wherefore is it that thou dost ask

after My name? and He blessed him there." He would not tell His name. No doubt the mysterious wrestler was Christ—Jehovah—and whilst He would not tell His name, because even in those early days the system of Judaism in its types, let alone Christianity in its fulfillment of types, was not instituted, yet He blessed Jacob. A little later on, you remember, when the angel prophesied the birth of Samson to Manoah and his wife, Manoah said to the angel, "What is Thy name?" The angel replied, "Why asketh thou thus after My name, seeing it is secret"; or, as the margin of our Bible reads, "seeing it is *wonderful*" The truth comes out more fully than in Genesis. "Wonderful" is just the word for Christ. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father."

Further down the stream of time, in Isaiah 9. 6, we get a much richer unfolding. "Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." What strength there is in Him!

Let me turn aside for a moment, and give a word of comfort here. The government of the universe is upon His shoulder, but when it speaks of the good Shepherd finding His sheep, it says when He found the sheep He put it upon His shoulders—*BOTH* of them. Then why have doubts and fears as to whether you can be kept or not? "The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father"; and then, with a sweep from the majesty of His person, by implication it brings before us all His wonderful work upon the cross—"the Prince of Peace." In the next verse it opens out the coming glory which shall be His when He reigns over the earth.

Time fails to say more. But enough has been shown of Christ in prophecy and Christ in fulfillment to make us say adoringly from the depths of our ransomed souls: "My Lord and My God."

"Tis eternal life to know Him,
Oh! how He loves."

Answers to Correspondents.

The Person of the Lord.

H.J.T.—When the Lord came into manhood or to use the words of Scripture, when “the Word became flesh” (John 1. 14, N.T.), He did not cease to be, as to His person, what He always was before. We read, “the Word was God,” and this was as true of Him when He tabernacled amongst us—a Man in circumstances of poverty—as ever it was in those mysterious ages of eternity. As He lay in the helplessness of babe-hood in the manger of Bethlehem His great name was Emmanuel—God with us (Matt. 1. 23). He was then the One WHOSE GOINGS FORTH HAVE BEEN OF OLD, FROM THE DAYS OF ETERNITY (Micah 5. 2, margin). “He was in the world, and THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM, and the world knew Him not” (John 1. 10).

In John’s Gospel the fact of His Deity is definitely stated and is specially in evidence, but it cannot be hidden in any of the Gospels. It was the Creator who fed the multitudes when they hungered; commanded the fish for the nets of His servants; subdued the tempest into immediate obedience; and raised up the dead to life and strength. Only God could read the unspoken thought; relieve the heart of its burden of sin, and present Himself to all men as an object for faith. These things which Jesus did proved that He was God, though at the same time actually a

man with human sympathies and feeling. He suffered hunger and weariness; felt deeply the slights and ingratitude of men; kept the law which God had given of old to men; fulfilled the relationship in which man stood to God without failure in spite of the attempts of the devil to turn Him from it, and was, as the Scripture says, tempted in all points like us, sin apart (Heb. 4. 15).

In resurrection also the fact of His Deity is strikingly affirmed; for though He appeared before His disciples a Man with wounded hands and side, yet Thomas confessed Him as His LORD and his GOD, and the Lord accepted his homage without rebuke. As He ascended to the glory of God, A MAN UPON THE THRONE OF GOD, the glory of His person is still kept clearly before us, for it is written, “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2. 9).

He ever was—and will never cease to be—over all “God blessed for ever”, one in the Trinity with the Father and Holy Ghost, yet He became Man in order to fulfil the counsels of God and die for us, and He will never cease to be Man, for it is in Him as Man that all God’s counsels will be fulfilled. The foregoing should answer your question as to “Christ becoming God.” He cannot become that which He never ceased to be.

An apparent Discrepancy in the Dates given in the Old and New Testaments.

Much has been written on the difference in the length of time given as having elapsed between Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and the building of Solomon’s temple in 1 Kings 6. 1 and Acts 13. In the former 480 years is the time stated, while from the latter we should gather that the exact length of time was 573 years—a difference of 93 years.

Some of the earliest MSS. give a different reading for Acts 13. 19–21 to that which we have in the Authorized Version; it is, “And when He had destroyed the seven nations in the land of Caanan, He divided their land to them by lot, about the space of 450 years; and after this gave them judges, until Samuel the prophet.” To support this reading,

the birth of Isaac must be taken as the beginning of the period mentioned, and there is nothing unreasonable about such a course. The land was promised to Abraham in connection with the birth of Isaac, and in about 450 years—452 to be exact—God fulfilled that promise and divided the land amongst Israel. It may be that Paul in Acts 13. uses God's faithfulness to His promise in this respect as a proof that He could not fail in fulfilling a greater and more important one: the giving of the Messiah, and that Jesus was He. We submit this solution of the difficulty for your consideration as one that has the support of many who are entitled to be heard.

For ourselves we have thought that another solution is the right one, underlying which there is a solemn lesson for us. The building of Solomon's temple was on the line of God's purposes for His people; it was the proof that they were His people; redeemed out of the house of bondage by His power to serve Him alone. But during their sad history in the times of the judges there were exactly 93 years in which they were in bondage to His foes and theirs. During those years they could not yield to God the firstfruits of their land which He claimed, for that had to be paid as tribute to their conquerors; they were not free to serve Him or bring their offerings to His tabernacle, for their oppressor greatly impoverished them. It would seem that God did not reckon

these sad years in His calendar. They were lost years.

In Acts 13. the Apostle, while making the faithfulness of God very manifest, also traces out the history of their failures, and naturally on this line the years of bondage are included.

8	years	under	Mesopotamia	(Judges 3-8.)
18	"	"	Moab	(" 3-14.)
20	"	"	Caanan	(" 4-3.)
7	"	"	Midian	(" 7-1.)
40	"	"	Philistines	(" 13-1.)
<hr/>				
93				

In addition to the above there was the oppression of the Ammonites for 18 years (chap. 10. 8), but that is distinctly stated to have been on the other side of Jordan only — not truly in the land — and so does not affect the question at all.

If this is the true explanation of the apparent discrepancy it teaches us that all the time that is not lived to God is LOST TIME — God cannot count it; it is a deeply solemn lesson. If the Christian comes under the power of the world, or the flesh, or the things of the earth, which these foes of Israel typify, he is not living according to God, and he will suffer loss. All this will be manifested at the judgment-seat of Christ, where every man's work shall be tried, and where we shall receive the things done in the body "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5. 10). May we each be constrained by the love of Christ not to live unto self, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

"Things Strangled" (Acts 15. 20).

You will notice that the things that the Gentiles are here exhorted to refrain from were things which were contrary to God's rights as Creator, and His order in creation. Idolatry set Him aside entirely; fornication set aside the human relationship that He in the beginning had established for man's blessing; and the eating of things strangled, or blood, took from God that to which He only had a right in the lower creation, and which He reserved to Himself when He

gave flesh to Noah, to be henceforward the food of mankind. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Gen. 9. 4). The heathen practised all these things, being wilfully ignorant of God and His universal laws; but the Christians who were brought out of that darkness into the true knowledge of God had to conduct themselves according to God's expressed will in these things. These were not new laws that were forced upon

them, much less were they a compromise with or accommodation to the clamour of the Jews.

The Christian is free, and may eat what is set before him without question, giving God thanks for that of which he partakes. But if he were asked to join in a feast at which it was boasted that the meat to be eaten was strangled meat—

that is, meat out of which the blood had not been poured—in defiance of God's expressed command, he must refuse. If he did not he would show himself to be lamentably ignorant as to God's rights as Creator, to whom the blood, which is the life, belongs, or indifferent to these rights, which indifference would be sinful. 1 Cor. 10. 25-33 should be a help to you on this subject.

Is the Experience of the "Wretched Man" of Romans 7. true Christian Experience ?

E.W.—In considering Romans 7., many take too little notice of the opening of it, with the result that they mistake the struggles of the latter half of it for true Christian experience, which it is not. Verses 4, 5, and 6 are as important as any that follow, and describe a state of deliverance from bondage, and of happy fruit-bearing and service; this is Christian living, and Christ as risen from the dead is there presented as the One to whom we turn, and in whom we find the power and support of the new life of liberty.

Then there follows a description of the unavailing struggles and poignant sorrow which are more or less the experience of the soul before this happy liberty is known; but this liberty is not the result of these struggles—it is not obtained as a result of them, nor attained to by them, it is the gift of grace entirely, grace that took full cognizance of the fact from the beginning that in us no good dwells. It is the sovereign grace of God brought to us in the gospel.

The sorrowful experience of the chapter is, however, of the greatest use to the soul, for while we are ready enough to accept *theoretically* the truth "in me no good dwells," yet we do not generally turn from efforts at self-improvement to find good in Christ alone until the truth is learnt experimentally. It is by the road of disappointment, defeat, and despair that we are led to the point where we gladly accept not only God's verdict as to ourselves, but

also His way of deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It may be helpful to state briefly the cause of the exercise which the chapter describes. The awakened soul recognizes that the law is good, and owns the justice of its demands, and sets it up as a standard of living to which he earnestly hopes to attain, but he discovers that there is an evil principle within him that refuses to respond to the will of God and hates that which he knows is just and good. His desires are right; but sin within is too strong for him, and repeated failure to attain to his ideal produces the wretchedness from which he cries for deliverance.

It is here that the meaning of the death of Christ comes as a great relief, and the value of the statement "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ that ye should be to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead" (ver. 4) is appreciated.

To be married to the law is to be in the experience of the soul on the ground of *what we are in the flesh* before God, but that bond, if ever it existed in our case, has been dissolved by death, that is, by the death of Christ; for we are viewed as being dead with Him (chap. 6.), and this truth is presented to us that we might not only know that we are *judicially* free from the law and its claims, because those claims have been met in the death of Christ, but that we might also be *practically* free in our

experience, so that we might be to Christ alone.

He has said to His disciples in connection with fruit-bearing "Without Me ye can do nothing." And this is true now—He is the One to whom we must look. He is raised from the dead, and as so raised He is the life-giving Spirit, the leader of a new race, from whom we have sympathy, grace, and support; and as He appears before our souls in all His mighty ability to deliver us from all our distresses, we can thank God through and for Him.

This deliverance is known practically by the Holy Ghost who is given to us; and as we look to Christ, the Holy Spirit is the power of the new life which we have in Christ; and just as every move-

ment of the evil flesh was contrary to the will of God, so every movement of the Spirit within us is according to that will, and our souls find liberty and joy now in doing the will of God; but for this we must walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, minding spiritual things.

The experience of the chapter was certainly not Paul's when he wrote it, or he could not have given thanks to God, as he does at the end of it; and he would have by it contradicted the Scriptures that you quote as to Christian liberty. It was as having got out of this slough of despond that he was able to describe the experience of a man in it. It is therefore after the soul is thus free that true Christian experience is entered upon.

How can I be what we desire?

M.D.C.—We are not sorry to hear that you are dissatisfied with yourself and your spiritual progress, or that you cannot say of yourself what some of your friends can who claim to have received "a baptism of the Spirit." It is not God's intention that you should be satisfied with yourself, but with Christ. He would not have you occupied with yourself at all, even if you could speak of goodness, and power, and ability to serve the Lord, which evidently you cannot, but He would make Christ paramount in your thoughts, and when this takes place everything is right. The Holy Spirit who dwells in you will be unhindered then in His gracious work in and through you, but even then you must not become occupied with this work, but ever keep Christ before you as the one object of your soul. It is on this line that the Holy Spirit will help you, and on none other. Of Him the Lord said, "Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: FOR HE SHALL

RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHOW IT UNTO YOU. All things that the Father hath are mine" (John 16. 13, 14). No statement in the Word is of greater importance than this, for it clearly defines the chief purpose of the coming of the Spirit. He is not here to occupy us with ourselves nor His own indwelling, but with Christ exclusively.

You are to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus the Lord, not in what you are yourself, and the discovery that there is no goodness in yourself will be a help to you to this end, for it will lead you to look only to Christ, the great Deliverer and the One in whom all good dwells. Satan would keep you perpetually occupied with yourself. He would fill your eyes and thoughts with your own weakness and failures in order to hinder you from perceiving the magnificent grace and infinite love of God which is in Christ for you. But as long as you are occupied with yourself you are occupied with bad material, and, if honest, you must of necessity suffer bitter disappointment.

Do not harbour that false and God-dishonouring notion that if you could

improve yourself God would be more favourably disposed towards you. If it were so His grace would be no grace at all. He is full of grace towards you, and all as the outcome of what He is Himself, and He has manifested this grace toward you in Christ knowing all about you. The truth is that when you were as bad as it was possible for a sinner to be—*without strength, ungodly, a sinner*, and an enemy of God (Rom. 5. 6-12) He showed forth His love to you in the most wonderful way possible, for He commended His love to you in the gift and the death of His own Son. And this abides: this love of God is all-triumphant and eternal, strong and changeless as

God Himself, and it is yours—to be the portion of your cup. It is all set forth in Christ to fill and satisfy your heart, and it is in this that you may rest; here you may grow and prosper, and as you do so, your ways will become pleasurable to God, for beholding the glory of the Lord you will be transformed into the same image, you will become morally like Him. It was the outward look of faith that brought the inward peace when first we turned to the Saviour; it is the steady outward look to Him—occupation of heart with Him—that gives present inward joy and rest and produces true and practical sanctification of life. Nothing else will do it.

The Unpardonable Sin.

E.W.—The unpardonable sin, which was blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, was the attributing of the mighty works done on earth by the Lord to Satan; this Mark 3. 30 makes plain: "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

There was evidently a great difference between speaking against the Son of Man and blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. The Son of Man came in grace so lowly that He was prepared to be an object of scorn to those whose eyes had not been open to discern the glory of His person, and was full of pity for men even when they spoke evil of Him, but in the works that He did the unhindered

power of the Holy Spirit was so manifest that the people were compelled to say, "Is not this the Son of David?" But the Pharisees did not want and would not recognize the works of God; they were a generation of vipers, Satan's brood, and they, by their wilful and determined opposition to the light that shone in those wonderful works, put themselves beyond the reach of repentance. They were satisfied to be of their father the devil and his works they did (John 8. 44). They sinned presumptuously, and for such sin the law of Moses provided no sacrifice, and God had no forgiveness.

On Open-air Preaching.

M.H.V.D.—The following "Hints to Open-air Preachers and Helpers," by Walter B. Westcott, will, we think, answer all your questions as to this very important service.

To Preachers.

1. Pray as much before an Outdoor Meeting as you would before an Indoor one.

2. Beware of thinking that anything will do for an Open-air company: this is a fatal and foolish error, much to be deplored.

3. Preach THE WORD, which God will surely own and bless. There is far too little gospel in most open-air addresses. People will listen to an earnest man who has something to say and knows how to say it.

4. Do not use anecdotes and illustrations *too freely*; a cake must not be all currants. Remember that the hearers have souls, and that merely to interest is not enough.

5. Remember that the Gospel is concerning God's Son Jesus Christ our

Lord (Rom. 1. 3); that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1. 24); that He is the way, and no man can come to the Father except by Him (John 14. 6). Then let Christ Himself be your great subject.

6. Amongst your audience will probably be found the careless, the sceptical, the prodigal, the weary, the broken-hearted, the anxious. Be compassionate and tender, but fearless and faithful; speak tremblingly of hell and judgment (never shout and declaim about such terrible realities). Appeal to sinners as a man who yearns for their blessing.

7. Be simple and short, unless some special circumstances induce you to prolong your address, but always stop before your audience and helpers grow weary.

8. Don't attempt to say everything you know; it might take more than half an hour. Some worthy men take Adam and Eve as a foundation for an Address that embraces Noah and the ark, Abraham, Joseph, David, etc., finishing up, invariably, with the Prodigal. Enough is as good as a feast—sometimes better.

9. Finally: Get the message into your heart, and then put your heart into the message.

To Helpers.

1. Do not come to an Open-air meeting listless and prayerless; come to work, to sing, to pray, to watch for souls.

2. Gather close round, especially in front of the preacher, so that the crowd may come up behind you.

3. Be manifestly more interested in what the speaker is saying than any of the crowd.

4. If you can preach and are not asked to preach do not be annoyed or injured. A wise and dependent leader may be trusted to invite the speakers whom he thinks most suitable for the particular time, place and audience.

5. Do not move about amongst the

crowd during the preaching; this is very distracting. Wait until the end of the meeting before giving out tracts, etc.; or let one or two stand some little distance away from the crowd to catch any who may leave.

6. At the close of the meeting try to get into conversation with some of the hearers, using tact, and being ever in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Many Open-air meetings are utterly spoilt by long pauses and fruitless appeals to individuals to fill up the gap. Such a deplorable state of things ought never to occur. Another serious offence is committed when a brother steps into the ring unasked. No Open-air meeting should be held unless someone is responsible for the conduct of it. This responsibility he should feel, and others should recognise. But the one responsible must be very dependent upon God, and a wise man.

“Let all things be done decently, and in order.”

Prayer and Singing.

To the foregoing we may add, in reference to your enquiry as to prayer and singing, that we think the prayer-meeting should be held behind closed doors before the preaching begins, for then there would be less to distract the heart from its earnest supplications, though the preacher's dependence upon God should be clearly expressed in public, and this is done by public prayer; and we have found sometimes that prayer instead of singing between two addresses has been a great help.

We have seen meetings spoilt by too much singing. You go out to PREACH the gospel, and unless your singing is above the average the people do not want to hear it. We have seen interested audiences disperse when a hymn has been announced that might have been held by an earnest address. On the other hand, a hearty song of praise to God is often a great help; in this matter wisdom will be given for the occasion if there is dependence upon God.

Studies in the Psalms.—Second Book

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 56.-60.

THESE five Psalms under the title Michtam, follow appropriately the four Maschil Psalms in which, as we have seen, the character of the enemies which oppose the saints is described. The same opposition is in view here, and these five Michtam Psalms seem to minister to the faith in the power of which the godly become conquerors. Physical force in the shape of armies has no place in this victory, for at the time to which these prophetic Scriptures refer "he that killeth with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. 13. 10). It is not otherwise in the present reign of grace, whatever form the enmity may take "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5. 4). In beautiful accord with this, the first Psalm of our present series points out the word of God as that to which faith must cling, a point emphasized by repetition in verses 4 and 10.

The title tells the period of David's life in which the Psalm was written, and it is interesting to read it in connection with Psalm 34., which we learn from the title refers to the same time. In the history we may discover the failure of faith in Israel's king. In spite of the very remarkable way in which God had protected him, as we read in 1 Samuel 19. 18-24; he fabricates a falsehood for his friend to tell Saul, (chap. 20.), and so conducts himself in chapter 21. that, as he admits, he occasioned the death of all the persons of the priestly family save Abiathar, and in his fear of the Philistine whose protection he had sought, in mistrust of God, he feigns himself mad in order to escape. His deceit is allowed to meet with success, and this Psalm describes the restoration of the humiliated king to faith in God and His word: "through God will I

praise His word" (vers. 4, 10). The anointing oil and the word of God by Samuel had declared His destiny (1 Sam. 16. 1), and in this way the vows of God were upon him, for he had accepted the office and could confide in divine power to bring to pass all that had been foretold. Truly God had delivered his soul from death; He would also deliver his feet from falling, that he might walk before Him in the light of the living. A further stage in the restoration of David's soul is described in Psalm 34., as is evident.

In the practical application of these principles to ourselves we should remember that each believer has his mission in this world, in which he is supported by divine power, a power available to faith. Further, verse 8 teaches us that if our path is shadowed by sorrows our very tears are counted by a God who loves and cares. As to verse 12, though we should be getting off the ground of Christianity to be taking vows, yet it is essential to the maintenance of a definite path to acknowledge and respond to the absoluteness of the claims of grace: "We are not our own, we are bought with a price."

PSALM 57. We learn from the title that this was written at the same time as Psalm 142, but in our present study a much greater spiritual elevation is reached in the soul of the writer. It is divided into two sections, each ending with the same refrain and separated by verse 6, which shows how the enemies of the faithful fall Haman-like into the snare prepared for others. One great lesson of the Psalm—stranger to a Jew than a Christian—is that salvation must be looked for from heaven; this is the teaching of Philipians 3. 21.

In our Psalm hope from any earthly source is gone, and God in His own

dwelling is looked to in confidence. Naturally, we turn to man for help and lose the blessing God would give us. The faith of verse 3 leads to the "fixed" heart of verse 7, happy and triumphant praise follows, of which the Gentile nations are witnesses (ver. 10). In verses 5 and 11 God's glory is desired in the highest heaven and universally on earth; this will be fulfilled when the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings and the Son of Man of Psalm 8. fills heaven and earth with the glory of God.

PSALM 58. This is the call for God to arise in judgment, because in the place whence judgment should issue righteousness is silent; this is the evident meaning of verse 1, whichever of the various renderings is preferred. The wickedness present to the writer is traced to its source in corrupt human nature, with a possible allusion to Satanic inspiration in the serpent's poison. Then, in language impossible to the Christian but quite suitable to the time prophetically contemplated, God is entreated to deal with all this opposition unsparingly, with the result that men shall say: "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God who judgeth the earth." The failure of the responsible witnesses on earth necessitates the witness of God Himself in judgment. Thus, when all is hopeless on man's side, faith is instructed what to pray for and expect.

In PSALM 59. the prophetic spirit passes far beyond the occasion of writing mentioned in the title to tell of the judgment of God on all the nations. Prayer for this result is taught in verse 5 to Jehovah, God of Hosts, the God of Israel. This judgment on the nations is for the instruction of "My people" (ver. 2), just as the judgment of the wicked among the Jews in the previous Psalm is evidence to the Gentile that there is a God who judgeth the earth. In verse 13 the petition for their consumption, which seems to contradict verse 2, may refer to the destruction of their power and their national position.

Faith assures the believer of his security in spite of all his foes by the protecting power of Jehovah (*cf.* vers. 8 and 9 with 16 and 17).

PSALM 60. is worthy of more detailed examination. The standpoint of the writer is seen in the first three verses. Some disaster had overtaken the armies of Israel, which David's piety attributes to the displeasure of God. True piety looks beyond secondary causes, and owns God's hand in all things: "Thou hast showed Thy people hard things." This bowing of the will to God always leads to intelligence in prayer, so at once two pleas are presented to God which, being according to His will, He hears; and the petitioner receives the answer in his own soul at once, though at times the public response may, in God's wisdom, be delayed. Verse 4 begins with the statement always true in the history of the saints: "Thou hast given a banner to them that *fear* Thee." This holy fear of God in a day of confusion is just that to which He has respect (see Malachi, where the word "fear" occurs seven times, but especially 3. 16 and 4. 2).

With the Jew the testimony had its own character, but in our case it consists in the presentation of Christ by life and lip, as the Apostle could say, "that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." The secret of this testimony is given, according to our Psalm, to those who fear Him, truly a good deposit as spoken of in 2 Timothy 1. 14. The plea which obtains God's answer is "because of the truth," referring either to His faithfulness, to His promises, or simply in the sense of that which is revealed, as we find it particularly in the Epistles of John. How deeply important that the servant of the Lord should have faith in the power of God to display this banner on earth that the true knowledge of Himself should be ministered towards others. The second plea is based on His unchanging love for His own; "that Thy beloved ones may be delivered; save with Thy right hand, and

hear me." At once God speaks in His holiness, for the moral state of His people is in accord with Himself, "I will rejoice," and the division and possession of the land follows, as affirmed in Jeremiah 32. 41, "with His whole heart and with His whole soul." Well may we sing :

"It is the Father's joy to bless."

In verse 2 we see Israel weaned from human aid, looking only to their God,

for vain is the help of man. In the day of the coming battle victory is assured: "He it is that shall tread down our enemies." What an encouragement these Psalms are to the faith of God's saints in their trial will be evident.

It may be noticed, in conclusion, that the latter half of two Psalms of our present series, 57. and 60., are put together to form Psalm 108., the second of the fifth book. In that position it is perfectly suitable to its connections.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 23.

(H. J. VINE).

The Banner of God.

NO sooner does the salvation and blessing of Jerusalem rise before the mind of the prophet than the obstacles which are in the way are also seen. Therefore it is now said with energy and intensity, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; *lift up a Standard* [or a Banner] for the peoples. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the end of the earth, say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh" (chap. 62. 10, 11). This passage speaks of a short season full of tumult and slaughter; attempts will be made to take the city; but salvation will swiftly come; for the Banner of God is to be lifted up!

This remarkable Banner is specially spoken of all through Isaiah; and in a peculiar way. If there were no other proof of unity of authorship of the prophecy, this one instance would be enough. The word is but once translated "*banner*" in Isaiah; six times "*ensign*"; and three times "*standard*." It would have been better had the translators kept all through to the one word "BANNER." We have seen how the personal "SIGN" unites the two main parts of the prophecy: we shall now see that the truth of The Banner of God does so likewise.

The first mention of it is in Isaiah 5. 26; "He will lift up a *Banner* to the nations." The last mention is in our chapter (62. 10); "Lift up a *Banner* for the peoples;" this is in view of the salvation and blessing of the city. So in chapter 49. 22. God's Banner is set up to the peoples, and they bring the sons and daughters of Israel to Jerusalem. The last mention but one, however, shows an aggressive enemy on the scene; "When *the enemy* shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a *Banner* against Him" (chap. 59. 19). A reference to Isaiah (1) will show the effect of this: the enemy "shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of *the Banner*, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (chap. 31. 9).

And now, without delaying to examine every mention of this most marvellous Banner, let us turn to the second chapter in which it is found (chap. 11. 10); "There shall be a *root of Jesse*, standing as a *Banner* of the peoples." Here we see who the Banner is. The Root of Jesse and of David is our Lord Jesus Christ; He is the Banner of God; He shall drive away and destroy the enemies of God: He shall gather and bless the people of God. Through Him shall all nations be blessed.

Even when the question is raised in

heaven as to who is worthy to open the book of this world's government, and to break its seven seals, the answer is, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, *the Root of David*, has prevailed to open the book and its seven seals" (Rev. 5. 5.). Again, when He is about to come from heaven He says, "I am *the Root* and the *Offspring of David*" (Rev. 22. 16). But what is so striking is that Isaiah 53. 2 points us to this One (who shall be seen in His triumph and glory soon), in His lowliness and loveliness here, in His humiliation, "*as a Tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry ground.*"

Even amidst the brightness and brilliance of the great glory of God, He shall ever be known as the meek and lowly. Yea, even as the King He is "meek" (Matt. 21. 5) and "lowly" (Zech. 9. 9); "*the Root of Jesse.*" Men thought they had got rid of the Seed Royal; but God raised Him from among the dead; He is now hidden in the heavens; and the time of His showing to Israel will soon come; then they shall know Him in *the height of His glory*: but never forget *the depth of His humiliation*.

"The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to acquire the remnant of His people." "He shall set up *a Banner* to the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (chap. 11. 11, 12). It is to be noticed that this glorious Banner in both parts of Isaiah has Israel specially in view: nevertheless, it is lifted up to attract the attention of the nations and the peoples also; for it is to bring in the blessing of the whole earth. We read in verses 9 and 10: "THE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA. AND IN THAT DAY THERE SHALL BE A ROOT OF JESSE STANDING AS A BANNER OF THE PEOPLES: TO IT SHALL THE NATIONS SEEK: AND HIS REST SHALL BE GLORY."

This gladdening and glorious Banner shall finally unfold its royal purple in

widespread peace and prosperity, righteousness and joy [for Israel and for the nations, for the peoples of the earth.

Of Israel and its metropolis blessed under this divine Banner, it is said: "They shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called the Sought Out, A city not forsaken" (62. 12). Happy the people and the city that are so favoured: thrice happy the soul who, already knowing the Saviour, while He is rejected, can say, "HIS BANNER OVER ME IS LOVE."

In the day of which we have spoken Israel will boast in Christ as their *King*: now the assembly boasts in Him as her glorified *Head*. Israel, as a nation, will know Him as her *Messiah*: the assembly, as a living organism, the body and bride of Christ, knows Him as her *Bridegroom*. Israel will be blessed under Him *on earth*: the assembly will share His glory *in heaven*. But it must be remarked that all is not the church or the assembly which claims to be such. The assembly *is not* where the assembly is made everything of: the assembly *is* where Christ the Son of God is exalted. The true assembly boasts in Him, not in herself. It can be admitted that there is a Roman church, a Lutheran church, an Anglican church, a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church, etc.: but "*the*" church, "*the*" assembly, is that which Christ the Son of the living God is building upon Himself—the Rock, revealed to souls by the Father, not by the teaching or the usurped authority of mere officials. The Holy Spirit who dwells in "*the*" assembly there exalts Christ the Son of God, who is the Head of the Church, received into heavenly glory; as He said, when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, "*He shall glorify Me.*"

"This thence—now Christ is gone on high,
Redemption's work complete—
The Spirit brings His glory nigh,
To those who for Him wait."

It is such ministry which forms and feeds the assembly—calls it out and builds it up.

Silence in Heaven.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 9.

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.”—(Rev. 8. 16.)

THE harpers pause, the songs of the elders cease, the living creatures are silent; there is a hush in those heavenly courts, silence reigns for half an hour; but it is the silence of expectancy, premonitory of some great event. It follows the breaking of the seventh and last seal; after which the book of God's ways with the earth is unrolled to the end, and the great actors in those tragic scenes revealed.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (Rev. 8. 3).

Hitherto, beyond taking the book and breaking its seals, there has been no personal action of the Lamb. Now John beholds Him in *angelic form* exercising priestly functions. This reminds us that the activities of heaven are again with earthly saints, for visions of the Lord were often of old in angelic guise.

Jacob connects an “Angel” with redemption (Gen. 48. 16); David with preservation (Ps. 34. 7); Isaiah with salvation: “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them” (Isa. 63. 9). Very fittingly the Lamb thus presents Himself in the form of an Angel-priest. Having tasted in spirit when on earth, anticipatively, the sorrows of the godly remnant, it will be a comfort to them to know that He can enter into their griefs, and will in due time appear for their salvation.

His priestly action as He moves from the sacrificial altar to the altar of incense may account for the “silence in heaven.” Philo tells us that whilst the priests in the temple burned incense, silence reigned among the people. Their song ceased when the burnt offering no longer ascended with its

sweet odours from the brazen altar (2 Chron. 29. 27, 28). So here; no sacrifice is on the brazen altar—the fire alone remains! This fire poured out on the earth in judgment will consume men; the throne, being no longer a throne of grace, from its thunderings of Divine wrath with lightning rapidity will shake the earth until it quakes exceedingly.

What a difference too in the saints' prayers! Now we pray for blessing on our enemies, then they will cry for vengeance on them. Now our great High Priest—Jesus the Son of God—“to all our prayers and praises adds His sweet perfume,” and answers of mercy and grace flow down to us. Then seven angels, who like Gabriel, stand in the presence of God, will appear with seven war trumpets. These war trumpets had a double mission: they not only sounded an alarm to the people, but had a voice Godward. When their sound was heard it was a call to God to intervene on Israel's behalf when assaulted by an enemy (Num. 10. 9). As each blast is now sounded, indications are given that God “remembers” His downtrodden people.

The first sounded, and a fiery hail mingled with blood was poured out on a third part of the civilized world. This judgment carries our thoughts back to God's dealings with Pharaoh, Israel's earliest oppressor (Exod. 9. 24). Then the fire ran along upon the ground, and the hail smote every herb and brake every tree. Then its action was in a limited sphere; Goshen was not touched, God's people were immune—His enemies alone were visited; so here only a circumscribed area called the “third part” is the subject of judgment.

The Roman earth was divided into three parts: Eastern, Central, and

Western. Italy, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and north-western Africa were included in the Western division. This ancient empire is to be revived, but "it does not necessarily follow that it will have the exact boundaries it had of old."

On the western part the hail, blood, and fire will fall, consuming in its destructive path "trees" and "green grass." "Grass" is descriptive of the masses, and "trees" of those elevated above them. "The people" are said to be "grass" (Isa. 40. 7), whilst Pharaoh and the Assyrian Kings are both described as "trees" in Ezekiel 31. Rulers and subjects will equally feel the desolating effects of this storm in answer to the blast of the first trumpet.

A second trumpet sounds, and a burning mountain plunged into the sea deals death and destruction to one out of three of those with whom it comes in contact. In a sea of blood a third part of the creatures die, and a third part of the ships are destroyed. Conceive in your mind Vesuvius—belching forth flames and pouring out burning lava—violently plunged into a Mediterranean harbour, and you will have some idea of the figurative meaning of this awful catastrophe.

In Old Testament imagery Babylon is described as a "burnt mountain" (see Jer. 51. 2-5). The "sea" is a synonym of the restless state of wicked men (Isa. 57. 20). "Ships" indicate commercial prosperity between nations. The mountain here described is "burning," not burnt; hence the destruction it deals out to those with whom it comes in contact. It will not only affect commerce, but it will make the condition of men like a sanguinary sea by the violent deaths it causes. This judgment is specially on the "sea" of nations outside the Roman earth, who are without ordered government, living in rebellion to constituted authority.

A third blast sounds; John sees a flaming, torch-like star, called Wormwood, fall from its appointed place in the heaven and embitter both fountains

and rivers. Fountains are the sources, rivers the channels by which fertility and fruitfulness are produced; they are synonyms for that which ministers to men life and blessing. A "star" is an exalted personage, such as the King of Babylon, who is named Lucifer—or day-star—because he aspired to supremacy over the other kings or stars, aiming to be like the Most High (Isa. 14. 12-14). Wise men, or teachers, are also compared to the "brightness of the firmament" (in other words, to the stars, Dan. 12. 3).

The fall of an exalted teacher from among the lights of the moral firmament would answer to the description of this "great star" termed "Wormwood." A wandering star is one travelling outside its orbit uncontrolled. Here, this "great star," with its unsteady light, having fallen from its assigned place leads others astray, and they become, like him, wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude, ver. 13). Instead of being a source of light and blessing, he will embitter things as needful to men's happiness and comfort as rivers and fountains. Jude speaks of some who are "twice dead." Death in its first stage is moral separation from God, the source of life and blessing. "Many men died of the waters because they were made bitter" may mean that they have deliberately renounced light and truth, and are thus "twice dead;" whilst actual separation of soul and body may also take place.

The shrill blast of the fourth trumpet rings out, and the whole system of supreme, derived, and subordinate authority—sun, moon, and stars—in the third part of the Roman earth becomes a scene of darkness, without a single ray of light from the governing powers. All is disorder; panic reigns supreme; man's boasted progress ends in confusion, anarchy, and lawlessness. An impotent government in a great crisis is serious; but no government at all is infinitely worse. No wonder that men's hearts fail them for fear of those things coming

on the earth. The condition of things is compared to a total eclipse lasting day and night; darkness is spread like a funeral pall over Europe at the utter collapse of the ruling powers, and the break-up of every form of government.

But the worst has not come, for John hears a powerful voice, and beholds a swift eagle—not angel—winging his way through mid-heaven, crying, “*Woe, WOE, WOE*” to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpets which are yet to sound (Rev. 8. 13).

The first “*woe*” trumpet ushers in a star—not seen falling, but fallen from heaven—who has the key of the bottomless pit. Some have thought this star is Satan. We gather it is not Satan, but an exalted personage under his immediate influence.

Satan is not now in the bottomless pit, nor is he in the lake of fire. He is the prince of the power of the air whose activities are bent on blinding the minds of men. Serpent-like, he assumes to be a minister of light seeking thus to corrupt the minds of teachers of religion, philosophy, and science. How well he succeeds is proclaimed in their sayings and writings. Then he will act directly in his true character by means of this fallen star, and open the pit’s mouth. The baneful influences emanating therefrom are compared to smoke, like that of a great furnace, darkening the very essentials of life and happiness, such as the air and the sun. Out of the smoke will come scorpion-like locusts, whose special mission is not to kill, but torment for five dreary months, the men who have *not* the seal of God in their foreheads. Death to end their sorrows they would eagerly welcome; nay, earnestly seek; but this exemption from torment shall be denied them. They have caused sorrows to others, now their turn has come. They had refused heaven and chosen this world, now the god of it shows he is a lion and a dragon; he comes out in his true character as “*Abaddon*”

—destruction; and “*Apollyon*”—destroyer—energizing with Satanic power this man who is the medium by which he will torment men’s minds.

The men with the seal of God in their forehead will be exempt; God will preserve them from these blinding influences.

The dismal sound of a sixth trumpet is followed by a voice proceeding from the four horns of the golden altar, commanding the angel which had the trumpet to unbind four “*angels*” or messengers—which are restrained until a given day, month, or year at the Euphratean river—and let them loose to do their deadly work. John beholds horses—not angels—with lion-like heads and serpent-like tails, fire, smoke, and brimstone issuing out of their mouths, their riders protected by breastplates of fire and brimstone. He also heard this vast host numbered, and the number was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. On they marched, sweeping away the “*third part*” in their desolating march through the Latin empire, leaving behind them misery and death.

What is man’s answer to these sore plagues? Rampant blasphemy, and utter indifference. Unaffected by them, men will pursue their evil courses, repent not of their works, but persist in idolatry, murder, sorcery, and fornication. The first “*woe*” scourged the unbelieving portion of the Jewish people; this will fall upon a more widely extended sphere. Men had refused heaven and chosen earth; so the darkening influences and awful delusions producing cruel, harassing torments had visited them, but alas! left them unrepentant—another proof that hearts untouched by grace will be unmoved by judgment. The carnal mind is enmity against God; that mind the lost will carry with them to the lake of fire. Eternal judgment will not change man’s nature; repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will be unknown in the abode of the lost. What a warning to men to repent *now*!

To Know Him.

(HENRY J. VINE).

Why is it so often urged upon believers that they should know the Lord? Do not all true believers know Him?

ALL true believers know our Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour most surely; but it is, nevertheless, of the utmost importance that we should all go on to know Him better. Our spiritual prosperity will be ensured thereby. Indeed, we are exhorted, as those who are beloved of God, to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is as we thus increase in the knowledge of Him, that grace and peace are multiplied to us (2 Peter 1. 2). *Grace* has justified and saved us; *peace* is ours; but an abundant multiplication of grace and peace is open to us in the knowledge of Him.

The Apostle Paul was a devoted servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had known Him as his Lord and Saviour for many years when he wrote to the believers at Phillipi. Of his own present purpose he says to them (chap. 3. 10), "*That I may know Him.*" Before he trusted Christ there were many things connected with him—as Saul the scholar, Saul of Tarsus, Saul the Pharisee—of which most men would boast; things which bring fame to men. He counted them all loss on account of Christ. "Yea, doubtless," he says, "I count all things but loss for THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD" (ver. 8). Having believed on Him, Christ Jesus became the governing Object of his heart and mind. He knew Him in whom he had believed, and still he diligently pursued the precious knowledge of Him, with which there was no knowledge to compare. Choosing one of the choicest of expressions, he calls it, "*the excellency of the knowledge.*"

A friend says to you, "Do you know So-and-so?" "Yes," you reply; "but only slightly." "Ah" says your friend, "If you knew him intimately,

you would say there is none to compare with him." Much more is this true as to our Lord Jesus Christ; infinitely more so. As we increase in the excellency of the knowledge of Himself (not simply to know *about* Him, but to know Him), we shall sing:

"Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art."

WHY THE ASCENDED CHRIST GAVE THE GIFTS.

Having triumphed over Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ went up on high, and gave gifts to men; that, being brought to God, they might come to the knowledge of Himself, the Son of God. He that ascended first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He is the same who has ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

The true exercise of gift, therefore, is to lead saints on to know Him. But the mere urging of this upon souls is not what is meant. It is one thing to press that this is necessary; it is another thing to really minister Christ to souls. For this we must grow ourselves. As He is precious and excellent to our own hearts, others will be benefitted by the overflow.

Christ gave apostles and prophets for the foundations of the faith (Eph. 2. 20). He also gave the evangelist, and the double gift of shepherd and teacher, that the work of the ministry might be carried on (Eph. 4. 11, 12); until the end in view is reached: "until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of *the knowledge of the Son of God.*" Then is seen the full-grown man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ. No organization of men can produce this. No special school of teaching can bring it about. As long as we are spiritual babes, we are liable to be

affected by systematized error, whether calling itself "new light," or "advanced teaching"; but as we *hold the truth in love*, we shall grow up to Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ; and holding in faith and affection every member of His body, as dear to Him, we shall seek in every right way the benefit of all.

OUR SAVIOUR.

As we have said, each one begins with the knowledge of Christ as a personal Saviour. And it is a most blessed moment, when we first come to know Him thus. This secures all else. Without this, eternal woe is sure. Salvation is in Him alone. Through faith in Him, forgiveness, justification, and a heavenly inheritance are ours. We shall not come into judgment, for He has borne the judgment which we deserved on account of our sins. He came not to judge, but to save. He has put away sin by His sacrifice. *He died to save us*; and now, raised from among the dead, He is in the glory of God. The darkness of the cross has passed away for ever; and He is in the unclouded sunshine of God's favour. He is our righteousness. His place is ours. By grace we are saved.

We have been reconciled to God by His death; and *He now lives to save us* daily, from all that would hinder our joy in the blessed God, who provided such a Saviour.

And more. *He is coming for us as Saviour* from Heaven. We look for Him thus. In the twinkling of an eye; by the same great power which he has to subdue all things He will change our bodies of humiliation, and transform them, so that they shall be like His own body of glory. Our blessed Lord will do this. He will do it too, before "the wrath to come" sweeps over this world. Before the hour strikes for that awful time He will take us hence. He is our Deliverer from the coming wrath. Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved by Him from wrath (Rom. 5. 9).

We praise the grace which "*hath saved us*"; we trust the living One who "*is able to save us*"; we look for Him who *will save us*. But whether past, present, or future, all our "salvation is in Christ Jesus."

"Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him,
Who can tell how much we owe Him?"

OUR ADVOCATE.

Having received Christ, the Spirit of God's Son is given to us, and the cry "Abba, Father," rises to God from our hearts. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." This perfect love and this unchanging relationship are ours now to rejoice in. "Behold, *now* are we the children of God" (1 John 3. 2).

We have been taken out of the darkness of this world. We have been brought to God's marvellous light. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin; and we can now walk happily in the light as God is in the light. But if we presumptuously say we are without sin, that would only prove the truth is not in us; for that very truth would give us to recognize and hate the sin that is there; and enable us to walk in self-judgment. The precious truth is made known to us in order that we may not sin, and to maintain us walking in the enjoyment of the love of the Father, and in the nearness which belongs to the blessed relationship which is ours; a relationship, thank God, which can never be broken.

We may, however, lose the joy of it all through sin. It is just here that *our Advocate* prevails on our behalf. The advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Father is provided for this very thing. "If any one sin we have an Advocate ["Patron," or "Comforter," as in John 14. 16, etc.] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2. 1). The tender sensibilities which are ours as the children of God, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, give us a painful sense of the demerit of sin, and causes

us to seek the Father's presence in confession. How comforting to know at such a distressful time that the righteous One, our Saviour, is *our Advocate with the Father*.

We confess; the Father forgives. He is faithful and righteous in so doing. Our present Advocate is also the One who is the propitiation for our sins. So, not only does the Father restore us to the fulness of joy before Him, which He would always have to be our portion; but He undertakes, as we thus come to Him, to "cleanse us from all [or every] unrighteousness."

The grace and love and tenderness belonging to the family of the Father; the communion and joy of that relationship, with its deep divine intimacy, might easily be spoiled for us as we pass through a cold, quarrelling, sinful world like this, had we not a prevailing Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. It is because of Him that we are kept in any true sense of the Father's love at all. Blessed be His holy name for ever.

OUR HIGH PRIEST.

We have spoken of Him as our *Saviour in glory*; as our *Advocate with the Father*; He is also our *High Priest before God*. Time and space would fail us now to speak of Him as our Lord, our Head, our Shepherd. To tell of His glory as the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Son of God, is beyond our present purpose. So great is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, the Creator Son, over all God blessed for ever, the One who loves us and came near to us to bless us, that the Father alone can fully comprehend the infinite perfection of our adorable Saviour. The Holy Spirit would teach the delivered saint much—yea, very much—concerning His glory; but in the impenetrable depths of His divine being, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." We rejoice that this is so; our Saviour is so great.

But His greatness is not such that it

puts Him away far beyond us altogether. Nay, it does but enhance the love which brought him near to us in our need. When sinful and guilty He became *our Saviour*; and when erring as the children of God, *our Advocate*; when weak and weary through infirmity, *our High Priest*. All this endears Him to the believing heart. We have not an High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our infirmities, for when He was a man upon earth He was in like manner tempted in all things—sin apart; and now, having gone into heaven, He is still a Man; Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, able to help those who are tempted.

"With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above;
His heart is filled with tenderness,
His very name is Love."

Oh, that we may indeed be led on to know Him better, to grow in the knowledge of Himself! Then our happy hearts shall be kept in the freshness of first love. How He values this we see in His tender pleadings through Jeremiah, with His people of old. Some may call it sentiment. Well, it is truly divine sentiment. They may have forgotten, but He says, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, *when thou wentest after ME*" (Jer. 2. 2). Then, sorrowfully, it is said, "It is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (ver. 19). To the highly favoured assembly at Ephesus it is said, "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2. 4).

Where love is active, the heart grows in appreciation of its object. May this be so with us, through God's rich grace. "*'Tis eternal life to know Him.*"

"THUS SAITH THE LORD: LET NOT THE WISE MAN GLORY IN HIS WISDOM, NEITHER LET THE MIGHTY MAN GLORY IN HIS MIGHT, LET NOT THE RICH MAN GLORY IN HIS RICHES; BUT LET HIM THAT GLORIETH GLORY IN THIS, THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH ME" (Jer. 9. 23, 24).

He Dwelt Among Us.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."—(John 1. 14).

WHAT an amazing fact is revealed to us in this short sentence. He who WAS when time was not, at whose fiat the pendulum of time began to swing, who set all the forces of nature into motion, and made the universe pulsate with life; Who is Himself personally the exact expression of the infinite thoughts and eternal glory of the Godhead—the ever-existing Word—He became flesh and dwelt among us, taking part in flesh and blood that He might come near to us without making us afraid; it is this that fills the souls of those who have received Him with wonder and worship.

He did not come as a king might come to visit His subjects in their cottage homes, speaking a kindly word to them, and then passing on and forgetting them: *He dwelt among us.* There was no aloofness about Him; He entered into the circumstances of life; He entered into the joys and sorrows of men, as well as into their houses. He came near to them, became infinitely accessible to even the poorest and the worst, *He dwelt among us full of grace and truth.*

It is recorded in this Gospel and in none other—a significant fact—that He accepted an invitation to a marriage feast. It is recorded also in this Gospel and in none other—a significant fact—that He wept beside the grave of the dead. These two—the marriage feast and the covered grave—are the brightest and the darkest episodes in human life, and He "dwelt among us" in them, and in them He manifested His glory, and "His disciples believed on Him." And were there any days or circumstances between these two extremes from which He withdrew and in which He was not available to men?

We say with deepest reverence that He took men as He found them; He demanded no special treatment from

them; He was full of compassion for their sorrows, He did not grow impatient at their ignorance and weakness, nor condemn them for their sins.

He was ready to set the TRUTH before a man of the Pharisees when he came to Him, and was so full of GRACE that He did not rebuke the cowardice that made Him creep out in the darkness for that memorable interview.

His GRACE took Him to Sychar's well to talk with a lonely and tired sinner there, and He poured the TRUTH into her soul so abundantly that she returned to her city a new creature, with Himself as her absorbing theme. And mark well His way in that story. The distance was great to where that solitary sinner sighed and sorrowed, yet no camel or ass bore him over the weary miles, for He was a poor man; He must take that journey, every step of it, on foot; and tired and hungry and thirsty He met her—met her as one wayfarer would meet another—and talked with her so gently that she felt neither restraint nor fear in His presence. How truly He "*dwelt among us,*" and how *full of grace and truth* was He in that dwelling; for let not His lowliness and the poverty of His circumstances, and the way in which He "*dwelt among us,*" hide from our souls the glory of His person. He was "THE WORD," "THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER."

What a never-failing, ever-growing charm this Gospel of Gospels has for our souls! How infinite are the heights in which it takes its rise, how deep are the depths into which it flows. Grace and truth are there in Him who dwelt among us, even while he still dwelt in the bosom of the Father as the Only Begotten Son. He has brought the love of that bosom to us, and revealed it, not as something to be admired on the

Sabbath day in the temple, but as that which would labour seven days in the week, seeking no rest, in order to relieve the needs of men and fill their souls with joy. And TRUTH was in Him—He came from the highest height of God's glory to reveal it; and GRACE also—He stooped to the deepest depth of our need to meet it; and He has filled the immeasurable distance between the height and the depth with the light of His own glory.

We speak not here of the time when He left the dwellings of men, and passed alone into the darkness as the sinner—the scapegoat bearing our guilt into the land uninhabited; when, without a friend or comforter, He, who had been the friend of all, was smitten of God and forsaken for our sakes. That, indeed, was the great purpose of His coming, and to fulfil that purpose He set His face steadfastly, and the fact that that was to be the end of His life here, and that He knew it, makes all the more wonderful that continuous self-forgetting service amongst men. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" summed up His life day by day until the end.

That which He declared here abides for us. What He was He is, and what He was the Father is; for He said "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

How infinitely attractive to our souls has the Father become since He has been revealed to us so blessedly in JESUS, who dwelt among us.

Death and resurrection have not changed Him. See Him standing upon the banks of Tiberias. Yonder upon the deep toil His disciples, dispirited and forlorn. It was lack of faith that took them out to fish that night, and their labour had been in vain. But does He rebuke them? Nay; He fills their nets, as the mighty Creator; then, as tenderly as a mother caring for her weary child, He addresses Himself to their need. They were cold and He lighted a fire to warm them; they were hungry and His own hand prepared a meal for them; and He sat in the midst of them and fed them Himself. And there was a backslider amongst them—indeed, they were all backsliders—but this did not change His love; and they were to rest—not in what they were but in what He was, not in their love to Him but His love to them. And so have we (John 21).

How gladly we bring to Him, our Saviour, who is so incomparably blessed, our tribute of praise :

*"Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art ;
Replenished are Thy lips with grace
And full of love Thy tender heart.
God ever blest ! we bow the knee,
And own all fulness dwells in Thee."*

"In the Beginning was the Word."

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle John, deservedly compared to an eagle, has lifted his enunciation of the truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the other three. The other three Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as Man. Of His Godhead they said but few things. But John, as if He found it oppressive to walk on earth, has opened His treatise as it were with a peal of thunder ; he has raised himself not merely above earth and the whole compass of the air and heaven, but even above every angel-host and every order of the invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by whom all things were made, in that sentence "In the beginning was the Word."

(Augustine).

The Word—(John 1. 1).

The Word is not merely a divine Being—He is God. Thus from HIS ETERNAL EXISTENCE "*In the beginning was the Word,*"—we ascend to

HIS DISTINCT PERSONALITY—"and the Word was with God"—and finally to the full truth of HIS SUBSTANTIAL GODHEAD—"and the Word was God."

Two Hundred Wise Men.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

MUCH is said, and rightly, of the two hundred men of Issachar who had "understanding of the times," and who knew, as we may read in 1 Chronicles 12. 35, "what Israel ought to do," for, to have such an understanding and to know just exactly what to do in a season of crisis and perplexity is clearly a matter of supreme importance. It is the lack of this which has brought about many a disaster, while, on the other hand, the possession of it has resulted in victory and peace.

Let us consider our chapter, for it is one of the most interesting in the chequered history of Israel. It gives us particulars of the conduct, on a certain occasion, not only of the tribe of Issachar, but of all the others, not excepting the priestly tribe of Levi. Its burden is a general rally round David, whose fortunes, if we may so describe them, have suddenly undergone a mighty change.

Hunted by King Saul from place to place, followed by a handful of nobodies, and living constantly within "one step of death," his prospects were very dark; but now, Saul being killed, and himself the secretly anointed king, the way to power is thrown open to him.

But enormous difficulties stood in that way. No doubt he was known as the vanquisher of Goliath and victor over the Philistines in the famous valley of Elah; but, besides that, he was but a guerilla-leader, and captain of some four hundred outlaws, whose one business was, apparently, to subvert the throne of the reigning and popularly-chosen king. It might fairly be questioned what headway such an one could expect to make in the face of these barriers. How could he turn the tide of public opinion, or sway the masses in his favour? The thing looked impossible.

And yet it came about! The day had come for this fugitive, this hated,

dreaded, persecuted son of Jesse, to end his wanderings and to mount the throne.

But how? Let us read one verse (7) in chapter 17: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over My people Israel." This explains it all. David had a wonder-working God in Jehovah, One to whom there is no impossibility; and whatever may have been the failure of faith in the bosom of David during the days of King Saul's persecution, yet the purpose of God, as to him, must assuredly be accomplished.

"I took thee from the sheeppcote . . . that thou shouldest be ruler over My people."

"When He makes bare His arm
Who shall His word withstand?"

No power can withstand that arm; and so the popular, humanly-chosen king was thereby set aside in order that the man of God's choice should fill his place.

How deeply interesting it ever is to watch the gradual revolution of the wheel of God's designs!

Is it wrong to think that the two hundred men of Issachar, these men who "understood the times," had been carefully noting the revolution of this wheel? Had they not detected something fatal in Saul's career, something unstable in the *vox populi* which demanded his kingship, something painfully deficient in him who "enquired not at the ark" of God during his forty years of rule? Had they not perceived something else than a "madman" in the sweet psalmist of Israel; something more than an outlaw in that most loyal of subjects; more than a bandit in the kindly wanderer? Yes; they were men of understanding. They read the times wisely. They appre-

hended aright the intention of God. They knew what Israel ought to do. And what was that? What amid all the national or tribal perplexities of the moment was the one distinct, clear, obvious, all-commanding issue?

What was the one outstanding act which should settle every feud, bury every hatchet, heal every sore, and produce universal harmony?

Question of questions!

It was—notice—to “**MAKE DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL**” (ver. 38).

That would solve the difficulty. Let David get his divinely appointed place as Ruler over the people, let him reign supreme, and then all minor matters, such as tribal or party jealousy, must necessarily sink and fade away. As David increased according to God, all such trifles would decrease. The stars would disappear as the sun arose—magnificent eclipse!

Issachar's two hundred were right. The thrill and throb of a common devotion to David, the consuming desire to see him exalted, animated every bosom. “Day by day” (we read in ver. 72) “there came to David to help him until it was a great host like the host of God.”

How grand the result. David had

led 400 fugitives hither and thither; now, under this God-given impulse, he commands 334,100 “men of valour” and of a “perfect heart!” No longer a fugitive, he is king and centre; “he is God's king, and ruler over a great host, like the host of God.”

How easily read is the moral! How readily applied to-day, if only we would apply it.

How all the poor, wretched, unworthy religious animosities of the day; all the defence of parties, as such; all the unnecessary “odium theologicum”; all the pride of mere position, would pass for ever out of the hearts of all the beloved, blood-bought saints of God, if only, instead thereof, Christ alone were exalted as the One Head and Centre of His body the church!

Imagine the difference between the blessed work of making David king and the misery of internecine strife; between the invaluable effort of positively glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ in all His offices and the unprofitable and very negative toil of fault-finding with our brethren!

If the men of Issachar knew what Israel ought to do in the crowning of David, how much more should we display our wisdom in obeying and following the Lord's alone!

The Bible and Science.

PROFESSOR ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc., says, in the “Bible Champion,” “Along with spiritual truth, subordinate to spiritual truth and auxiliary to it, the Bible gives us much of a scientific character. With regard to this it should be noted: (1) that the Bible asserts nothing in contravention of any scientific truth; (2) that the natural facts which from day to day men are discovering, though previously unknown to science, have from the beginning all along existed in nature. It is particularly to be noted also that

these facts have not only existed in the book of nature only, but also within the pages of the Word of God. These facts are not restricted to a single science, nor even to two or three sciences.”

“Wrapped up in the Divine record are these scientific facts, communicated to the writers by the inspiration of God, facts of which the learning of those times had no notion, or conception—prophecies of discoveries to be made by the scientific industry of future ages.”

We append a few of these facts by way of illustration.

THE SAND AND THE SEA.

Few things are more marvellous than the regulation and restraint of the sea: how it is confined within bounds which it cannot pass. Science tells us to-day that it finds this impassable barrier in the sand. This is a great discovery, but it was written down long ago in Jeremiah 5. 22: "Fear ye not Me, saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence, which hath PLACED THE SAND FOR THE BOUND OF THE SEA by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it."

HOW LIGHT IS PRODUCED.

Science says that light is produced by vibration in that wonderful ether without which no light could reach us. So that there is light for us just so long as the vibration continues to make a pathway, but directly the vibration stops there is darkness. Whilst the vibration continues light dwells in its path, and when a place is reached where the motion is neutralized and ceases and the path comes to an end, such is the place of darkness. This famous undulatory theory is a modern discovery of science, yet nearly thirty-five centuries ago God asked this question of Job, chapter 38. 19: "Where is the WAY where light dwelleth, and as for darkness, where is the PLACE thereof?" It is proved to be literally true that light for us dwells in a path and darkness is stationary in a place.

ETHER DESCRIBED.

The interstella ether, which is shown in the preceding paragraph to be the substance through which light reaches us, is described exactly in Isaiah 40. 22, where we are told that God "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." The Hebrew word translated "curtain" is literally thinness, tenu-

ity, and taken with the expression "stretched out," is suggestive of a substance of extreme tenuity and elasticity, which ether is, according to the findings of modern science.

THE ROTUNDITY AND ROTATION OF THE EARTH.

The ancients believed the earth to be a flat plane. Comparatively modern discoveries have proved that they were wrong; but from Isaiah 40. 22 the truth might have been learnt seven hundred years before Christ, for there we are told that God "sitteth upon the circle of the earth"—the Hebrew word here translated "circle" signifying an arch of a sphere or globe.

The rotation of the earth is evidently presumed in Matthew 24. 40, 41, and Luke 17. 34-36, where we learn that one instantaneous event—the coming of the Lord to earth—will effect people in one place at night, for there they are in bed; in another place at early morning, for they are preparing the day's food; and at another in broad daylight, for they are at work in the field.

THE EMPTY PLACE IN THE NORTH.

Some years ago the powerful telescope in the Washington (U.S.) Naval Observatory revealed in the north sky the existence there of a great vacuum—a vast empty space without a star. But in Job 26. 7 it is written, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and He hangeth the earth on nothing."

THE EARTH HANGETH ON NOTHING.

The ancients imagined that the world rested on four elephants, that these stood upon a huge tortoise, and that the tortoise rested upon an ocean. But while the wise men of those days believed such nonsense as this, it was clearly writ, "He hangeth the earth on nothing," and by the invisible force of gravitation, this is exactly what God has done. At the dawn of the twentieth century it is a fully recognized scientific fact that the earth does literally hang up "on nothing."

The Resurrection of the Dead.

(HENRY. J. VINE).

"The Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."—(Romans 1. 1-4).

THE SON OF GOD MARKED OUT.

AT the very commencement of this gospel letter to the believers at Rome, the Holy Spirit calls our attention to the important fact that our Lord Jesus Christ was marked out as Son of God by resurrection.

The genealogy of Matthew 1. shows clearly that He was David's Seed according to the flesh. He must of necessity be so if He were to bring in the sure mercies of David. He must, however, be the Son of God also, if the fulness of the blessing of the gospel were to be brought to us. The Holy Spirit puts the fact that He was so beyond all question, with these words: "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1. 4).

This determines the matter fully and finally for us. It must be noticed, however, that it is not His own resurrection simply; for He raised others; "*the dead*" is not in the singular, but in the plural. It is stated abstractly.

The gospel, then, is concerning God's Son, who is marked out to be such by resurrection of the dead; by His own resurrection, and that of others also. What a firm foundation we have here! What divine rest and assurance it imparts to the believer's heart! With what watchfulness, therefore, should the true servant of the Lord guard this truth, which involves the glory of our Lord and the peace of His saints who are so precious to Him.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

When the body of our Lord Jesus Christ lay in the grave, His spirit was with the Father, into whose hands He

commended it ere He died. The body in which He bore our sins upon the tree, and which was laid in the grave, was the same precious body which was raised again, but quickened now by the Spirit; the blood having been poured out for our redemption. The marks which Thomas saw, and which convinced him, declare plainly that it was the very same body: the temple raised from death to die no more.

But the Lord raised the widow's son also, and the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus; He raised the last after corruption consequent upon death had set in. Who but the Son of God could so work?

Before He raised Lazarus He declared, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Everything was there in Him for both raising and giving life, essentially and potentially. Neither death nor corruption could stay His power. The glory of His person is involved in the whole question of resurrection, and since this is so we must hold to the truth of it with great tenacity.

Before we could be raised to eternal blessedness, He Himself must first die for us and be raised again, so as to take away death's sting and victory. The resurrection of Lazarus, nevertheless, declared His glory. Indeed, his sickness was, as we are told, "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified by it" (John 11. 4). He might have healed him; but He waited; and His glory shone out at a grave-side of death and corruption. It is not ascension and glory which mark out the Son of God; but resurrection. So when He told Martha that He was the Resurrection and the Life, He also told her that the believer on Him who died,

should live; also that everyone who lived and believed on Him should never die. He then asked her a very important and pointed question: "*Believest thou this?*"

At a time when all the foundations of faith are being questioned, it may not be out of place to put the Lord's question to the reader, "*Believest THOU this?*" Do you believe in the power and glory of the Son of God? To question resurrection is to question the power and glory of Him who is in Himself the Resurrection and the Life also. No true believer would wish to fall into such a snare. There may be lurking suspicions of the mind of the flesh, which is fallen and corrupt, as to the possibility of these things; suspicions which are hateful to the renewed mind. Many sincere souls are troubled by these questions, and the suggestions of science (so called), and the rationalistic reasonings of to-day, feed such wretched suspicions; but only let the glory of the marked out Son of God have its proper place in the heart by faith, then these hateful birds of the night will take wing and swiftly fly away, like bats before the brightness of the sunrise.

THE BODY RAISED.

It was to the assembly of God at Corinth that the question was addressed: "*How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*" (1 Cor. 15. 12). And it is first shown in this chapter that it is part of the gospel, for Christ is preached that He is raised. It then shows that it is a necessity for the rich and far-reaching results in glory which are to follow. The whole chapter is a treatise as to the resurrection of *the body*. It is no question of *the spirit*: for elsewhere we are taught that, leaving the body, the believer is as to his spirit present with the Lord. Absent from the body; present with the Lord. The chapter deals with the body, with its resurrection specially; with that which is buried; not with that which has departed to be with Christ, but with that which is laid in the grave

as Christ was, and which is to be raised again as Christ was. This must be held firmly in faith. The Apostle shows that the one involves the other, saying: "If there is not a resurrection of [those that are] dead, neither is Christ raised" (ver. 13, N.T.). And if Christ is not raised, then there is no gospel; we are still in our sins; and those that have passed away have perished. But, thank God, Christ is raised; and He is raised as the Firstfruits; a sure and certain pledge that we who are His shall be raised like Him for God's glory—the great harvest.

The man who questions: "How are the dead raised, and with *what body* do they come?" is called a "fool" by the Apostle. Nevertheless, he proceeds to point to what GOD does in nature in the case of seed buried in the earth. That is enough to teach an ordinary mind. In its rising, after death, He gives it a body as it pleaseth Him; but mark, "*to each of the seeds its own body*" (ver. 38); not a body of a different kind altogether. Identity is retained. "GOD" is the sufficient answer for a simple and sincere soul, though this may not be sufficient for a "fool." As in the case of Lazarus, the thoughtful believer sees that the work of resurrection is "for the glory of God, and that the Son of God may be glorified in it." The greater the difficulty appears to be, the greater the triumph and the glory.

The Apostle points out that the hope of resurrection sustained him in all his labours and sufferings. If the dead rise not, "why," he asks, "do we endanger ourselves every hour?" (ver. 30, N.T.). It seems that it was different with others, for he writes: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some are IGNORANT OF GOD" (ver. 34, N.T.). There lies the root of all the trouble and questioning—ignorance as to the true character of God. Surely He can and will raise the dead? Do you not believe this? It was King Agrippa who was asked by the prisoner of the Lord: "Why should it be thought a

thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" It was the unbelieving Sadducees who said, "There is no resurrection," whom the Lord Himself rebuked, saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor THE POWER OF GOD." All is plain and clear to the one who believes in the God of resurrection, in His power and wisdom. Such an one delights to speak and sing of the glorious day

*"When Christ our precious dust will take
And freshly mould:
And give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own;
And bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan."*

THE HOUSE FROM HEAVEN.

The Apostle not only speaks of the stimulus which the knowledge of resurrection gave to him in his labours for the Lord, but he concludes by exhorting others to let it also affect them in a similar way. "Therefore," he writes, "my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." No toil, no testing, no suffering gone through in faith for the Lord will be lost. All is treasured up, and in the resurrection, in the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it will be found to praise, and glory, and honour.

What glory and beauty will then characterize the bodies of believers in that day of brightness and blessedness! The weakness, weariness, and humiliation which now mark them will then have disappeared for ever. And this should cheer us on now to serve and suffer for the One who loves us; for the One who freed us from our sins by His own precious blood; for the One who is coming for us to give us bodies like His own body of glory. To bring this to pass, we are told, He will use transforming energy—"according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. 3. 21).

Then indeed we shall possess bodies which are according to God's eternal purpose. He has predestinated us to be

conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8. 29). That is not simply morally, as is sometimes suggested. The body of the believer will be then characterized by that which is from heaven. It will indeed be "a building from God." Nor will its fashioning be of man. It will be truly "a house not made with hands" (2 Cor. 5. 1). Already in the purpose of God its design and beauty are before Him; yea, it is "eternal in the heavens." It is not something which God had not predestinated; something which He has not revealed also; for the Apostle so longed for it that he wrote: "For indeed in this we groan, ardently desiring to put on our house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. 5. 2). Then that which is mortal shall be swallowed up of life.

All this is so encouraging to the true believer that we will add a final word as to how this will come to pass: how that which is *raised up* from the dead shall *put on* that which is from heaven: how the *raised bodies* of believers shall become characterized by that which is *from heaven*: when "this corruptible shall have *put on* incorruption, and this mortal shall have *put on* immortality" (1 Cor. 15. 54).

FROM EARTH AND FROM HEAVEN.

To make this clear we must notice that the Scriptures quoted speak of two distinct things in regard to our bodies of glory. FIRST, of that which is raised "*from the dead*": SECOND, of that which comes "*from heaven*." FIRST, of that which comes *up from the earth*: SECOND, of that which comes *down from heaven*, so to speak. That which is raised up shows the divine power of God in resurrection, and maintains the connection with that which is buried: that which comes down shows the eternal design of God in the heavens, and is brought out to characterize the believer's body for ever. The body which was before characterized by *mortality and corruption* also, if buried, puts on, when raised, *immortality and incorruption*. These things are eterna-

in the heavens; and are therefore *from heaven* when they are "put on." Then life shall swallow up mortality.

According to the illustration given in 1 Corinthians 15., a seed is sown. It dies; then it rises up again from the earth. What shall characterize this which comes up from death? A bud, or blossom, or fruit may come. It may be characterized by beauty of design, by brilliance of colour, by remarkable richness of bloom. Does all this wealth and variety then *come up* from the earth? Nay; the beauty displayed is *from above*. God has so constituted the surroundings with atmosphere, cloud, light, sunshine, and other things, that that which rises may be able to put on the treasures which God has therein placed for this purpose. Just so, when raised, shall we put on the glory which shall characterize us for ever. We cannot count up this wealth; we cannot measure our vast treasure; but we can meditate upon its loveliness with thankful hearts; for God has revealed these things. Let us list some of these riches of resurrection.

1. Heavenly bodies then instead of earthly.— (1 Cor. 15. 49).
2. Glory shall mark them instead of dishonour.—(43).
3. Power then, and no longer weakness.— (43).
4. Spiritual bodies then instead of natural.— (44).

5. Immortality shall mark them, not mortality.—(54).
6. Incorruptibility, and no longer corruption.—(54).
7. Life instead of death for our bodies.— (2. Cor. 5. 4).

Already by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has annulled death, life and incorruptibility have been brought to light. It was in God's purpose; but by His death and resurrection He has secured it for us, blessed be His holy Name! "Fear not," He saith, "I am the Living One." He has the keys of death and of hades. Satan had "the might of death," but He has been into death's dark domain and annulled him; and moreover, He has risen victorious. He is the glorious First-fruits from the dead; and just as surely as He is this, the afterfruits shall be raised like Him, when He comes again. He is marked out as Son of God by resurrection. His triumph is also seen in this. When His assembling shout is heard; when the Lord Himself shall come, then the mighty operations of resurrection power shall be set in motion; then the dead in Christ shall rise; and then the living, changed, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord—the marked out Son of God, the Resurrection and the Life.

The Lord is His Name.

He steereth the rolling tempest;
He curbeth the comet fleet:
He steps on the maddened billows,
And meekly they crouch at His feet.

He bendeth the bow of the thunder,
And, flashing, His shafts fly forth:
He calls to the deep for its waters,
And poureth them out on the earth.

He sits in Creation's centre,
And layeth a hand on each Pole:
He toucheth the stars with His finger,
And onward rejoicing they roll.

He reineth the rushing nations,
As one who a war-horse rides;
And swayeth their stormy tumult,
As moonlight swayeth the tides.

He bends to His purpose all beings,
The mighty no less than the small;
He humbles the proudest, and getteth
A tribute of honour from all.

He once trod the earth He upholdeth—
As Saviour of sinners He came;
As Saviour of sinners He suffered,
Yes, suffered the cross and the shame.

Is the World's Misery due to Muddle? (J. T. MAWSON).

WE quote from one of the ablest of the English weekly Reviews: "The world has enough and to spare for its children—it daily wastes enough to feed them all—and yet never was the social condition of the world so acute in its pain and poverty."

"The problem, then, is to find out by what readjustments the voice of complaining and the need for complaining may be made to cease from our streets."

A great ex-proconsul, dealing with this question, has said that it was his deepest conviction that 95 per cent of the misery of the civilized world is due to muddle. Is it? There could be no more important question.

If the world has enough and to spare for its children, that is God's faithfulness to men as Creator, and He cannot be blamed for the misery that is in it; and the blame must lie at another door. But is the misery caused by muddling of men? If it is, men may in course of time, with the increase of knowledge and experience, and of the many inventions for the production and distribution of the necessities of life, reduce the muddle to order and evolve a millennium of peace and plenty.

But if this were likely, surely some improvement in the conditions would have been manifest ere this, for for centuries men have been working at the problems with more or less earnestness and honesty, yet the considered conclusion of those who ought to know is, that "never was the social condition of the world so acute in its pain and poverty."

We are quite prepared to admit the muddling; but it is not muddle that causes the misery, IT IS SIN; and sin is lawlessness, the refusal on the part of men to be subject to God. This is the terrible root of all the trouble.

Of course, those who refuse to believe the Bible will not believe this; and it is very probable that the scouting of the Bible in these days is largely because men would rather believe that it is their muddling and not their sinning that is the cause of the misery; for if it is their muddling, merely, well ignorance only may lie behind that, and as ignor-

ance disappears before advancing knowledge, they may be able by their own efforts to get out of the mess they have made of the world; but if it is their sinning that is the cause of the misery, that is a question that must be settled with God, and from the beginning men have been doing their best to rid themselves of their responsibility towards God.

The Bible flatters none; it shatters the favourite but vain fable of evolution; lays bare the terrible root of all the misery; shows that men have departed from God; that they have lost their Centre, hence their restlessness and discontent, and that they have cast out and crucified the only One who could have put them right. It calls upon men to acknowledge their sins, to repent before God, and to do it NOW, because judgment is surely coming. It tells us that "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7. 21, 22). And these are the cause of the misery, and these things—every one of them, the pride and covetousness as well as the murder and theft—are not muddle but sin; and this is the root of all the trouble; it is the evil that springs from the hearts of men that has made the world what it is; and can the misery be mended and the voice of the complaining hushed unless the root of it all is dealt with? Impossible.

Let no one suppose that those who suffer most in this world are the greatest sinners; it is often not so, though undoubtedly the greatest sinners will suffer the most in the lake of fire, for at the last great judgment they are to be judged every man "according to their works" (Rev. 20. 13). We have no intention of charging the poor and suffering with the greater guilt. What we desire to do is to show, in a few words from the Bible, what is the cause of the universal misery, and it is plainly taught there that the world's misery springs from the world's sins, and the fact that it rejected and killed the only One who could have put it right.

Then is there any hope? Yes; for every man a door is opened wide, a door

of blessing and salvation. Jesus said, "I am the door; by Me, if any man enter in he shall be saved." But each must come for himself; it must be individual regeneration and salvation, and not social or national. But the world as the world—is there any hope for it? The Bible speaks of nothing but judgment for it—of wrath to come. Search its pages, for there these things are plainly writ. And when the surely and swiftly coming judgment of this world has been

executed, then will a new era dawn, for then the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings (Mal. 4. 2) and

"He will bid the whole creation smile
And hush its groan."

For that day the Christian waits; he knows that this is the only way out of the misery, and meanwhile he can confidently bear witness to the fact that the Saviour whom he knows so well is ready to save "whosoever will."

Eternal Punishment.

THE doctrine of Everlasting Punishment having been much called in question, and the minds of the simple shaken and the faith of some overthrown, I have thought a warning was needed for plain people. To such I would suggest to distrust those who talk much about Greek *to those who do not understand it*. It is easy thus to impose on people.

It is useful to know Greek, no doubt, in studying the New Testament, because it was written in Greek; and it is perfectly fair to refer to it with those who, knowing Greek, can judge of what is said; but it is very suspicious when much quoted to those who do not; for how can they judge about it? A man tells you "eternal" does not mean "eternal" in Greek. That sounds very conclusive; but how can you judge whether it does or not? Now in all those who talk much about Greek to plain people, I have generally found trickery; and that their Greek has not been worth much when put to the test by those who did understand it.

Without pretending to be very learned, I know Greek, and I have studied the Greek Testament [he published a translation of it], and I have not been led to place any confidence in their statements about the Greek; but the contrary. The Spirit of God will guide more surely a plain man, if he is humble, in fundamental truths, than a little Greek will those who trust in it.

Now, to a plain man, the statements of his English Bible leave not a doubt on

the mind that the punishment of the wicked is eternal.

These statements, I feel assured, are substantially right. No doubt, being a human work, translations are imperfect, and the translators' views and feelings are apt to be transfused into them. But in the main, the doctrine presented by the English Bible, and the faith produced by it in a plain believer's mind, is sound doctrine and divinely taught faith, though it is possible some passages might be more exactly rendered. None, however, that I am aware of, affecting this truth, are misrepresented by the translation.

It is quite evident to me, and to any plain honest man, that God *meant to produce on the mind of the reader* the conviction that eternal misery is the portion of the wicked, and I do not believe that *He meant to produce the conviction of a lie*, nor frighten them with what was not true.

It is my unhesitating conviction that the attempts to undermine this doctrine of Scripture have entirely failed, and that the arguments used are either dishonest—some of them flagrantly so—or contradictory and fallacious, and that all of them subvert other fundamental truths. I declare also my conviction that a sound knowledge of Greek confirms the plain man's Scriptural faith. If God had meant to convey the idea of eternal punishment, He would not have used expressions stronger than He has used; nor do any exist.

(J. N. Darby.)

The Unchanging Christ.

(EDWARD CROSS).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

John xiv.—xvi.

THERE is much need of a revival of that character of ministry in which Christ is set forth in what might be called the "emphatic isolation of His own person." We used to be more familiar with such verses as, "Let us go forth unto Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach." The effect of such ministry would be that Christ would get His rightful place before our minds in sympathy with the spirit of Revelation 5, "Thou art worthy—Thou alone." What He will be then is what He is to-day. He is the same, the Unchanging One—He abides, when creatures all shall fail.

Now this is the subject-matter of the Gospel of John, the essence of the thing in its undiminished force. In the other Gospels we have Christ in His official characters. Here we have Him in His personal being, what He is in Himself. And so we find Him constantly asserting Himself—"I"; "I am"—the full answer to the Lord's name in Exodus 3. 14: "I am that I am; this is His name for ever, His memorial to all generations." (Cf. Ps. 135. 13; Hos. 12. 5.) That is why the Gospel of John is such a resting-place for the soul in times of pressure, when everything around is convulsed. How many a person on a dying bed turns to John 14. for comfort and hope—and yet it is not for the dying hour alone: it is for us to know now, and live by.

In the Gospel of John we have two things. The first part of it sets forth Christ in His relationship to the world, as coming into it, and how He meets and satisfies every need belonging to it. He gives the water of life; He is the bread of life; He is the light of life. He is everything you can require in connection with this lower world: but then, when He fills everything here, out of the fulness that is in Him, there still remains the greater world above; and He fills that also.

This latter begins in chapter 13.: "Come from God, He is going to God; all things given into His hands by the Father." Think of that! What glory! infinite, divine in its source! What glory! ineffable in the issue! (Cf. Isa. 64. 4; 1 Cor. 2. 9.)

Come from God, and back to God! It is a long journey, that overlaps every other journey belonging to the history of this world, and to all the circumstances of time and sense. That is John 13., and from that we pass on to John 17., and the subject of the intermediate chapters is connected with that journey. He then takes the towel, the symbol of His present service on our behalf; and in connection therewith He says: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And what a relief from the "outlook" all around—social, political, ecclesiastical—to turn to the "uplook," and to know that all is secured for the glory of God, and for our eternal blessing.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Hitherto God was in the distance, "afar off" (Exod. 24. 2) "dwelling in darkness." Now He has come near to us in Jesus, and in Him we see the Father. Think then how great an One our Jesus is. You might have to say to a great friend: a nobleman, a duke, a king; and then you would have someone with power to back you in time of need. Do you understand what it is to have Christ at your back? to have Him to trust in? to believe in? He has gone through all our trials; travelled every step of the road; and gone right back to God. Now if you are under Him as your guide, the journey is a safe one, right home to God. He is the great Captain of salvation. "Ye believe in God," He says, "believe also in Me."

“In my Father’s house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.” The word “mansion” means abiding-place. It does not give the idea of size, but of continuity. “My Father’s house” is the universe. “He that built all things in God”: and in the vast universe of God there are many “abodes.” He is now going to make one for His disciples, not by the art of His hand, nor by the craft of His power; He is going to prepare the place *Himself*—a new place for man, not after the first man, but because He has become a man—and “if I go away I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, ye may be also.” This is all our hope and our expectation. Christ is our hope. We are waiting for Him to come and put right all that is wrong. First we are waiting for Christ to come to gather the church to Himself, to meet Him in the air. Then we shall ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4.). Again the remnant of Israel will be looking for Him to fulfil all the promises made to them of old. Then again, men will be blessed in Him: “all nations shall call Him blessed.” The rejected, the crucified One shall be glorified. He will return, and where misrule prevails to-day—and party government has brought the world to what it is—the selfishness of party government and sectarianism will be set aside; there will be one Head, one King; and all nations will own allegiance and render fealty to Him, as Lord of all. At that day it shall be said, “What hath God wrought.” Meanwhile, “the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.”

Thus we see the way John 14. puts us in relationship with the Father. Jesus came to His own, and His own received Him not: the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not: the world refused Him and cast Him out. Well, what has happened? He has brought to light greater blessing than ever was known before. No Jew, however privileged,

in the Old Testament had the light we enjoy here to-night. Moreover, we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us to take of the things of Christ and bring them home to us; to take our hearts and minds out of the current of this world altogether; to give us a higher place than ever Israel will have on earth; to tell us that this Saviour, the Son of God, has come from God and gone to God to prepare for us an abiding-place in the Father’s house on high, and to undertake the maintenance of our relationship therewith to the end.

Now we turn to chapter 15. “I am the true vine . . . ye are the branches.” The vine is for the earth, to bring forth fruit. Israel was planted a choice vine, but its fruit was “sour.” Now the Lord says, “I am the true vine,” the veritable, the real. Not that Israel was not truly a vine; it was; but it was not “the true vine.” Wine “gladdens the heart of God and man.” Israel did neither. Jesus does both. Hence we have the real thing. The other was at best but a shadow; in fact, it was a failure. Unlike other trees, the vine has but one use. It either brings forth grapes to eat, or it is worthless (Ezek. 15.). Now He says, “Ye are the branches”; and as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, so must we abide in Him. And, wonderful words to ponder: “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and ye shall become disciples of Me.” And think of His purpose in it, “that My joy may be in you, and your joy be full.” Is it not then worth while being a Christian? Yes, if you live as a Christian. Seek then to bring forth some beautiful grapes, such as will refresh the heart of God and man; what will go up in worship to Him; and go out in the gospel toward men.

Then immediately after He says, “These things I command you.” “I bid you do this; see that ye do it; see that ye love one another.” We *ought* to love one another.

Then we have another subject: “the

world hates you." You may trim your sails to all winds, and flatter yourself you are not hated by the world. The world does not hate you as a trimmer; it only despises you—but it hates you, as it hated Christ. It hates you if you follow Him. Possibly you may draw the contempt of the world on you because your conduct is foolish and your behaviour senseless: but you must not confound that with being hated for Christ—"They hated Him without a cause." This expression occurs in Psalm 35. 19, where we find Him earnestly seeking the good of others; and again in Psalm 69. 4, where He is set on vindicating the glory of God, and restoring more than the defalcations of Israel. See, then, that you give the world none occasion to blame you for your own misdeeds; let its hatred of you be for following in the footsteps of Christ (1 Peter 2. 19-25).

Then, verse 26, when the Comforter is come, "He will bear witness of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because

ye have been with Me from the beginning." In chapter 14. the Comforter puts them in relationship with the Father hence, chapters 15. 26 to 16. 13, He sets them as witnessing against the world, which, in killing them would think it was doing God's service (chap. 16. 2).

And for the end of this, His last discourse to them ere He was crucified, read chapter 16. 32: "Behold the hour is coming, and now is, when ye shall be scattered, each to his own, and shall leave me alone——" Alas! the disciples, blessed men though they were, were not to be trusted. Neither are we. But if we cannot trust ourselves—and we are not worthy of any trust—He adds for our comfort: "These things have I spoken to you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good courage: I have overcome the world." Thank God for that. May He keep our souls trusting in Him: so that when the pressure comes we may find His support.

The Word of God.

(FROM A MISSIONARY'S LETTER).

Down in the firing line we have many privileges and compensations, which friends in the homelands hardly realize. One of the greatest of these is, I believe, that of **WATCHING GOD'S WORD AT WORK IN VIRGIN SOIL.** We have constantly brought before us how it is "sharper than any two-edged sword," and able to make a breach in heathen armour and indifference, where all human eloquence and influence would fail. And His gracious Word is equally effective in "binding up the broken-hearted and proclaiming liberty to the captives," and of working miracles in the most unlikely places and ways.

Yet coming back from the Mission field, the greatest shock is to find how much this same Word of God has become disbelieved and dishonoured. Conclusions are drawn which would be

tragic if they were true. Why has this unbelief arisen? Mainly, it seems, because, as God describes it, the human heart is "deceitful above all things." Thus though these eternal verities were proved and demonstrated by our fathers, and produced in them the intensest faith and devotion, yet because they are not being demonstrated to-day before men's eyes, as they used to be, men disbelieve in them.

Yet in heathen lands God has triumphs as great as ever. He still makes bare His mighty arm. He still works His wonders, with power unabated. And through what does He work? Through learning, or education, or civilization? No, but through "the foolishness of preaching," through His glorious Word, which is neither obsolete nor legendary, but is still, in the hands of faith, "the power of God unto salvation."

To Open-Air Preachers.

THE gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation; then let us preach it. Preacher, stick to your preaching. In the great day, when the muster-roll shall be read, those that have been converted through fine music, and church decoration, and religious entertainments, and exhibitions will amount to the tenth part of nothing; but the gospel of Christ shall then be seen to have been the mighty instrument in the salvation of those mighty throngs that shall fill the glory of God with their endless praise. Keep to your preaching; let nothing throw the gospel into the background. In the first place preach the gospel, in the second place preach the gospel, and in the third place preach the gospel—"the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

We are aiming at a miracle—it is well to settle that at the commencement. We are sent to say to blind eyes, "See," to deaf ears, "Hear," to dead hearts "Live," and even to Lazarus, rotting in that grave, wherein by this time he stinketh, "Lazarus, come forth." Dare we do this? We shall be wise to begin with the conviction that we are utterly powerless for this unless our Master has sent us and is with us. But if He that sent us is with us, all things are possible to him that believeth.

O preacher, if thou art about to stand up to show what thou canst do, it will be thy wisdom to sit down speedily; but if thou standest up to show what thine Almighty Lord and Master can do through thee, then infinite possibilities

lie about thee. There is no bound to what GOD can accomplish if He is allowed to work by thy heart and voice.

It is the duty of the gospel-preacher to say: "I might be able to say that very prettily, but then if I did the hearers might get occupied with the way I said it. I will therefore so say it that they will only observe the intrinsic value to the truth that I would teach them." Mere oratory will only create sham and shame in the long run. It is not our way of putting the gospel, nor our method of illustrating it which wins souls; the gospel itself does the work in the hands of the Holy Ghost. If the turning of a soul be a miracle, God must do it; it is not to be accomplished by our reasoning, or persuasion, or threatening; it can only come from the Lord.

Yet be in earnest; let the fire burn in your soul, let the fire of love for souls be kindled and fanned in the presence of God; and then speak to men as one who knows and feels the power of the things he preaches. If you are not in earnest you had better go to bed than stand up in the street to speak for Christ, for it is better that you should sleep alone than make others to sleep the sleep of indifference by your sing-song lukewarmness.

Learn to talk privately with people. Every true-hearted open-air preacher will keep his eyes open for those who are affected by the word, and it is the quiet talk afterwards that often drives the nail home.

Go on; go on; go on.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
 " My yoke and burden share,
 Easy the burden I endure
 And light the yoke I wear."
 I follow Jesus, and I find
 His Father's will the best,
 And, now, in yielding to that will
 My soul has perfect rest.

(J. W. S.)

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 24.

(HENRY J. VINE).

“Who is This”?—Chapter 63.

THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS AVENGER.

IN the first six verses of chapter 63. we have a vivid picture, painted in strong and glowing colours by the Holy Spirit. In deeply dyed garments of blood-red the great and glorious Avenger of the enemies of God and His people is seen returning in triumph from His victory in Edom, where, alone, He had trodden His foes under His feet, as in a wine-press, staining all His raiment, as in righteousness He executed the long-foretold vengeance of God.

Very strange does this picture look after that with which this small subdivision began, in chapter 61. 1. There is presented the Anointed Preacher; and when He appeared in Luke 4. all the people wondered at the gracious words which fell from His lips: here He is seen as the great Avenger who has trampled God's foes in His fury. There He is proclaiming “the *acceptable year of the Lord*”: here it is “the *day of vengeance*” that is in His heart. When He stood up and read at Nazareth (Luke 4.), He stopped at the first comma of Isaiah 61. 2: here, after centuries of longsuffering, He passes on to fulfil the next sentence of that verse. The first is a “*year*”: the second “*a day*.” The first is the long “*year*,” still continuing, of mercy and grace, in which God finds delights: the second is the short “*day*,” soon to come and soon to be over, of God's just judgment, His “strange work,” in which He has no pleasure. Long centuries before, in Deuteronomy 32. 35-43, He had foretold this time, when He would render vengeance to His adversaries, and revenge the blood of “*His servants*.” These “*servants*” now come specially before us in the remaining chapters of Isaiah. The hand of the Lord becomes

known toward “*His servants*,” and indignation toward “*His enemies*.”

Let it not be thought however that this vengeance is vindictive. It is the very opposite. It is God's “strange work”; His “strange act.” It is swiftly and surely executed “in righteousness,” but in view of salvation. If salvation was to be brought to the servants of the Lord—the feeble remnant—this work was necessary; therefore mercy is behind it all; for when *The Great and Glorious Avenger* returns from its execution in the land of Edom, travelling in the greatness of His strength, He declares Himself “**THE MIGHTY TO SAVE**,” saying: “I that speak in righteousness, *Mighty to Save*” (63. 1). That is the work He delights in; but because of who He is, righteousness must mark all His ways.

It is the old story, always true, righteous judgment for the wicked; salvation for the believing; the profane punished: the pious blessed; Esau (Edom) has he hated: Jacob has He loved; that which is of the flesh is judged; that which is of the Spirit is favoured; that which is of the law cannot stand before God; that which is of the promise receives the inheritance; that which refuses Christ is refused; that which accepts Christ is accepted. Not that they deserve to be accepted because of any good in them, but because He endured the judgment they deserved upon the cross, when He bore their sins; there, sin in the flesh was also judged, that those who receive Him might be set free, *spiritually* from its oppression; just as the oppressed “servants” of the Lord, the feeble remnant of Israel, will be freed, *governmentally*, by the judgment He executes upon the land of Edom (Esau) by and by. Only He bore it for us on the cross: then it

will actually fall upon the wicked; but it will be salvation for Israel then; so the judgment borne on the cross is salvation for us now. In both cases it is through our Lord Jesus Christ, who secures salvation righteously. **HE IS RIGHTEOUS AND MIGHTY TO SAVE.**

“WHO IS THIS?”

Such is the question which heads these six verses (63. 1-6), which show us the great Avenger in His dyed garments. Every thoughtful man should face this question and find the answer. Alexander! Cæsar! Napoleon! others also are known and admired; though grave questions as to whether they warred in righteousness might be raised. *Here is a Mighty Warrior*, facing the enemy alone; His fury upholds Him; garments of vengeance cover Him; He is clad with zeal as a cloak; He triumphantly tramples His enemies in His anger and in His fury; He brings their blood to the ground. *“Who is this?”* Yes, **“WHO IS THIS?”**

There is no question as to His justice and His uprightness. In righteousness He judges and makes war. Along with His holy fury, His “righteousness sustains Him”; His brilliant breastplate sparkles with it; His very words “speak in righteousness”; His glorious garments glitter with truth and justice; His armour is the armour of light! But see the shining helmet on His head, telling us what is in His thoughts! It is the “helmet of *salvation*”; yea, His “glorious Arm” is lifted up to “bring *salvation*.” He is the Mighty to Save. *“Who is this?”* *“Who is this?”* *What is His Name? Canst thou tell?* It is of the utmost importance that these questions be answered.

It is the Saviour, the long-looked-for Messiah of Israel, their great Warrior King; His Name is Jesus; once they slew Him, but God raised Him from among the dead, and took Him away to the heavens; now He is seen returning to redeem, regenerate, raise up, and righteously restore the very nation

which refused and rejected Him. He exclaims (63. 4): *“The DAY of vengeance was in mine heart, and the YEAR of MY REDEEMED is come!”*

And that day of vengeance will come; and the year of His redeemed people will come; and every thoughtful man living in this day of grace should face the all-important question as to how he stands personally with regard to this great Redeemer our Lord Jesus Christ. No man has a right to be considered wise who dates every day of his life “A.D.” (“In the year of our Lord”), and yet has not settled this question. He is the Saviour and Lord of those who trust Him; but remember, He will be the Judge of those who refuse Him. Of necessity sin must be punished in this world if any nation is to be maintained in peace and order. God is not less particular as to this. Truly our Lord Jesus Christ is the Deliverer from the coming wrath; but He will execute it upon the wicked who refuse to own His claims. Those who confess Him as Lord, and believe in their hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, shall be saved (Rom. 10. 9). No one, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, can afford to give precious time to the settlement of other questions until he has this one settled, for it affects his eternal wellbeing; and he may be despatched unexpectedly and unprepared, like others have been, into eternity, at any moment.

In this day of God’s free favour, of His saving grace, men commonly think of Jesus simply as “meek and mild,” a sort of philanthropist, who will put up with anything. It is true He is full of mercy, and grace, and love; it is true His love is longsuffering and kind; but let it not be forgotten that true love, divine love, however long it may wait upon the sinner, seeking his salvation, will not be indifferent to sin; its punishment must be carried out. We see this at the cross; the very place which shows God’s love to us shows us His holy hatred of sin also.

In this day of weakness and effeminacy, wilfulness and toleration, men take the Name of Jesus and associate it with all sorts of movements, social and political and religious; movements which the truth of His person, as well as His teaching, utterly condemns. **HE IS THE LORD. HE IS GOD. HE HIMSELF HAS SAID, "IF YE BELIEVE NOT THAT I AM HE, YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS": BUT ALSO, "HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO JUDGMENT; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE"** (John 5. 24).

"WHO IS HE?" Yes! let the question be answered before God for the reader's own soul without further delay. And "*What is He to you personally?*" May you be enabled to reply in faith, "*He is the Son of God: He is my personal Saviour!*"

Before passing on to the final sub-

division of Isaiah it should be noticed that chapter 34. is the one other place where the "day of vengeance" is mentioned. What have the enemies of inspiration to say to this? Here, again, Isaiah 1. and 2. show one handwriting, and that in a singular and striking manner. In both chapters the judgment falls upon *Edom*. Other prophets give the reason. There is "a great slaughter in the land of Edom." "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for *the controversy of Zion*." His sword comes down upon *Edom*, the people of His curse (34. 4 8). So in chapter 63. the Mighty to Save is coming *to Zion*; and the question is asked, "Who is this that cometh *from Edom?*" Chapter 34. tells us who it is. It is the LORD; it is JEHOVAH. It is THE ANOINTED PREACHER, THE REDEEMER, AND THE AVENGER, of chapters 61., 62., and 63. IT IS JESUS!

"Name above every name, Thy praise
Shall fill yon courts through endless days,
Jehovah-Jesus! Name divine!
Rock of salvation—Thou art mine."

"The Only-Begotten Son."

When the Spirit of God, by the Apostle John, would affirm the perfect and eternal intimacy and union between the glorious Persons in the Godhead, and the unspeakable and infinite endearment of our Lord to the Father; when He would convey the loftiest possible idea of the majesty of the revelation of the truth; when He would impress upon us with a deep sense of the inscrutability of the divine nature, and the certainty and perfection of the manifestation of God in Christ, He declares, "No man—(*οὐδεὶς*), *nemo*, no being of created mould—hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, who exists in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). When He would exalt to the utmost the glory of the Word in flesh, He styles it "the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN with the Father" (John 1. 14). When He

would illustrate the benevolence of God with highest splendour, He says, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4. 9).

With a similar purpose is this epithet used by the Lord Himself: "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). And, finally, when He would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, and that which puts a man under the present divine displeasure He says, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because He hath not believed in the NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD" (John 3. 18).

A Majestic Vision.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 10.

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth.”—(Rev. x. 1-3).

MAN'S day under Satan's sway—the outcome of such teachings as “divinity in humanity,” “the solidarity of man,” and “the rights of the people”—will, under the sixth trumpet, be marked by the malignant influences of the horsemen from beyond the Euphrates. Their serpent-like tails and sulphurous mouths will cloud with moral darkness the whole of the Latin empire, extinguishing all traces of gospel light, and leading rich and poor to worship demons; not secretly—under the guise of intercourse with departed spirits as now practised in spiritualistic circles—but openly, under gross materialistic forms, as in heathen lands.

Refined and cultured nations, blinded by Satanic influences from the abyss, will be given up to strong delusion under the governmental hand of God. Apollyon will so act on conscience that it will become hardened, like the iron breast-plates of the horsemen and as impervious to the sense of right and wrong. Marriage rights will be ignored, sorcery and fornication will prevail. Life and property will be at the mercy of men with whom might is right, murders and thefts will go unpunished, all governmental restraints thrown off, society dislocated, apostate Jews and apostate Christendom will reap what they have sown, and this world become a veritable hell upon earth.

This depressing picture, so saddening to contemplate as the future of Europe, only brings into relief by its dark background the glorious and majestic vision which tells us that Satan's triumph will be of short duration. Chapter 10. is a

parenthesis between the sixth and seventh “woe” trumpet. It is a break in the prophecy which will be an especial comfort to the persecuted remnant of God's earthly people who will be moving in these scenes. These breaks are characteristic of Old Testament prophecy; the most awful denunciations found in the major and minor prophets are often interspersed with consolatory promises and bright gleams of a coming deliverer.

John now sees a mighty ANGEL coming down *out of the heaven*. He is not merely a heavenly being, but His origin is from thence; the same wonderful person whom we Christians know as the second man, “the LORD *out of heaven*” (1 Cor. 15. 47). In graphic language, which for grandeur of description is unequalled by any human composition, the Divine penman portrays Him as He stands with one foot on the earth and the other on the sea, with hand uplifted to heaven asserting that man's day draws near its close, and with it the mystery of God's present ways.

For centuries men and angels have beheld apostolic men treated as the refuse of the world, Christians defamed and persecuted, children of God in trying circumstances. Good men at a discount and bad men at a premium. The meek not inheriting the earth but being trodden under foot; the Godly led to the stake, or immured in a loathsome dungeon. The worst men getting the best, and the righteous the worst; and apparently God does not regard nor intervene on their behalf. This is a mystery. Evil triumphs, sin and death reign. Satan is both god and prince of

this world, and at the time of which we are now writing he will have given all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them to a man chosen and energized by himself. God's loved earthly people will be passing through seas of sorrow, yet to sight and sense God sits unmoved as they cry: "How long, O Lord? Dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood as them that dwell on the earth!" We Christians have the comfort of knowing that God secretly orders for the welfare of His people and makes "all things work together for good." He permits many things to happen, but we know that all is in view of our being conformed to the image of His Son. Ours is a heavenly portion, and our trials are intended to wean us from earth and set our feet and affections ever upward. Through everything God is for us. In the comforting assurance of this we traverse our pilgrim journey toward those glorious courts where Jesus sits enthroned. From thence we shall return to this earth to reign as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

Looking back we see God declared His power in creation, His patient goodness in providence, His holy, pitying love in redemption, His heavenly counsels in the church; but as yet there has been no outward display of His government. This "mighty angel" announces that the mystery of God's governmental ways will soon be over, and the sceptre will be grasped by ONE who shall rule in the fear of God. During a glorious millennium God will make it plain that He who now secretly controls all human events is the moral governor of the universe.

Christ is God, Christ is man. In His mighty and powerful hand men of Belial will be consumed like thorns under a pot, and Satan bound in the pit. Equity will take the place of injustice, right that of might, subjection that of lawlessness. All wrongs will be righted, all service rewarded, all evil put down. "A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32. 1). In the solemn oath of the "mighty angel" we get the pledge of the speedy

fulfilment of this; for in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, God will no longer delay to take the reins of government openly into His hand. "Time no longer" is a misleading translation, for this would mean eternity has begun. "Delay no longer" it should read, for it refers to the ending of the mystery of God's governmental ways.

God confirmed the promises to Abram by vision and oath; here we find a similar solemn attestation and vision. What a cheer this oath and vision will be to saints tossed about on the rough billows of persecution; cruel deaths ever confronting them, oft driven to their wits' end under the scourge of Antichrist, their cruel and relentless foe. It is for them these pages are written. We shall be deeply interested spectators, outside and above, like Abraham on the mount when the brimstone and fire fell upon Sodom, and Lot was dragged out by angelic power. Our Lord has not only called us servants but friends, so He confides to us secrets which do not immediately concern us, counting on our interest because they concern Him.

We have seven divinely drawn portraits of our Lord Jesus in majesty and glory. On the holy mount (Matt. 17.), in garments white as light and face shining as the sun; then in Revelation 1. as the Son of Man in flowing garment—not serving but judging—penetrating to the innermost springs of men's moral being, with "eyes like a flame of fire," and feet like burnished brass, and a voice resistless in power, as He moves among the churches. Again in Revelation 5. as a Lamb—taking the book of judgment into His hand—having horns and eyes which bespeak plenitude of power and fulness of discernment. In chapter 8. as the Angel-priest He pours out fire on the earth. In chapter 15. as Son of Man He is seated on a white cloud with a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. In chapter 19. He comes out of heaven clad in a garment dyed with blood, eyes as flaming fire, and many

diadems on His head, riding upon a white horse, followed by countless hosts who swell the triumph of His train, as He descends to claim the earth for God. His garments "dyed in blood," carry our thoughts back to Isaiah, who describes Him clad in "deep red garments, superbly raising the head, glorious in His apparel" (N.T., Isa. 63. 1 and 2).

In our chapter He is depicted as an "Angel clothed with a cloud." A cloud enveloped Jesus on the holy mount, and welcomed Him as He was carried into heaven. The Divine presence is symbolized by the shecinah or cloud of glory.

This celestial Veil is God's vesture in which He once filled the Tabernacle and the Temple. It is the outward and visible token of the Divine presence. Invested with it, and crowned with the many-tinted arc which encircled the throne (chap. 4), this wonderful Being in angelic guise thus proclaims that He is the "Yea" and the "Amen," the faithful covenant-keeping God. Who can this "angel" be but Jesus? In Him we have the inscrutable mystery—God and man—one glorious Person.

Behold His face! that face once marred more than any man's, that face in which all God's moral glory now shines, is here

seen as the sun at noonday, too bright for mortal sight, dazzling and blinding by its very splendour. Think of those feet—once when travel-stained washed by the penitent tears of a "woman of the city who was a sinner"—now burning like pillars of fire. Contemplate this glorious "Angel" with one foot planted on the earth and the other on the sea, roaring with a voice like that of a lion; lifting up His hand to heaven as He swore "by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10. 6, 7).

But the voice of the seventh angel is silent, the moment for the mystery of God's ways to close has not arrived, this is a parenthetical vision; so, instead of the seventh trumpet sounding, seven thunders utter their voices, and this concentrated roar of heaven's artillery proclaims some awful visitation which John is not permitted to disclose. Other scenes are now to engage his attention and ours.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you."

The Lord here assumes that His ministry had brought the Father so near to His disciples that they ought to have concluded that *His house was their home*.

The Lord's ministry had been such a revelation of the Father's love to them that it would have been strange indeed had this not been the case. Such a thing would have been an exception, and therefore to be noticed. But that

there were mansions for them, as well as for Him, in the Father's house, was so fully in character with all His previous works and words, that such a fact, such a truth, needed no mention at all. It was self-evident, a necessary conclusion.

All family privileges were theirs and ours, and, *of course*, the family mansion was their home and ours.

Psalms 61-65.

WE now come to a group of eight Psalms ending with Psalm 68. In these the Messiah is seen as the Leader of His people, passing from the sorrow and tribulation of the first four to the glory and triumph of Psalm 68, verse 18, of which celebrates the reunion of Himself with His people, no longer rebellious (though they had well earned that title); according to the early relationship of Exodus 25. 8, "Let them make Me a tabernacle, that I may dwell among them." In Psalm 68. the ascension on high is declared to be with this in view, that "Jah Elohim might dwell among them." What a testimony to the Person and work of Jesus, and what a mystery to a Jew! The turning point in our present series is in Psalm 65. 4, where the acceptance of the Blessed Man is answered in the satisfaction and approach to God of the people ("we."). One there is and One only whose acceptance is on behalf of others. His Name is Jesus; He alone can save His people from their sins.

PSALM 61. may well be read as the utterance of Messiah, between verses 21 and 22 of Psalm 22., seeking to be brought from the outcast place (Heb. 13. 12). He took in grace, to the rock of resurrection; from thence He looks back in verse 3 to what God had been for Him till His hour was come, and forward (ver. 4) to what He would possess with God for ever. In this wonderful passage from death to life, the ground for the fulfilment of His vows was laid in righteousness. One of these vows is found in Psalm 132. 2, which should be read with Matthew 16.: "On this rock I will build My assembly." Another is recorded in Psalm 22. 22: "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren." The message entrusted to Mary of Magdala (John 20.) gives the fulfilment of this, as chapter 17. 26 the motive. Verses 6, 7 follow, showing the

happy communion of the saints with God's purpose. Finally, the voice of the Messiah is heard taking up the praise so long silent in Zion, never to be hushed again; while the vow taken in the night of His sorrow is daily fulfilled according to the constancy of His everlasting love.

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOUR!

In PSALM 62. the Spirit of Christ is leading the godly in the Way which He alone took in perfection; a single-eyed dependence upon God is before us. The word "only" translated "truly" and "surely" in verses 1 and 9 of A.V. characterizes the teaching of this Psalm, plainly telling us that God alone is to be trusted, and that at all times (ver. 8), as He only is a refuge from the deliberate and planned hostility of enemies. With their lips they may bless, but the Spirit removes the veil from the heart, and cursing is found. From such God is the only Saviour, and the terms applied to Him in verses 1 and 2 should be well weighed. In verse 10 the sons of Adam the low-born, and the sons of Ish the high-born, are equally only a breath—in the scale of the balance their weight is a breath. The sons of Ish add deceit to their inherent worthlessness, nor can human force, which may by its energy accumulate wealth, compete with God as an object of confidence: "Power belongs to God, and to Thee, O Adonai, belongeth mercy," which interprets our good favourably enough to obtain a reward (*cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 18).

PSALM 63. has even greater moral depth than the preceding, and in reading it the longing arises that the intensity of desire expressed might be transferred to many hearts now in these less strenuous times when the character of opposition is different. In this Psalm faith is blessedly in activity, so that the desolations of the wilderness and the tribula-

tion of the path work together to make God the object exclusively sought. The Spirit answers these desires by ministering the joy of the knowledge of God, even in circumstances so foreign to the Jewish thought of blessing. Thus while the man of God is looking forward to see His power and glory, as he had seen Him in the sanctuary, he is able to realize "Thy lovingkindness is better than life"; and again, "My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips." Restful in the possession of assured blessing, the remembrance of God is the occupation of the mind in the silence of the night, while foes can be left for God to deal with in the confident anticipation of the deliverance that Almighty power will effect. In the meantime "my soul followeth hard after Thee," and in that blessed pathway God's right hand gives the needed support. This illustrates a principle ever true in the ways of God with His servants (see Phil. 3.). The last verse introduces the true King as the One by whom the destinies of all good or bad are determined.

PSALM 64. is simple; it is the petition of the man of God for protection when under the oppression of the wicked. Himself conscious of uprightness (such is the meaning of the word "perfect" in verse 4) and isolated in the tumult of evil workers, he tells out to God the character of his enemies—the diligent search for matters of accusation so that excuse for their hostility may be found, the secret malice—the bitter words preceding the overt crime of condemning the guiltless, all is detailed, and we know the Master Himself experienced the same in His day. The vindication of the righteous will be complete in God's time, for that faith waits in patience.

"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

"There is nothing like that! The deep, unspeakable, unfathomable love that dwells in that bosom is the love

In the end all the upright in heart shall glory.

PSALM 65. The turning point of our present series is found, as already remarked, in the acceptance of the blessed MAN of verse 4.

"Him with joy doth God behold;
Thus is my acceptance told."

All that seemed lost during the long ages while praise is silent in Zion is secured in Christ for the glory of God in the end. The church comes in during the interval as the vessel of the praises of the Risen One; for how could those be silent who know their association in blessing with Him, His Spirit being their life. After the removal of true believers by divine power to be for ever with the Lord and the rejection of the unfaithful witness (Rev. 3. 16), Zion will awake as never before and become the centre where all flesh will approach God. Such is the divine purpose, but under Jehovah's rod of chastisement the afflicted Remnant has to confess "iniquities have been too strong for me;" at the same time grace teaches this addition: "As for our transgressions Thou wilt purge them away" [lit. "cover them"]. This favour must be based on the merits of the Man of verse 4, of whom we read, "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." In the latter part of verse 4 and in what follows we read the consequences, first in the blessing of the righteous in privileged nearness to God; then by terrible things upon their enemies; finally, He who is the only hope for man exercises His power in manifested goodness, and all the lower creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption and is viewed as rejoicing under the beneficence of the Creator (*cf.* Rom. 8. 21).

that has visited us. And how surpassing all knowledge is such a thought! It is the heaven of the heart to be silent and still, and in simple faith to let such a revelation tell its own tale upon us."

“Church-Membership.”

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

I MUST begin this paper by finding fault with the compound word which stands at its head. It may be asked: Why, if there is an objection to it, have I chosen it for a title? My reply is that the word itself, and a whole string of ideas connected with it, have become current in Christendom, and my desire is to examine these ideas in the light of the Word of God.

Scripture nowhere speaks of membership even of *the* church. Much less does it countenance such a notion as membership of *a* church, or of “*our*” church, as one commonly hears it. The fact of such terms being in current use only shows how divergent from Scripture are the everyday thoughts and words of many Christians.

The word “member” in Scripture is only used in connection with the body: either the human body, or the body of Christ, of which the human body is the figure. It may be objected that the church is the body of Christ, and that therefore it must be as scriptural to speak of “members of the church” as it is to speak of “members of His body.”

But the body is only one of the many figures used to set forth the truth as to the church. The church is also spoken of as a house, with stones; as a city, with gates and walls; as a bride; as the temple of God, and in other ways. *Membership* in the Scriptures, is confined to *one* of these figures—that of the body.

I am not quibbling about mere words or phrases. I am persuaded that a very serious defect of understanding underlies the common speech of many Christians in these connections.

The word *member* is used in a general way to denote a person who belongs to a certain society or institution. We speak of members of Parliament, members of such-and-such a club,

members of a party, a company, a guild, a union. The word *body* is also used in this way, and we speak of the members of this or that public body. It cannot be too emphatically affirmed that Scripture uses neither of these words in this way. When it speaks of the body and its members it does not refer to the church as a society or company, of which individual Christians are members in the same way that men are members of any political, religious, or other society. It invariably refers to the human body and its different parts, or to that of which the human body is the figure—the body of Christ—the church *in that aspect*.

Certain great truths connected with the church are set forth under the figure of the one body with its many members. We shall examine these in due course. Let it be here remarked that these great truths are weakened—if their hold upon the soul is not altogether lost—by the use of the word “member” in the common way. To speak of a Christian as being a member of a church, or congregation, or local assembly, is to fail utterly in the apprehension of what true membership is. It is to predicate a membership for the said Christian which is *not the membership of the body of Christ*, and which is therefore not true membership according to the Scriptures.

“We gladly receive all true believers, who are walking uprightly, even if they are not members of any of our assemblies.” So said a brother in the Lord to the writer, not many days since.

“That is just what I so decidedly object to,” was my reply. “You have a membership which is not that of the body of Christ, for, according to your own statement, there are true believers who are outside it.”

“Well, what principle do *you* go on?” inquired my friend.

“The principle of the reception of true believers, not scripturally disqualified, *because they are members* just as truly as any of us, of the only thing of which we ourselves are members—the body of Christ,” was my reply.

It may help us if we remark that while Peter, James and John all speak of the church in various ways, only in the writings of Paul do we find the body spoken of, with its consequent membership. Peter speaks of the spiritual house with its living stones. John speaks much of what we call the *family*, where, as God's children, born of Him and possessing His nature, we enjoy that infinite love of His that characterizes this relationship. He records, too, the teaching of the Lord Jesus as to the Shepherd and the one flock, and presents to us the wonderful picture of the place the church will have in the glorious day that is coming, “the holy city, new Jerusalem,” “the bride, the Lamb's wife.” James speaks of the church rather as that which supersedes the synagogue in the place that the latter had in connection with God's testimony among men. But neither of these apostles refer to the church in its *body* aspect. Neither the Shepherd and the flock, nor the Father and the family, nor the Vine and the branches, nor the Master and the household, set forth the same truth as the Head and the body.

It was reserved to Paul to make known the great truth that Christ is the Head of a body, and that the members of His body are livingly, organically, united with Himself as truly as in the case of members of a human body.

Let us now examine in order the passages in Paul's epistles which treat of this.

“FOR AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY, AND ALL MEMBERS HAVE NOT THE SAME OFFICE: SO WE BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND EVERY ONE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER” (Rom. 12. 4, 5).

In this passage the Apostle merely refers to the marvellous truth contained in these words as affording a basis for the practical exhortations which precede and follow. He does not speak here of the relations of the members to the Head, but affirms our mutual and interdependent relations as fellow-members of one body. Being such, due consideration is to mark all our dealings with one another. Whether the service appointed to us be reckoned important or insignificant, whether it involve prominence or be rendered in obscurity, we are to be governed, even in our thoughts (ver. 3) by the great truth that we, Christians, are no mere aggregate of so many units, no mere assemblage of so many redeemed individuals, but that we are component parts of a great organic entity, bound together in vital unity to perform our various functions, not as isolated servants of one Lord, but as being one body in Christ, and therefore members one of another. What a different complexion the thought of this would put upon all our service, even that of such a humble character as “shewing mercy” or “weeping with them that weep.” How it would effect us in our thoughts towards one another (ver. 10), in our personal experience (ver. 12), in our treatment of others (vers. 14, 15), and in our judgment of things and people (ver. 16). Surely the truth of our joint membership of the one body has an intensely practical bearing.

“KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODIES ARE THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST? SHALL I THEN TAKE THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST AND MAKE THEM THE MEMBERS OF AN HARLOT? GOD FORBID” (1 Cor. 6. 15).

Here we have the truth of our membership, not mutual relationship to one another, but in personal relationship of each one to Christ. The thought of the one body is not brought into the passage. Our bodies are said to be members of *Christ*. Each believer is a member of Him. Of course, this involves the mutual membership of all the parts of the body. But that is not the

point of this particular Scripture. What it brings before us is the marvellous relationship in which each one of us has been set with regard to Christ, and the utter incongruity between such a relationship and fornication.

It is indeed a great safeguard against sin of every kind to bear in mind that we are *members of Christ*. Oh lofty and exalted membership! How exclusive in its very essence, of all that is incompatible with Christ! How prohibitive of every association that would link sin with His Holy Name!

“THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST? FOR WE BEING MANY ARE ONE BREAD, AND ONE BODY: FOR WE ARE ALL PARTAKERS OF THAT ONE BREAD” (1 Cor. 10. 16, 17).

The setting in which this passage appears is very noteworthy, and will help us in the consideration of our theme.

The fact of our partaking of the Lord's supper involves a certain *fellowship*. It was so in the case of Israel. Eating of the sacrifices involved participation on the part of the one who ate in the privileges and responsibilities connected with the Jewish altar. The act carried with it this significance: that he who ate was an integral part of that people whose national unity was expressed by their attendance at that one altar.

So too with Paganism. To eat of things offered to idols was to identify oneself with what was really the “table of devils.” Such an act carried with it the awful significance that the eater was a part of Satan's kingdom (Luke 11. 18), one of those who were under “the authority of darkness” (Col. 1. 13, N.T.).

In Christianity the same principle holds good. In eating, as Christians do, of the one bread, we express the truth that we constitute one fellowship, a fellowship with which all others,

whether Jewish or pagan, are incompatible. Freemasons have *their* “fellowship,” and wherever a “mason” is found in any of the remotest ramifications of their world-wide organization he is a constituent part of the one great whole. Christians, in like manner, have *their* great fellowship, divinely formed. Each one of us belongs to this fellowship. Each one is a sharer of the privileges and responsibilities that belong to the whole.

The Christian fellowship is that of *the body of Christ*. In this it is unlike Judaism or Paganism, or Freemasonry, or any rival or counterfeit fellowship. The partakers of the one bread are not only bound together in one fellowship, but are members of one body. This fact comes out very definitely in chapter 12.

It must be remarked in passing that what 1 Corinthians 10. brings before us is not the *purpose* of the Lord's Supper, the loving remembrance of Himself. We find this in chapter 11. In chapter 10. the *significance of the act* and what is involved therein are dwelt upon in order that those who belong to the Christian fellowship may abstain from *all that would compromise that fellowship*.

“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY: SO ALSO IS CHRIST. 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” (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13).

Two things must here be noticed. First, the astonishing fact that the name of “the Christ” (the Greek has the article) is given to the body. It is not Christ personally, but His official title applied to His body on earth. The thought conveyed is, I suppose, that Christ being no longer here, He is represented by His body, in which are reproduced by the power of the

Holy Spirit the graces that were seen in all their perfection in Himself.

Second, the manner in which the body has been formed, namely through the baptism by the one Spirit. This refers, of course, to the event of Pentecost. Those who up till then had been individual disciples were brought into an entirely new relationship to Christ and to one another, being livingly united as members of one body by the reception of the Holy Ghost.

So much is heard in certain quarters now-a-days about the baptism of the Spirit, that it is well to notice that in Scripture it is not spoken of as a personal experience, to be looked for in the case of individual believers. It was a historic event, not needing to be repeated, though others (as in Acts 10. and 19.) were subsequently brought, by their reception of the Spirit into the unity formed at Pentecost.

Our union with Christ is therefore not by faith, nor even by our being quickened, but by the Holy Ghost. All are indwelt by one and the same Spirit, and are thus constituted members of the one body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 12. 14-27; it speaks for itself. It is only necessary to observe that although the assembly at Corinth was only a part of the body of Christ, the Apostle speaks of the whole body; for the assembly there was, according to the principle of its gathering, the body of Christ as assembled at Corinth. It is true that at the beginning he speaks of all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus; but in fact he addresses the Corinthian assembly. And the general expression shows that, in the walk of the assembly, and in its general interests, a local assembly cannot be separated from the whole body of Christians on earth; and the language employed here shows that, as to their position before God, the Christians of one town were considered as representing the whole assembly as far as regarded that locality;

not as independent of the rest, but, on the contrary, as inseparably united to the others, living and acting, with respect to that locality as members of the body of Christ, and looked upon as such in it, because every Christian formed a part of that body, and they formed a part of it likewise.

[“From the verses that follow, we see that the Apostle, while looking upon the Christians there as the body of Christ, the members of which they were, has in his mind the whole assembly as the assembly of God.”— (“Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Vol. IV, page 240).]

One further thing must be remarked, namely that the disposition of the various members of the one body, and the ordering of their respective functions is of *God*. “*God* hath tempered the body together.” “Now hath *God* set the members every one of them in the body.”

Membership of the body of Christ is therefore not optional. No believer can say whether he will or will not be a member. Nor does it rest with any assembly, committee of officials, or pastor. *God* has assigned a place in full membership of the body to every believer; no two with just the same function, but each member necessary to all the others. A beautiful interdependence marks the whole.

We have now reviewed, in briefest outline, the passages in Romans and 1 Corinthians which speak of the body of Christ and its membership. The importance of the subject makes it advisable that we should defer for a future occasion our consideration of the wonderful passages in Ephesians and Colossians which deal with it from quite another standpoint. When we examine the references in these Epistles we shall hope to point out the special connection of the one body with the great eternal purpose of God, and the place that it has in connection with His present working for the glory of Christ.

Divine Administration.

(JAMES GREEN).

AN ADDRESS.

Ephesians I, 9 to 11; III, 1 to 12.

I WANT to call your attention to a word which occurs three times in the passages we have read: the word "dispensation," which would be much better translated "administration," for in each case it speaks of energy and supply flowing from a centre of power.

Some people seem rather afraid of this Epistle to the Ephesians. I have heard them say, "It is too high for us. We are not up to it." But that is self-occupation; it is not a question of what we can reach to, but what has the Lord Jesus Christ reached? We are so apt to turn in upon ourselves, but, if we get before our souls what the Lord Jesus Christ has reached, and that God has opened the heavens to us in order that we may look in and see where Christ is in the glory of God, it should be a great encouragement to us.

I was climbing a mountain in the Lake District. It was hard work going up and up, with the mists all around one, and not able to see very far, but what an encouragement it was to get a little rift in the clouds overhead, and to look up and see the top of the mountain bathed in sunshine. In such a case you would not say, "I am not there," but rather, "That is where I am going." The glimpse of the mountain-top in the sunshine encourages you to go on. You have got the end before you, and you say, "That is what I am after." Now it is a grand thing to get God's ideal before us; and what is that? Christ in glory, Christ in all the blessed acceptance that He is in, in the presence of God—the blessed God, crowned with all the glory of His work, and expressing there all God's thoughts for man. Now it is never said that Christ is like God, because He *is* God. We are made to bear His moral likeness, but the Spirit of God carefully guards the

person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It does say, "He is the image of God," the one in whom God is perfectly expressed, and He is the one to whom every knee must bow, and whom every tongue confesses as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Turn to John 17. 22, 23. There the Lord says, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved Me." These two verses gather up not only the image and the likeness of which we have already spoken (see April issue), but also the administration that I am calling your attention to tonight. The Lord Jesus in John 17. speaks of the glory and of the saints as being one in glory. In verse 21 He prays for them as they are down here in this world. The world ought to have believed through the church. There has been a great failure on that side, but the Lord prays that the saints may be one in glory, that the Father may be in Him, and He in them; He the image of God, God perfectly expressed in Him, and Christ perfectly expressed in the saints. That is a wonderful thought, and what will the effect of it be? Well, in that day of glory, which is called in Ephesians 1. the "administration of the fulness of times," God will be seen perfectly expressed in Christ, and Christ will be seen perfectly expressed in His saints. The effect of it will be that the world will know that the Father has sent the Son, and that He has loved us as He has loved Him. That is simply magnificent.

Christians to-day are very much occupied with their failures—not only with their individual failures, but with church failures. I am sorry for the Christian that has not a church life of

some sort or another. By that I mean that not only do you walk as an individual, but you are walking in company with others. What you are in your individual pathway is a very important thing indeed. You have to walk individually with God, but then how are you walking with your fellow-Christians? That is what I mean by your church life. How are you getting on with your brethren? The Lord Jesus prayed that the saints might be one, but Christians to-day are anything but one. That is because everything fails that is committed to man. God knew it would fail, and it is no surprise to Him that it has failed. We may say it ought not to have done so. Perhaps not, but there it is. Everything that is committed to man will fail, but everything that is committed to the Lord Jesus Christ will stand. So He maintains the oneness for which He prayed, in the power of the Spirit, in life and communion, and will bring it all out to the eternal glory of God. God wants to lift your heart above all the failure that is on man's side; He wants to show you the top so that you may see everything as it is in Christ, and then you can come down and walk a little more in the light of that.

In Ephesians 3. 10 there is a very wonderful word; it is the word NOW. "To the intent that *now*." It will be all right there in the glory, but God wants those things of Christ in glory to have a very practical effect upon the saints of God NOW, at the present time. Ephesians 3. has been frequently spoken of as a parenthesis in the line of the Epistle. From the end of chapter 2. you can read right on to the beginning of the fourth. The Apostle speaks of a habitation of God by the Spirit, and in chapter 4. he says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called." But he brings in chapter 3. in this parenthetical form because that is exactly what this church period is in the dispensations of God. God had His line of prophecy in the Old Testament, and speaks in the Old

Testament Scriptures of certain things that were to be fulfilled. He speaks of His purposes regarding Israel, and those things will all be brought to pass. But the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the rejection of God's Son, stopped for the time the accomplishment of those purposes. God has not broken His word; but He is at perfect liberty to put down the piece of work on which He was engaged and to take up another piece of work that He had never yet commenced, and to carry on that new piece of work to its finish. This is exactly what He is doing. The period in which we live is a parenthesis in the dispensations of God, and no prophecy of the Old Testament applies to it. God is not fulfilling Old Testament prophecies now. I do not mean that we may not gather many precious lessons from the Old Testament, because it is all about Christ, and everything that is about Christ is delightful to the heart. Read the Old Testament, but remember that that which God is doing at the present time is new altogether. It has been going on now these hundreds of years since the Lord Jesus has been in glory, and it will be finished when the Lord Jesus Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, to gather His saints home to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. Now it is concerning this period, and concerning this present work of God that Ephesians 3. speaks, and with it is connected a double administration.

The Apostle says, "If ye have heard of the administration of the grace of God." It is marvellous the way in which the grace of God is flowing from the centre of power where Christ sits at God's right hand. The idea in this word "administration" is that of a perfectly organized system, complete in all its parts, each part dependent upon every other part, and all of divine workmanship, as it says in chapter 2., "We are His workmanship." It is all divine. No human architect planned it, but it exists in the power of the Spirit. Christ

is there in glory, and from Christ in glory there is an administration of grace. Now look how wonderfully it flows. The grace of God is expressed in the gospel, and it passes on from one to another. I do not know how the gospel reached you. I know how it reached me. Probably if we were to compare the various ways in which each one of us was converted, we should be astonished. When I look back on my own conversion—it was not very sudden or very startling, but it seems to me perfectly marvellous the way God put things together, ordering circumstances to bring me into contact with a certain man, and that that man should say certain things; the whole thing fitted together like a perfect piece of workmanship. It was so in my case. It was so in your own. Think of how your conversion was brought about. What was it? It was the administration of the grace of God. That is the way the grace came to you.

Then there is something else. "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery." There were two things that the Apostle had always before him, and they were not separate things, but dependent one on the other. They were the gospel and the church; and what Satan has been at, and is at to-day as hard as ever, is to separate between the gospel and the church. Now God has joined them together. The church is the outcome of the preaching of the gospel, and you could not have the church unless the gospel was preached. Look how inseparable they are in chapter 4. 11: He gave some apostles, and some prophets." They were the foundation gifts. "Some evangelists"—he puts them in the middle—then "some pastors and teachers," and they were all "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ." You could not do without the evangelist, but then the evangelist is to lead on to the church. Now do not let anything separate in your mind between the gospel and the church, because God has joined

them together. I think you will see how the Apostle brings that out in this chapter. He speaks about the great secret that God had in His mind. When He disclosed His purpose at the first—to have man in His own image and likeness—He did not let out the secret of how that was to be brought about. He kept that secret hid in Himself until the time when He revealed it to the apostle Paul. "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words." You will find those few words in the end of the first chapter, where he speaks about Christ being "the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all."

Now note this verse (chap. 3. 5), because it will be a great help to you, and will make clear what I have been saying, "Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men." Moses did not know it. David did not know it. Abraham did not know it. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—none of them knew it. It was not made known to them as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (ver. 6), "that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." It means that God would gather out of the whole world, without any reference to nationality, the saints of the present interval, to make them into a joint body, of which Christ is the Head. You get more, perhaps, of the headship of Christ in Colossians than you do in Ephesians, but here in Ephesians you get the wonderful structure of the body that is Christ's fulness, the body that is to express Himself.

Now mark this—"and partakers of his promises in Christ by the glad tidings." Look how he links up the gospel with it. "Whereof," he says (ver. 7), "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, by the effectual working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace

given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." You, my dear brother, go out to preach the gospel. Do you know what you are preaching? You go, as God may give you opportunity and access to souls, to reach some poor sinner. What you are preaching to them is "the unsearchable riches of Christ." What inexhaustible supplies of grace, and from such a source! Get to know Him better, and you will preach the gospel better. The better you know Christ, and the more you are filled with His glory, the more the wonder of Himself comes before your soul, the better you will preach the gospel, "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

But then there is something else. "And to make all see" (when the gospel has reached them, when the unsearchable riches of Christ have come home to their hearts and every need is satisfied out of His fulness), he says, "I have not done with them. I want to make all see what is the administration of the mystery." Not only has He picked you up as a sinner, but this wonderful administration that He is carrying on to-day is to form the likeness of Christ in you. God is forming the likeness of Christ in each one of us now, to come out in that day as His image; for to represent Him, you must be like Him. It is not simply that the image is representation, as the head on a coin represents the king but is not like him. That is not what God purposes, but that the saints are to represent Christ in that day of glory because they *are* like Him. So He brings the preciousness of Christ before us, attaching our hearts in affection to His person, forming each one after the fashion of the way He walked, taking us up in our little affairs through all the circumstances of daily life. Bringing us into contact one with another, bringing us together as we are to-night. You may say, "This is only a meeting." I look upon it as much more than that. A meeting like this—

and all occasions on which God's people get together—is just the opportunity for God to carry on His work of making Christ more precious to our hearts than ever He was. Many is the time I have been in a meeting, and gone away from it saying, "Christ is more real to me than He ever was before—thank God!" That is part of the working out of this wonderful administration of the secret that was hid from the beginning of the world in God Himself. Some people read the verse as if the mystery was hidden in the Old Testament Scriptures. It was not hid there. It was hidden in God. God kept it hid in Himself, when He created all things. "To the intent that *now*"—look at this verse—"to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be known by means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God." Angels are looking down into this world, and they see this work of God going on; they see it going on in the soul of every believer—the working out of this marvellous mystery, this wonderful secret, by which every believer is united to every other believer, and all united to the Head in heaven. They see all this going on, and what are they doing? Admiring the manifold working of the all-various wisdom of God.

"According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." We are taken right back to eternity, before the world ever was, to the eternal purpose of God! You could not say when that commenced. It was in God, and the saints are a part of it. The object of that purpose is the heading up of all things in Christ, the display of it is in the church made in His image and likeness; the fulness of it is the glory of God, and you and I are brought into the knowledge of it now, and made partakers of it, according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

Answers to Correspondents.

Sin not imputed where there is no law.—(Romans 5. 13).

R.W.—You must not infer from this passage that those who sinned without law will escape the judgment of God, for the final judgment of the wicked is not the point here; such judgment will undoubtedly take place both for those who sinned under the law and for those who sinned without it, as Romans 2. 12 states. The Apostle is proving the sinful condition of the whole of Adam's race, and he does this by showing that death reigned from Adam to Moses, clearly demonstrating the fact that all during that period were sinners, even though they broke no positive and declared commandment of God, as did Adam and the Israelites. When the law was given it made the matter worse, for every sin against the law became

an "offence," or transgression, and the penalty which the law inflicted upon its infringement fell upon the transgressor here in the world; the sin was put to the account of the sinner, and dealt with here; we see this exemplified in Israel's history. But God did not treat those who had no law as breakers of the law, so they were not chastened by the rod of God as was Israel; nevertheless, the judgment of Revelation 20. awaits them and all others who have died without mercy. They will be without excuse, too, for though they had no direct prohibitions from God their consciences bore witness to them that the things they did were wrong (Rom. 2. 15).

The Sins of David.

R.W.F.—We think that a distinction must be drawn between David's sin "in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" and the numbering of the people (1 Chron. 21.). The former was David's own personal transgression of the law of God, the blame of which lay entirely at his own door, and for which he had personally to suffer under the government of God, even though he received forgiveness for the sin on his repentance. The numbering of the people was a national sin; it was the climax, evidently, of national pride that did not give the glory of its greatness and prosperity to God; this we gather from 2 Samuel 24., and from the fact that the

whole nation came under God's chastening hand as a result. David, as king, ought to have rebuked this pride and led his people in humble praise to God instead of being carried away by the popular feeling. Yet the sin is not put down to him as a personal trespass, though he confessed it as his and was prepared to suffer for it to save the people. This explanation will, we hope, meet your difficulty as to the statement: "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings 15. 5).

"NOW OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, AND GOD, EVEN OUR FATHER, WHICH HATH LOVED US, AND HATH GIVEN US EVERLASTING CONSOLATION AND GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE."

"COMFORT YOUR HEARTS, AND STABLISH YOU IN EVERY GOOD WORD AND WORK" (2 Thess. 2. 16, 17).

The Son of God.—(Hebrews 1.):

“God hath spoken by His Son.”

HE is the One by whom God has come into full and final expression.

“Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things.”

The wide universe, filled with the glory of that which He has expressed, is to be His possession.

“By whom also He made the worlds.”

He was the One, at the advent of time, by whom all things were created.

“Who being the brightness of His glory.”

He exists as the radiance of the uncreated splendours of the eternal God.

“And the express image of His Person.”

He is the accurate and most exact

resemblance of the eternal, infinite, and ineffable substance of God.

“And upholding all things by the word of His power.”

He sustains and controls by His omnipotent Word the universe that He created, and which He is to fill with the glory that He has declared.

“When He had by Himself purged our sins.”

The oblation that He has offered to God for our sins is complete and of infinite value, since that offering was Himself, and was offered according to the glory and power of His own person.

“Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.”

He has assumed His rightful place in the position of honour and power—at the right hand of the eternal Majesty.

The Son of God and Resurrection.

(HENRY J. VINE).

WHEN the centurion and his companions who were on guard while our Lord Jesus Christ was in the tomb saw the earthquake which opened the graves, and the things that took place at His death and resurrection, they feared greatly, saying, “*Truly this was the Son of God*” (Matt. 27. 54).

It should be noticed that this was said at the time when “*many bodies*” of the saints arose, and came out of “*the graves*” after Christ’s own resurrection.

What a witness were those raised “*bodies*” out of “*the graves*” to the glory of the Son of God, and to His triumph over death.

In John 11. His glory is seen in bringing Lazarus forth from “*the*

grave” also; and in John 5. it is written, “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in “**THE GRAVES**” (*μνημείους*) shall hear His voice, and shall come forth” (ver. 28).

The word for “grave” is indisputably the same in each of these scriptures. It unquestionably assures our hearts as to His power to raise the dead, as to His triumph over death, and as to His glory, who is the Son of God, the Resurrection and the Life. What victory! What glory! Blessed be His name for ever.

“The Lord is risen indeed :
And death has lost its prey :
And with Him all the ransomed freed
Shall reign in endless day.”

The Blowing of the Silver Trumpets.

(J. T. MAWSON).

Numbers 10. 1-10.

“Poor and feeble though we be,
Saviour we belong to Thee!
Thine we are Thou Son of God,
Thine, the purchase of Thy Blood.”

THE silver trumpets figured largely in the everyday life of Israel, and their use speaks typically to us of a great and blessed truth. It is well known that silver in Scripture is a symbol of redemption. Every Israelite that was numbered from 20 years and upward had to bring a half shekel of it as an offering to Jehovah. It was the acknowledgment on their part that they belonged to God who had redeemed them out of the house of bondage for His own pleasure, and the silver thus offered was devoted to the service of the sanctuary (Exod. 30.).

Now these silver trumpets were essentially sanctuary vessels. May they not have been made from the silver offered by the Israelites to Jehovah at the time of their numbering? This is quite possible, though it would almost seem as though the whole of these redemption offerings were used for the making of the sockets and hooks of the tabernacle (Exod. 38.); but be that as it may, these trumpets were first used at the door of the tabernacle, which was founded upon the silver sockets—redemption; and to assemble the people there was the primary purpose of their silvery notes.

When the priests of God blew long and loud upon them they proclaimed to the uttermost limits of Israel that the people were God's, that He had redeemed them at His own cost and by His own power, and that having redeemed them He had rights over them, and that He could summon them when He pleased to listen to His word at the door of His sanctuary. They were to hold themselves at His disposal. It mattered not with what they were

engaged, God's call was imperative, and their own pursuits must take the second place; must be abandoned, indeed, and that immediately, what-time the blasts of the silver trumpets rang in their hearing.

Have those of us who have believed yielded ourselves completely to the truth of which this type speaks, so that it is not merely a matter of doctrine with us that we are God's redeemed ones, but a great practical reality in our souls? Do we mean it, when we sing—

“I love to own Lord Jesus
Thy claims on *me* divine.
Bought with Thy blood most precious
Whose can I be but Thine?”

Let us give attentive ears to the truth proclaimed by the silver mouths of God's trumpets. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE” (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20). And also in 1 Peter 1. 19, 20: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold . . . but WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The words themselves are pure like silver, for “the words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps. 12. 6), and, wonderful fact, obedience to them purifies the soul; the incorruptible seed brings forth after its own sort. For we read, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit” (1 Peter

1. 22). And for practical and continuous purity of heart and life we must keep the fact that we belong to God prominently before our souls.

God has a right to command us, for He has redeemed us, and He has given to us His Word that we might know His will, and He has given to us His Spirit that we might do His will—that we might be ever at His disposal.

The tabernacle was the God-appointed centre for His redeemed people in those ancient days, and from that centre His words to them went forth, and to it He summoned them when He would. That was the shadow, the picture, Christ is the substance, the reality; and if we are obedient to the Word of God Christ will be our one and only centre, as He is the One in whom all God's will has been declared for us.

But the priests not only blew the trumpets on God's behalf, they also blew them for the people. When they brought their BURNT OFFERINGS and PEACE OFFERINGS to God, they had to blow these trumpets. The joyous notes of redemption had to ring forth when they approached unto God with those things that spoke of worship. And this would teach us that we can only approach God in worship as those who are redeemed. Israel offered no sacrifice to God in Egypt, when still under the domination of Pharaoh. They had to be set free from their foes, and redemption did this for them, and in the joy of their freedom they worshipped the Lord. So with us, if we "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus" (1 Peter 2. 5), it is because we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

IN THE DAYS OF THEIR GLADNESS and IN THEIR SOLEMN DAYS also they had to blow the trumpets, whether in prosperity or adversity, in joy or sorrow, in exaltation or humiliation, the redemption note had to be dominant. They were ever to keep in memory the chief fact of their existence

—that they were the redeemed of the Lord.

How much more do we need this, and how it would keep us from independence of God in the days of prosperity, and from depression in the days of adversity. How it would sustain our hearts in times of sorrow and pressure if we blew the silver trumpets. For if we belong to God, will He not do the very best for us, and may we not rest contentedly in the love that made Him redeem us at so great a cost?

AT THE BEGINNINGS OF THEIR MONTHS also the trumpets had to be brought out, setting forth for us that in every change in our lives we have to remember that we are the redeemed of the Lord. Is there a young man who is receiving promotion in his profession? Let him blow the silver trumpet. A young man and woman to be married in the Lord? Let the silvery notes of the fact that they belong first of all to the Lord ring out more joyously than all beside. Do any contemplate a removal from one town to another, or from one land to another? Let them make the change in the deep sense that they are not their own, but the Lord's, and say from their hearts, "If the Lord will." "At the beginning of your months ye shall blow with the trumpets."

WHEN THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE they could not do without these instruments. Their swords and spears and shield were not indispensable, but these trumpets were. If they blew them not they ran the terrible risk of defeat; but if they blew them, God said, "*Ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.*" We are often in conflict, and the world, the flesh and the devil often press us hard. We feel that our strength is small, and that our enemies are many and strong. If in the conflict we lose the sense that we belong to God we cannot prevail, but as this is remembered we are "more

than conquerors, through Him that loved us." The blowing of the trumpets brought the Lord to the aid of His people, and it is well for us to *remind Him*, when in conflict, that He has bought us, and that as being His He will not, He cannot, abandon us to our foes, and that in His power alone can we prevail. It fills our hearts with courage also as we remember the same glorious facts, and keeps us in dependence upon the One to whom we belong, and the enemy must flee when we stand up as the redeemed of the Lord to resist him.

It is recorded that when once the army of the great Charlemagne had become completely hemmed in by a mighty host of Saracens and was in danger of annihilation, that one of

the Frank warriors stepped forward and blew upon his bugle three terrific blasts. The first blast brought the pursuing army to a standstill, the second spread consternation throughout their ranks, and at the third they fled from the field in great disorder. More effectual, more powerful in our conflict with the foe will the blowing of the silver trumpets be. For no weapon that is formed against the redeemed of the Lord shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise up in judgment *shall* be condemned. This is their heritage, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.

Then let us at all times and under all circumstances glory in the fact that we are the redeemed of the Lord, and that He is the Lord our God.

A Song of Love.

HOW tedious and tasteless the hours
 When Jesus no longer I see,
 Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
 Then lose all their sweetness for me.
 The midsummer sun shines but dim,
 The fields strive in vain to look gay,
 But when I am happy in Him,
 December's as pleasant as May.

His name yields the richest perfume,
 And sweeter than music His voice,
 His presence disperses my gloom,
 And makes all within me rejoice.
 I should, were He always so nigh,
 Have nothing to wish or to fear,
 No mortal so happy as I,
 My summer would last all the year.

Content with beholding His face
 My all to Himself is resigned ;
 No changes in time or in place
 Can make any change in my mind.
 When blest with a sense of His love
 A palace a toy doth appear,
 And prisons would palaces prove,
 For Jesus would dwell with me there.

A Jasper Stone.

(JAMES GREEN).

Rev. 21. 9-11; 18, 19. Heb. 1. 5, 10. Phil. 2. 9-11. Eph. 1. 19-23.

NOTHING can be of greater importance for the Christian than to know for what purpose God has saved him. Lacking this knowledge, he will become self-centred in his own blessing, desirous, doubtless, that his fellow-men should know the forgiveness that through grace he possesses, but he will be without that definiteness of aim in his life which a full knowledge of the will of God produces.

In two previous papers (April and June issues) we saw that God's thought from the commencement was to have man in His image and likeness, and that the fulfilment of this is found in Christ, who is the image of God. We saw further that in His marvellous wisdom and grace, God pleases to associate with Christ a people gathered out of every nation under heaven, during the time of His absence from the earth; and that this company, distinct in its calling from all others, is known in Scripture as the church, His assembly, the body of which He is the living Head.

Then we considered the wonderful administration of the grace of God, by which this is being accomplished; and souls brought from the darkness of sin and its judgment into the light of God, that they may know the unsearchable riches of Christ. But, blessed as this grace is, it is the introduction only to something more wonderful still, viz. the administration by which the body of Christ, consisting of all who believe in His name, is being built up and nourished, in order that it may be fitted for the further administration of the fulness of times, when Christ shall be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.

In Revelation 21. this latter administration is unfolded under the figure of the city, the holy Jerusalem.

In verse 9 of that chapter the angel says to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," and before his vision rises the city, radiant with the beauty of many a precious stone, its twelvefold measurements speaking of its perfect suitability for administration, and its characteristic splendour—that of a jasper stone, clear as crystal. We must now seek to gather up the thoughts conveyed by this last symbol. In Revelation 21. 11, the jasper stands connected with the glory of God, in other words, the manifestation of His excellence; not deity, for this can never be given to the creature, but that which God is in the manifestation of His own moral blessedness, in grace, goodness, power, holiness, love, righteousness.

It will help us to turn to Revelation 4. 3, where the One who is seated on the throne is, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone. The jasper of Scripture is a clear, transparent jewel, unlike its modern representative, which is opaque, and the sardine or sardius is equivalent to the ruby. It is not difficult to see that this latter stone figures the glory of redemption, the truth connected with this being that God is revealed, and this is the jasper. In both these characters—of Revealer of God and Redeemer of men—Christ has been rejected, in both He has been throned, in both He will judge the world in righteousness. The glory of Redemption is His: the witness of this will be seen in the city, for the sardius is in its foundation, but that which will characterize the administration of the fulness of times, the heading up of all things in Christ, that which will cause kings to do homage with their glory and honour will be the jasper glory of God manifest in Him shining forth through His church. No created light shall shine forth from it in that day, but the

glory of God shall fill it with the light of the revelation of Himself, and the Lamb who suffered once shall be there, its centre and its theme.

The city is marked in its first foundation, in the building of its wall, in its shining, in that of which it shall be the abiding witness, by the fact that it owes its existence to the manifestation of God in flesh, in the Person of the Son. This is the great secret, without controversy, on which all else rests, and this is the jasper light in which the nations of the millennial day shall walk. The princes of this world, too blind to see it, have rejected and crucified the Lord of glory, but then they shall know it, not only in Him whom they have slain, but in those who, being part of Himself, shall set forth the image of Christ as He Himself is the image of God. Deep and blessed satisfaction to His heart who ever sought His glory that sent Him; precious and wonderful the joy of His saints, to make known the deep perfections long known in secret; no longer seeing as in a glass darkly, but then face to face; no longer to know in part, but then to know even as we are known, and out of the fulness of that knowledge to tell forth the excellent glory of God to all who inhabit His wide universe, that God in Christ may be all in all. Well may our hearts thrill at such a prospect, in view of which the Spirit is the seal and the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

The three Scriptures, Hebrew 1., Philippians 2., and Ephesians 1., may lead us to the present application of these things to our pathway here in connection with the testimony of our Lord. In the practice of geometrical drawing there is a problem which consists of describing a number of circles within a circle touching each other and the given circle, and this represents the idea of the church of God which is current in some quarters. We are all one in Christ Jesus, say they; we are all gathered to His name;

but, alas! like the geometrical figure, each circle has its own centre, and that differing from all the others. Thanks be to His grace, all Christians are included in the great circumference of His own, but still the fact remains that all are not gathered to one Centre. Now God's idea of the church is not a number of circles within a circle, however closely they may be in contact, but a unity brought about by the fact that there is one only Centre. To this alone the Spirit of God gathers, and this is the reason why He lays such emphasis on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the fulness of that name takes possession of the soul, it must, by its very perfection, exclude every other name that might be used as a gathering centre.

In Hebrews 1. we have the greatness of "the Lord." "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." The only one of whom it can be said, as all else perishes, "Thou remainest." In the glory of His Person He is the Son, and as He comes into manhood, begotten in time, He is owned by God in the same relationship in which He ever stood. "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," His humanity henceforth being inseparable from all that He is. As the greatness of His glory is before our souls our place is only to adore, and so much the more will the unique character of His Lordship command us in all that relates to His name. In Philippians 2. God gives us His estimate of the worth of the name of "Jesus." To that name He has decreed that every knee shall bow. The name of His humiliation; the name of all the tender graces of the One who has revealed the heart of God; the name that speaks of all His sorrows; the name inscribed upon His cross of shame. There is no name like it; it excludes all others, as it claims the deepest affections of our hearts, and bows the inmost springs of our beings by the constraining power of the love,

that humbled itself to death, even the death of the cross. It is in the likeness of the Lord Jesus that God is forming His saints to-day; removing the likeness of the first man and creating the graces of the second.

Ephesians 1. completes the triple glory of His name. He is the "Christ," the One who has displayed God, and whose excellence is attested by the fact that all the counsels of God have Him for their centre. For, as we have seen before, in the administration of the fulness of times all things in heaven and on earth shall be headed up in Him. This consummation is borne witness to now by the place to which God has raised Him, setting His name above all others that may be named either in this world or in that which is to come. In the knowledge of this lies the solution of all the difficulties that distract His people to-day, when many voices are clamouring for adherents to parties,

names, and isms, or propounding schemes for the amalgamation of all these, the answer to all is that Christ is Head over all things to the church, which is His body, and to Him alone the Spirit of God is gathering. A wonderful title is that of "the Christ," belonging to Himself personally, and yet, as in 1 Corinthians 12. 12, put upon the church, for in union with Himself, His bride is to be His image, the display of the glory of God, of which He is the lamp. The light of the jasper shall shine through the vessel of wrought gold, the saints the righteousness of God in Him, jewelled with all the graces found in Himself, He the Lamb, the centre, the source of the light, the effulgence of the glory of God. May these things have a present effect upon us by detaching us from every name that will have no place in that day, and leading us to find our true centre in Him alone.

JESUS.

JESUS the holy,
Seated victorious,
By God the glorious
Made Christ and Lord;
Heaven's Light and Centre,
Centre of blessing,
Centre of worship,
By all adored.

Choirs of blest angels
Thy throne surrounding,
Ever resounding,
"Praise to the Lamb,"
Joy in beholding
Ever unfolding,
In Thee the glories
Of the "I AM."

And Thy redeemed ones,
Standing yet nearer,
To Thy heart dearer
Than any there;
Sound forth the story,
Of highest glory,
Thee their Redeemer
Glad to declare.

Like many waters
On the shore breaking,
Echoes awaking
With ceaseless roll;
High rise their voices,
In anthems swelling,
Praise that comes welling
Up from the soul.

Their crowns of glory—
Crowns everlasting—
Willingly casting
Down at Thy feet;
Worthy, Thee only,
Ever attesting;
And manifesting
Gratitude meet.

We, Thy blood-bought ones,
With note harmonious
(Hearts in full sympathy)
Strike, too, the chord;
As we behold Thee,
Man in the glory,
Gladly adore Thee,
Our Lord and God.

Science or the Bible?

(R. McCALLUM).

WE live in an age in which science has been exalted to great heights, an age in which it is often accorded a higher place than THE WORD OF GOD, and we do well to remember that the *spirit of "science"* is not friendly to Christianity, but is hostile to it. So that it has been said: "It is a singular fact, that when we can find how anything is done our first conclusion seems to be that God did not do it." Even Lord Kelvin was so carried away by the spirit of his class as to say: "Science is bound by the everlasting law of honour to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be brought before it. If a probable solution consistent with the ordinary course of nature can be found, we must not provoke an abnormal act of creative power." And, therefore, to account for the origin of life on the earth, instead of referring it to creative power he accounts for it by falling meteors. How he accounts for when and where and how the meteors originated we are not told.

It is not my intention to belittle in any wise true science. Who can think of the immensity of the field of knowledge which falls legitimately within the domain of science without being impressed by it? Who can ponder the genius of men like Newton, Lagrange, Laplace, Fourier, Poisson, Hamilton, Stokes, Thomson, Maxwell—only to mention a few at random—without marvelling at their intellect? Yet how sad it is that in many cases the mighty intellect has been used against the Giver. Intellect, being God-given, we do not despise, nor science, if it be not "*science—falsely so-called;*" but it is deplorable that these should be so often used not for the glory of the Giver but against Him; plain evidence that the will of unregenerate man is opposed to God. There is no conflict between true science, and the Bible, it is the scientist himself and his theories, and

his followers with "the little knowledge that is dangerous" that have dared to enter the list against the Word of God. The true knowledge of God is greater than intellect and science, and this knowledge lies outside the regions that the mind of man can investigate, but, by the Father's revelation, it is known to every child in His family. We may bow our heads in thankfulness as we remember the words, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11. 25-26). How infinitely better it is to have this knowledge than to be possessed of all the learning of the universities.

Some people seem to have the idea that the words of scientific men and the teachings of science generally abide for ever and are true for all time. Further—in the words of Sir Robert Anderson—"Many people reserve their scepticism for the sphere in which religion is the teacher, while in the presence of science they are as innocent and simple in their receptivity as the infant class in a Sunday-school." For much of that "scientific" pride which exists, and which makes many think that they know more than the Creator and Upholder of all things, *popular science* is responsible.

Men are well advised to give heed to the words of the late Prof. P. G. Tait: "However far we may manage to go, there will still appear before us something further to be assailed. The small separate particles of a gas are each, no doubt, less complex than the whole visible universe, but the comparison is a comparison of *two infinites*. Think of this, and eschew popular science, whose dicta are pernicious just in proportion as they are the outcome of presumptuous ignorance."

But change has marked every branch of science. Of this we might cite a few instances. The corpuscular theory of light, which states that a luminous body emits minute particles which by their impacts on the retina cause the sensation of sight, and which was developed by Newton with a genius almost more than human, has had to give place to the undulatory theory. According to this theory, light consists of a vibratory motion propagated through the ether—a medium, be it noted, which we can neither see, taste, nor smell. In this all-pervading medium our own bodies are being continually bathed, and yet our senses afford us no direct cognizance of it. We accept this on the dictum of the scientist. What unbounded trust men are willing to place on the intellect of the scientist!—but if one trusts in the Word of God, *which changes not*, he is branded as an ignoramus and a fool.

In electricity—the one-fluid theory of Franklin and the two-fluid theory propounded later have been thrown overboard and replaced by the modern electron theory. The two-fluid theory has been rejected as explaining more than there is to be explained. Christians would do well to follow scientists here, and reject whatever explains too much, for the aim of many is to explain matters to such an extent as to explain away God.

Little over a hundred years ago even Sir William Herschel believed that the sun might be inhabited. To-day such an idea has only to be mentioned to appear ridiculous.

I have before me at present a book entitled "Modern Electrical Theory," in which the following appears as a footnote: "It is difficult to say whether the

objections raised by Newton or the objections . . . raised by Huyghens appear the more absurd to those imbued with modern physical ideas. And doubtless our discussions of radiation will appear equally ludicrous to our successors." I trust the author draws much consolation from his frank admission.

"The hypotheses of science require continual restatement in the light of new evidence, and as to the weight and interpretation to be given to such evidence there is continual conflict between the old and new science, between the science that is established and the science that is being established."

Yet it is for scientific theories and speculations, which to-day are and to-morrow are ridiculed, that many are giving up the Bible and the only true God. What a terrible and soul-destroying exchange! But what confidence of soul it gives us when we put down our feet, not on the "assured results of science," but on the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; and when we place our faith, not in that which is perceived only by the intellect of man, but in the One who is "from everlasting to everlasting"; who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," who has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away."

In the Word which He has spoken we have reliable authority upon which to base our confidence. In Him who is the wisdom of God we have God fully declared, and the knowledge of God is infinitely greater and more satisfying than the knowledge of any of His works.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after CHRIST. FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY" (Col. 2. 8, 9).

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee (1 Tim. 6. 20, 21).

A Victory for the Truth.

(HENRY J. VINE).

"Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. . . . And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. . . . And Abijah said, Hear me thou Jeroboam and all Israel. . . . Ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves. . . . But as for us the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests, which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business. . . . God Himself is with us for our captain." "Then the men of Judah shouted . . . and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers."—(2 Chron. 13).

UNITY for Israel centres in Christ; unity for us, for the assembly now, centres in Christ also. Unity for Israel centres in Him as the King, in resurrection, the Royal Seed of David's line, and as Priest after the order of Melchisedek. Unity for the assembly centres in Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. In the widest sense, in the fulness of times, all things in *the heavens* and upon *the earth* will find their centre in Him, for the joyful and glorious administration of that long-looked-for day (Eph. 1. 10).

Men are extremely zealous for unity at the present time; but every effort in this direction must be tested as to how it stands in relation to the only Centre appointed by God. If claim be made to be in accord with that, then one further test becomes necessary. Are those who make the claim subject to the directions of the God-given Head of the assembly, directions finally recorded for us by the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures? God tells us to avoid division makers; also to use diligence in the uniting bond of peace, in love to all the saints, to keep that which embraces them all—the unity of the Spirit; but for this there must be the maintenance of the truth in its proper relations; there must be both objective and subjective adjustment. We must be held by the Centre, and obedient to the directions also.

In three Epistles (Eph., Col., and Phil.) prayer for advance in the truth is made, with the reason given for so praying, that they were rightly adjusted, both as to the divine Centre, and also as

to the circumference. There was faith in *the Lord Jesus*, and there was love to *all the saints*. It must be clear to all that any advance must be wrong where these do not obtain; for however much prosperity there might appear to be, every human, religious organization will eventually be engulfed in the Babylonish system of which Scripture speaks so much, and which is now rapidly developing. Before leaving this it is necessary to add a word as to loving all the saints. Simply to quote 1 John 5. 2 will be sufficient: "Hereby know we that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." This emphasizes clearly what we have said as to conforming to the directions.

THE GREAT DIVISION MAKER.

Now Jeroboam stands out prominently in the Old Testament as the great division maker. Under him the great mass of God's people, ten of the twelve tribes, broke away from God's centre at that time. Like a death knell, these sad words with which the Spirit distinguishes this man, are repeated again and again, "*Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*" In one chapter alone it is solemnly reiterated four times (2 Kings 15. 9, 18, 24, 28). There is something appalling about it. The terribleness of this man's sin in God's sight is signalized in this special manner, and every true heart is struck with the sense of its awfulness. Personal sins are bad enough, but to turn away God's people from the centre which He has set up—what could be worse?

We are distinctly instructed by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that Christ, the Son of God, the Firstborn from among the dead, is the Head of the assembly at the present time. He is the only Head which God has given to the church, or rather the assembly, which is His body. The one new man also is formed "in Himself." The spiritual structure, too, which is being built now, grows into a holy temple "in the Lord." In Him likewise is constructed the assembly, as the present habitation of God in the Spirit. These important facts must be firmly and faithfully held if we are to answer acceptably to the mind of God as to the unity which is according to Him—the unity of the Spirit, which finds its only centre in Christ; for there is that which retains the name "*church*," though it is practically away from the divine Centre; just as the ten tribes with Jeroboam retained the name "*Israel*," though they were away from the Lord as a whole.

The striking story which is recorded in 2 Chronicles 13. is perhaps one of the most helpful in the Bible for those who seek to abide in the truth to-day. For our learning it was written, not simply to engage us with history. Abijah is singled out as the man who took his stand on the truth as to God's covenanted centre at that time. It was that which secured victory. Jeroboam, the division maker, who turned men from that centre, was his proud and ambitious opponent.

ABIJAH means "*Jah is Father*"; JEROBOAM means "whose people are many." These names are very instructive. Those who are embraced in the unity of the Spirit to-day are characterized by addressing *God as Father*. They are thus distinguished from those who knew God in Old Testament times simply as Creator, Almighty, or Jehovah. On the other hand, the Jeroboamites, now as then, are governed by numbers rather than by the truth of God. It may be said of them in a general way, "*Whose people are many.*"

It is in the knowledge of *the Father's Name* through redemption that preservation is realized to-day; and that in response to the intercession of the Son with the Father, as He said, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name."

The followers of the great division maker are strong against this at all times. Jeroboam set twice as many on the field of battle as Abijah; acting, too, without faith, but with his usual worldly wisdom and strategy, victory seemed sure, and needed but a matter of moments to make it manifest; for, while Abijah protested the truth of God against error, Jeroboam was quick to hem him in *before* and *behind*, and was about to seize his prey. He had, however, no resource *above*; therefore the battle turned in favour of those who had. It is always the way of the worldly wise: they are governed by the look of things to the eye of nature. This may be right enough in purely natural matters; but when it is a matter of the truth, faith's keen vision looks up to the invisible God, as indeed it does *at all times*; and that makes victory sure, even when all looks adverse.

THE MAN WHO STOOD TRUE TO GOD'S CENTRE.

Abijah, as we have already said, firmly took his stand upon the imperishable rock of truth; and he put his confidence in God, who had revealed that truth. He was not a very commendable man personally (1 Kings 15.); but that only serves to make the surprising victory which followed all the more striking, showing clearly that it was a victory for the truth of God; and showing, too, the immense value which He sets upon faithfulness to His own established order. This does not palliate Abijah's bad personal behaviour in other connections. He suffered for that under God's righteous government. Here it is entirely a matter of the truth of God being vindicated. That must triumph. All the powers of earth and hell cannot stay it.

Abijah stood up on Mount Zemaraim, the mount of "two fleeces." There he boldly asserted the truth that *the flock is one*, and that under the *one King of David's line* God's people should be shepherded; also that the kingdom in His hand was "the kingdom of the Lord" (8); and that being true, Jeroboam was a rebel therefore; and those who had strengthened him were children of Belial. The priesthood also which was with him was not of God, for it was not of Aaron's line; moreover they were idolatrous. Abijah laid this to their charge with incisive emphasis. He then proceeded to point out the positive position which he himself and those with him occupied, a position which had been divinely established. He had already reminded them of—

1. *The covenant of salt with David's line; and now,*
2. *Jehovah was their God (10);*
3. *The ordered priesthood served Him (10);*
4. *The Levites waited upon their work (10);*
5. *Burnt sacrifices and sweet incense ascended (11);*
6. *The shewbread was set on the pure table (11);*
7. *The golden candlestick was attended to (11).*

Having proclaimed these things, Abijah exclaimed, "God Himself is with us for our Captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper" (12). But when Judah looked back, behold the battle was before and behind; and they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. "Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted it came to pass that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah" (15).

The great importance of all this for us at the present time is found in the

fact that it vividly illustrates the way in which God owns and honours the faith which simply connects itself with His own revealed truth; and this door always stands open; as our Lord Jesus Christ said, even for "two or three" of those who belong to Him, who understand what it is to be connected with the assembly now (Matt. 18. 15, 20). They may enter in at that door which no man can shut; and, taking their stand according to the truth, prove that God still honours the name of the One who is personally the Truth, the only Centre He has established, and the only Centre we are to acknowledge even now, amidst the departure of the mass. Not that we are to look for conquests of an outward sort necessarily; although there will be conquests, the conquests of faith; but the character of such to-day will altogether outstrip that of our interesting type; for they will be spiritual, securing results which will be found to praise, and honour, and glory after the present time has gone by, and the day of Christ's glory shines out in supreme splendour.

THE TRUTH REVEALED.

It will be well for us therefore to challenge ourselves before God, as to the ground upon which our faith takes its stand. This can only be done by those who know that they have redemption in Christ, through His blood. Unless the soul is at rest as to redemption it is incapable of the exercise we now speak of. If we follow the order set forth above, as that which Abijah's faith embraced; only, in a few words, for the sake of space, to state what answers to the seven things now, we may be able to see where we are as to the order set up by God at the beginning. Do we, *both in faith and practice*, acknowledge that order?

1. *Christ the only Head and Centre for us now;*
2. *His God and Father our God and Father;*
3. *Jesus the only High Priest now appointed;*

4. *Those of the "one body in Christ" only for service;*
5. *Worship in spirit and in truth to the Father;*
6. *We are "one loaf, one body," partakers of the Lord's table;*
7. *Our High Priest maintains the truth perfectly before God.*

must and shall prevail. Great is the honour given to those whose faith enables them to stand with the truth to-day, strong in the Lord, although nothing, it may be, in themselves. One of old wrote and sang:

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that might be?
CHRIST JESUS, IT IS HE!"

(The following Scriptures should be read: (1) Eph. 1. 10; Col. 1. 18; 2. 10. (2) John 20. 17; Eph. 1. 3. (3) Heb. 3. 1 etc. (4) Rom. 12. 4-7. (5) John 4. 23. (6) 1 Cor. 10. 17. (7) Heb. 8. 1-2; 9. 1-2, 11).

The faith of God's elect, "the faith once delivered to the saints," is to be ours; not a faith manufactured in the twentieth century, but the faith revealed by God at the beginning. Nothing short of this is the truth. Looking carefully at the scriptures referred to, it will at once be seen that everything is ranged divinely in regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Centre of it all. Do we stand here?

Without Him we can do nothing. "Abide in Me" are His own precious words to us. And the Apostle to the Gentiles, writing to the assembly at Colosse, when speaking of "rejoicing and seeing your order, and the firmness of your faith in Christ," continued, "As therefore ye have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, 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" (Col. 2. 5-7).

The Jeroboamites' worldly wisdom and strategy may have its day, but it will fail utterly sooner or later. Faith sees its folly and its moral overthrow already, at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. 1. 20)? "Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified," said the Apostle. "To the nations foolishness, but to those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST, GOD'S POWER AND GOD'S WISDOM."

God grant that both reader and writer may be thus firmly and faithfully found standing with the victorious truth of God, as fully and finally make known by the Spirit in the Scriptures of Truth, till the shout is heard, the shout which brings a greater victory than the shout of the men of Judah. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with an assembling shout, and call all His own, dead and living, out of the scene of Satan's power, to be with Him and like Him, in bodies of glory, for ever and ever.

It is by Him that the truth of God

The Person of the Lord.

WHAT the Lord Jesus was in any one place at any one time; He was always and everywhere; so that, if the mirror of the Gospel history were to be broken into a thousand fragments, every fragment would yield the same image of "God manifest in flesh."

* * * * *

Those who do not admit the true doctrine of the Lord's Person and work are continually brought to a standstill by astonishment as they read the Gospel history. We, too, marvel, but with us the mysteries are not many; they are reduced to one—"God was manifest in flesh." "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel."

To the Weak in the Faith.

HIM *that is weak in the faith.*" "Ah, that sentence describes me exactly," sigh you. "Others seem strong and joyful, but I groan, and struggle, and stumble. My trials are so many, and my burdens so heavy, that I fear that I shall sink beneath them." Yes, that may be your fear, and a true description of your feelings, but God has something to say about you, and perhaps you will spare a moment from your self-occupation and failure to hear His Word. The sentence quoted opens the 14th chapter of Romans, and, speaking of the one here described, the end of the 4th verse says, "YEA, HE SHALL BE HOLDEN UP: FOR GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE HIM STAND."

This word contains good news for you, and should fill you with thankful exultation, for notice; it does not state what you are able to do, but what God is able to do, and your weakness is no hindrance to His power. It does not say that he "that is weak in the faith" shall stand up, but that "he shall be holden up." So that it is not a question of his ability to remain erect, but the power of another to maintain him so.

It is not your weakness that causes you to stumble and fall, but the secretly cherished thought that, in spite of all your failures, you still have some power by which you will be able to rise above your temptations. Give up this foolish notion, for were you as strong in your self-confidence as was Simon Peter before he denied his Lord with oaths and curses, it would no more avail you in the time of temptation than it did him.

Lift your eyes from yourself, your weakness, and your failures, to the living God, who loves you with an unmeasured love, and whose power is the servant of His love to bring you safely home to Himself. All He looks for is

that you should own your helplessness and depend upon Him.

For your help, and with a friend's permission, I will relate an interesting and helpful incident. He was travelling on a Continental train, and was the sole occupant of a compartment, save for a young man who was reading an English newspaper. This young Englishman, for so he turned out to be, was also a Christian, but so weak was his faith and so many his temptations that he did not think that he would be able to stand a week longer. My friend took from his pocket a Bible and a penknife, and said: "See, I will make this penknife stand up upon the cover of this Bible, in spite of the rocking of the train." The young man thinking that this was some conjuring trick that my friend intended to perform, watched the proceeding with interest, saying: "I am afraid that it won't be easy to do that, sir." "But," said my friend, "I am doing it." "Oh, but you are holding it," retorted his fellow-passenger. "Why, of course. Did you ever hear of a penknife standing up upon its end without being held up?" asked my friend. "I see," was the young man's comment; "I see; you mean to teach me that I cannot stand unless I am held. Thank you for reminding me of that."

I hope that he learned that lesson well, and that you may also learn it, dear fainting, failing Christian, for in the learning of that lesson lies the secret of victory and joy.

"Now unto HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

On Open-Air Preaching.

DO not waste your time and breath on prettily rounded sentences, or on anecdotes without weight or point, the truth of which your hearers may question; but **PREACH THE WORD.**

It is said that on one occasion when the Scotch Covenanters were engaged in battle that their ammunition was almost exhausted; they had one barrel left, and on that they were relying for victory. But when they broke open that barrel they found no bullets at all, but raisins instead; it was a ghastly mistake, a tragedy, and they sat down in defeat.

It is not confectionery, or the sweet raisin of a pointless oratory that will overthrow the imaginations of men's minds that make them exalt themselves against God; great sermons and splendid rhetoric will not pierce the coats of mail with which the devil has clad his dupes. **THE GOSPEL**—it is God's power unto salvation. The Gospel—it is the mighty weapon that pulls down strongholds, its arrows find out the joints of the armour,

no shield is proof against its bullets. It breaks the heart of the hardened sinner and it binds up the heart that is broken. It pierces the soul as with a mortal wound, and heals the wound and makes the sinner live. Type, parable, experience, and story, all have their place, if wisely used, but the great facts of sin, death, judgment; God, Jesus our Lord, and His marvellous love; His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection; repentance, forgiveness, salvation, eternal glory, and the lake of fire,—these, if preached faithfully and prayerfully, will not fail to capture men, and make them obedient to Christ. These, if they fill and grip the soul of the preacher, will make him self-forgetful, will make him despise every platform trick that would call attention to himself and will fill his mouth with true and unpremeditated eloquence, the eloquence that bubbles up from a heart that burns with the fire of divine love. These will make him a soul winner, a workman that need not to be ashamed, but approved unto God.

The Love of Christ for His Body.

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."—(Eph. 5. 20).

THE regard to one's self which each one of us is ready to render is here divinely sanctioned, and it is upon this principle of nature that the Lord's love and care for His church is put. The Lord is declared to act towards us on this instinctive verdict of nature: that a man is to love His own body. The force of this first law of nature is felt by Christ towards us, and the duty it imposes is owned by Him, "for we are members of His body." So that if I can understand my love for my own flesh, I may begin to understand Christ's love towards me, a part of His body, and

the duty I owe myself is acknowledged by my Lord as due by Him to me. Marvellous grace! He can but nourish and cherish me, as I would nourish and cherish myself.

This lies in the Word for our faith to apprehend, and the Holy Ghost dwells in us that we may, according to His power, know it experimentally. Can the imagination form the idea of a more intense and devoted affection? This is "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and He desires that the joy of it should fill our hearts.

Studies in the Psalms.—Psalms 66.—68.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

PSALM 66. is the utterance of the faithful remnant as they issue from their fiery trial purged from their sin (Ps. 65. 3). The key is found in verse 18, which should be read in the past tense: "if I had regarded iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me." This harmonizes with the single eye of faith seen in Psalms 62. and 63., which were given for the time of trial; the standpoint of Psalm 66. is the deliverance from it; so in verses 16-20 they recall the prayer, having received the answer. Vows also had been uttered in the day of trouble, these would not be forgotten in the morning of their joy (vers. 13-15). All this experience is the repetition of their former deliverance from Egypt (*cf.* vers. 5-7 with Isa. 11. 11). Nor is this merely a deliverance from outward affliction; the narrowness and bigotry of the Jew is superseded by the spirit of the gospel, so that they bid all the earth join in the shout of victory and sing the glory of the Name of God (vers. 1-4). In this connection we should remember how the gospel has come to us through Jewish channels, and that we enter into its blessings through the judgment of God on the holy Victim of Calvary, not by terrible dealings with the children of men, as in our Psalm.

A similar strain is continued in PSALM 67., which anticipates the full deliverance of the preceding Psalm in prayer for it. A reason is given for this prayer, so that the Jew as he uses it may understand his relation to the Gentiles, who should in their turn learn in the elect nation the meaning of God's ways in government, and also His salvation in grace (for "saving health," verse 2, read "salvation"). The administration of the church, on the other hand, as we learn from Ephesians 3. 9, 10, is for the instruction of the principalities and powers in the heavens; hence, to put this Psalm in the lips of Christians as part of their

worship, as in the Anglican Liturgy, is, to say the least, out of place, and is a hindrance to that enlightening of our minds the Apostle was anxious to effect. One more interesting point may be referred to: we find in verse 1 a prayer, taken from the priestly blessing in Numbers 6. 25, that God would cause His face to shine on them; the same petition occurs in Psalm 31., and is thrice repeated in Psalm 80. Daniel also takes it up in his wonderful prayer (chap. 9.). In each case it is the public manifestation of God's favour that is sought; the Christian, being brought into favour in the Beloved, knows the shining of the Father's face as a present secret, however dark the circumstances, and rightly as he should be exercised in them.

PSALM 68. is the triumphant re-introduction of the people of God into their proper blessings, and especially their relationship with Him (ver. 18). Lo-ammi had been pronounced upon them, and to outward appearance all seemed lost, but in the first verse the Spirit recalls the prayer of Moses in Numbers 10. 35, to indicate that He is beginning their history over again, and henceforth, according to the terms of the new covenant, their blessing would depend, not upon the obedience of the people, but upon the faithfulness of God; in accordance with this He is praised in His Name JAH, which sets Him forth in His absolute and uncaused existence, not simply as Jehovah the eternal One. It is under this Name JAH that He dwells among them (ver. 18), as of old in the wilderness, that His saints may be reminded that, if they had turned from Him, He had been faithful to them according to all that He is in His essential being (read, "that the God Jah might dwell among them"). He has never given up His purposes of grace, for if in government the consequences of the first three words, "Let God arise," is exhibited in verses 1-6 in judgment on His

enemies, the rebellious being relegated to a parched land (a reference to that part of the nation which remains hardened in sin), on the other hand the righteous are called to be glad and rejoice exceedingly before God, because of His mercy which expresses itself in taking account of the exact condition in which the needy are found (vers. 5, 6). The first six verses form the introduction to the Psalm, and it may be helpful to take up the remaining six sections in order.

Verses 7-12 contain an evident reference to the Exodus, with the sequel of the faithfulness and grace of God, omitting the story of the breakdown of the people in the wilderness, for in that day He will remember their sins no more (Jer. 31., 34., 50., 20). Rightly it is the Lord gives the word to celebrate the victory, and a great host of women, as in Exodus 15., publish the glad tidings.

Section 3, verses 13-19, is in happy sequence of blessing; instead of the degradation of slavery to the nations with too brief revivals, as in the history given in Judges, Israel rises from the "pots" (however the word is translated, the meaning is an "outcast place"), spreading her silver wings and golden feathers in the light of divine favour. Almighty power is on her side scattering kings, as when Salmon was white with the bones of the slain in the days of the wicked Abimelech (see Judges 9. 48). Verses 15, 16 take as an illustration of natural beauty Mt. Bashan, with its many peaks, and contrast it with Zion, which can, with better reason, boast as being the place chosen of God for His everlasting dwelling, it is seen in verse 17 invested with the glories which once distinguished Sinai. Verse 18 is directly addressed to the Lord (Heb., Adonai); Ephesians 4. supplies the key and discloses its fulfilment in Christ. By the grace of His descent and the victorious power of His ascension above all the heavens, captivity (Satan thus characterized, men being his captives, Heb. 21. 15) has been led

captive, and the power of the throne is exhibited in supplying gifts to His servants on earth for the maintenance of testimony to Christ in heaven, so far Ephesians; the Psalm goes on to show the effect on Israel, among whom a place has been found for the God Jah to dwell. Little wonder that the camp of the saints is impregnable in the day of assault (Rev. 20. 9), and that during the present period the body of Christ remains on earth in spite of every kind of opposition.

Section 4, verses 20-23, teaches to own Jehovah the Lord as controlling the issues from death; accordingly enemies are smitten and the saints brought from Bashan (figuring the great powers of this world), and from the distant parts of the sea of the Gentiles.

Section 5, verses 24-27, Israel's King owned as GOD (Ps. 45. 6) enters His earthly sanctuary surrounded by joyful worshippers whose praise is inspired from Himself, the fountain of Israel (1 Chron. 29. 14). In verse 27 four tribes are selected to represent the re-united nation (Hos. 1. 11).

Section 6, verses 28-31. As in all dispensations, the strength of the people is from God, He alone can confirm what He has wrought. All the great Gentile powers represented in the figurative language of verse 30 are seen in subjection to the might of Israel's God, because of His temple at Jerusalem.

Section 7, verses 32-35. This is the glorious climax; at the bidding of the Spirit to render vocal praise to God, the Lord, who is viewed as riding upon the heaven of heavens, the place of sure and stable government (in verse 4 we should read, "Him that rideth in the deserts," the place of His people's need and where He ministers to them), the newly reconciled Gentiles address Him in the last verse as "terrible out of Thy holy places," it is thus they had learned Him, and as the God of Israel, now publicly identified with Him. In true subjection to all His ways they give the suited conclusion to the creature's praise: "BLESSED BE GOD."

"What is Man?"

(INGLIS FLEMING).

"WHAT is man?" is a question which is again and again asked in Holy Writ, and we may occupy ourselves profitably in considering the answers given to the enquiry.

I would call attention first to Job 7. 17, 18.

MAN IN HIS LITTLENESS.

Here the patriarch Job, afflicted and distressed under the chastening hand of God, cries out in the bitterness of his soul, "WHAT IS MAN?"

He had been the greatest of all the men of the East. As a prince among the sheiks he had been honoured and feared by all. Now he was brought low. The three hedges about himself, his household, and his property (Job 1. 10), had all been broken down. His substance had been carried away by his enemies. His sons and daughters had died, and he, himself, had been smitten with loathsome boils, and was now in such misery that he would choose rather to die than to live. Feeling the pressure of all his sorrows and sufferings, and not yet seeing the end of the Lord (Jas. 5. 11), he complains to God, crying, "Let me alone, for my days are vanity."

Man in his littleness is in view. "What is man that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him? And that Thou shouldest visit him every morning and try him every moment? With some sense of the majesty of God, he feels how insignificant man is, and murmurs because he is not left alone. Why should God take knowledge of him and observe him and his ways?"

And well it is that a man should be brought to feel and to acknowledge his smallness and weakness. For though a man may boast himself among his fellows, and even in his self-sufficiency set his mouth against the heavens, ex-

pressing pride and rebellion against God, yet, after all, what is he?

Well he is in this day, as someone has said, one of about fifteen hundred millions of people inhabiting the earth: a mere unit among myriads. Then the earth on which he lives is one of the smallest globes in the vast universe. If the sun were a hollow body, fifteen thousand earths would be required to fill it. And the sun itself, though the centre and controller of the system of which the earth forms part, is only one of multitudes of flaming orbs, the number of which passes all human computation. Thus man is not so very great, although he glorifies himself so much. And moreover his days are truly few and full of vanity. His works, remarkable though they may be, will all decay and pass away, and—

"Like the baseless fabric of the vision . . .
 . . . Leave not a wrack behind."

* * * *

THE SINFULNESS OF MAN.

Eliphaz the Temanite, one of Job's three friends, also asks the question: "What is man?"

In his question he brings the sinfulness of man before us as he demands "What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight. How much more filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water?"

Not only is man little and insignificant, but he is unclean and guilty as well. He has his origin from a polluted source. He is of a corrupt stock, and he has committed sins innumerable. Thus his whole life is marred by evil. He may be outwardly correct, but inwardly he is wrong. The thoughts and intents of his heart are contrary to God. Self is his

centre, "pride rules his will," God is not in all his thoughts.

The witness of Eliphaz (who seems to have echoed much that Job had himself stated before) is abundantly confirmed by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and by the personal testimony of the people of God in all the ages.

Thus Job is brought to cry at the end of God's dealings with him, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Daniel tells us that in the presence of God "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption." Isaiah says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." Jeremiah declares, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Paul says, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Peter cries, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Man as fallen is corrupt from foot to crown, and utterly unfit for God.

* * * *

MAN, THE OBJECT OF GOD'S CARE.

In Psalm 144. we find the psalmist asking the same question, "What is man?" but in different associations to those in which we have thought of man hitherto. It is now man as the object of God's solicitude who is presented. The weak and sinful creature of whom we have spoken is now seen as the object of God's tenderest interest and consideration. In joy of heart, David sings the praises of Jehovah, saying: "Blessed be the Lord my strength . . . my goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield and He in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me. Lord, what is man, that Thou takest knowledge of Him! or the son of man that thou makest account of him! Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away."

Unworthy, insignificant, and weak, the sinful man finds his refuge in the

Lord, and learns to draw everything from Him. Power, goodness, support, protection, salvation, all that he needs is with the Lord in abundance. And all these are with Him for the feeblest and most sinful man who turns to Him. Well may the sweet Psalmist of Israel close the psalm with the jubilant note, "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

* * * *

**THE MAN OF GOD'S PURPOSE.
THE MAN OF GOD'S PLEASURE.**

In Psalm 8. we have the enquiry, "What is man?" made once more. And we shall find that the answer given brings us into another order of things altogether. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained: What is man, that Thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

The greatness of God's glory in the created heavens—the work of the Creator's fingers—causes the psalmist to marvel at the fact that God is mindful of such a creature as man. But at once the Holy Spirit carries him away from the thought of man in his weakness to the contemplation of man in his true greatness and glory. "The Man Christ Jesus" comes into sight. Man in responsibility and failure and feebleness no longer attracts the attention. The Man of God's right hand . . . the Son of Man whom God has made strong for Himself, alone is seen. "For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour." We see Him stooping to manhood and to death, "even the death of the cross," for the fulfilment of the will of God, and now set in resurrection glory in the place prepared for man according to the counsels of God. There everything is put under His feet—earth, air, and sea being alike subjected to Him. The Man

of God's counsel and delight occupies the psalmist's gaze, and by this means is brought before ours.

And we, having our lot cast in these days, see the fulfilment already of part of that which was prophesied of in this portion of God's Word. It is true that we have to wait for the Lord's name to become excellent in all the earth (it has become excellent in our hearts now by the grace of our God); but we know His glory set above the heavens, for Christ is glorified there. While we wait for all things to be put under His feet, "we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour."

And still fuller unfoldings of the divine pleasure are made known to us than were given to the writer of Psalm 8., for we learn that we who believe are for ever to be associated with Christ, under whose feet everything is soon to be placed. The psalm does not present the Christian's link with Him, but brings into prominence Him with whom we are linked.

The New Testament, however, makes the association for us most clear. There we have the quotation of Psalm 8. three times. The first occasion is Ephesians 1. Here the Lord Jesus is presented before us as Man raised from the dead by the exceeding greatness of God's power, and set at His right hand. All things are put under His feet, and He is given to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The same power which wrought in Christ has wrought in us. The Head over all things has the church as His body, which is composed of every true believer since the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. "The body is the complement of the Head; it is in this sense His fulness; this is His glory. It is He who divinely fills the whole universe, the church is the body of Him who does it."

Hebrews 11. quotes the psalm, and adds, "But now we see not yet all

things put under Him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death . . . crowned with glory and honour," and we learn that "both He that sanctifieth [Christ] and they who are sanctified [Christians] are all of one." They are associated together before God, and that for this cause "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Soon they will be displayed in glory with Him, being brought there by Himself as the Captain of their salvation.

Finally, in 1 Corinthians 15. 27, 28, we learn that when Psalm 8 is fulfilled, when all things are at last actually put under His feet, when all things are subjected unto Him, that then He, the Son, shall Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all. What perfection of moral glory and beauty is here disclosed, in this Man after God's own heart. He who is "over all, God blessed for ever," the eternal Son "in the bosom of the Father" having become Man, ever acts for the glory of Him who sent Him. And He who suffered for the glory of God must yet reign for the glory of God. But when every enemy is laid low, when every discordant note is hushed, and every string of the great harp of praise is brought into perfect tune according to the mind of God, then the kingdom in perfect order will be given up to God the Father, that God may be all in all.

The first man, Adam, came into a scene of perfect order, and wrought havoc and confusion. The Second Man, the last Adam, came into the midst of the havoc and confusion, and at infinite cost to Himself brought honour and glory to God, and will yet give order and peace in this world, and yield everything up to God in divine symmetry and perfection.

How wondrous is man's place and portion as seen thus in Christ? How blessed to know that He is our life and that we are for ever linked with Him who has glorified God so fully!

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 25.

(H. J. VINE).

“His Glorious Name.”—Chapter 63.

VERSE 7 of chapter 63. is the beginning of the end. The remnant of Israel first speak; then Jehovah replies in the last two chapters. The spirit of Christ is seen in this feeble remnant spoken of as “*the servants*,” which now become the nation in a new way. They speak of *His Name with confidence*, and confess the nation’s sins with sincerity. Jehovah speaks of being found of the Gentiles, when the sinful nation refused Him; but for “*His servants’ sakes*” He will bless abundantly; and all flesh shall come and worship before Him (66. 23). *His Name* and *His servants* are together eminently prominent in these closing chapters.

The Name of Jehovah is now known to the remnant. Long ages of education blessedly ends in this! Moses in the fiery mount heard it proclaimed from the midst of a cloud!—“Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will in nowise clear the guilty, visiting the sins of fathers upon children, to the third and fourth generation.” It is no wonder that worship bowed Moses before Him to the earth, and that he asked Jehovah to go with them in their midst. But, mark, in reply the Lord says, “Before all thy people will I do marvels, such as have not been done in the earth, nor in any of the nations; and all the people in the midst of whom thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee” (Exod. 34. 6–10). And it has been so; but the results are supremely blessed. His Name is known, and all the nations are blessed consequently.

The soul now, knowing His Name, recounts Jehovah’s lovingkindnesses and praises, “according to all that the

Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel” (ver. 7). Looking right back to the time of Moses, the soul sees *Jehovah’s glorious Arm* working on their behalf; the same Arm which is now revealed to faith; the Arm of His strength; the Arm that brings salvation; “His glorious Arm, dividing the water before them”; when He “led them by the right hand of Moses,” to make Himself “AN EVERLASTING NAME” (ver. 12). This is the first of the seven times His Name is here mentioned. 2, it is a “*glorious Name*” (ver. 14); 3, owning Him as their national Father and Redeemer, the remnant say, “*Thy Name is from everlasting*” (ver. 16); and 4, the adversaries “were not called by *Thy Name*” (ver. 19); 5, “make *Thy Name* known to Thine adversaries” (64. 2); 6, “there is none that calleth upon *Thy Name*” (ver. 7); 7, Jehovah then finally replies: I am sought and found by the Gentiles, who were “not called by *My Name*” (65. 1).

This last mention is both interesting and instructive, for it involves our coming into the blessing of the gospel to-day; and so in Romans 10. 20 the Holy Spirit of God thus uses this verse. But whilst it is true that righteousness and salvation for poor sinners of the Gentiles is here, yet we need to be reminded that such blessing, great as it is, opens the door for us into higher blessings and associations with our Lord Jesus Christ than is in view in Isaiah. The Epistles in which we have these things unfolded take us right up to Christ where He is, Head over all things, to the assembly, His body. We do not find this in Isaiah at all. The mystery was hidden in God; and silence was kept as to it, until the Holy Spirit made it known after our Lord Jesus Christ was glorified.

The Little Open Book.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos—No. 11

“And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.”—(Rev. 10.)

IN the book of Revelation we have unveiled a prophetic unfolding of future events. Their orderly historic sequence is often interrupted by visions parenthetically introduced, which have a moral bearing at all times, and are specially intended to administer comfort to the suffering Saints in those anti-Christian days. What a solace it will be to the godly remnant of persecuted Jews to learn from chapter 7. that God has set his seal upon them, thus securing them to share in the glories of Messiah's earthly kingdom. In that same chapter we learn that it is the purpose of God to bless the Gentiles as well as Israel during the millennium. What a cheer to know that the day is coming when, from the dark places of the earth, countless multitudes will swell the triumphs of the Son of Man! How or by what agency they will be reached we are not told. Presumably they are called out of heathen darkness by the “everlasting gospel.” They will “fear God and give glory to Him,” at a time when Anti-christ is claiming exclusive and universal homage. Consequently, persecution, hunger, thirst, will be their portion. They will pass through the great tribulation without being slain, and will participate in the blessings of Christ's earthly kingdom in their natural bodies on earth in association with the sealed remnant of the Jews. Many of them, —like Daniel thrown to the lions, or the three Hebrew children in the furnace, who refused to bow at the mandate of the idolatrous king, and worship the image he set up—will experience the delivering hand of God, be preserved, like the sealed one hundred and forty-

four thousand, to enjoy wonderful blessings on earth.

Then what a revival of hope will spring up in the hearts of the sufferers who are crying, “How long, O Lord, how long?” when the true meaning of the vision of the mighty angel of chapter 11. dawns upon them, and they listen to his declaration that the mystery of God's governmental ways is about to end. When Mount Zion shall receive her rightful king and Jerusalem shall be the centre where judgment and justice is openly administered, the “world kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ having come.”

This great event is anticipated in the parenthetic vision of chapter 11. 15-18. Heaven is jubilant over Christ getting His rights in this world. The elders rise from their thrones, prostrate themselves before Jesus; adoringly own Him as “Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come.” They ascribe to Him eternal existence, eternal supremacy, and almighty power; proclaim His Deity in the past, present, and future. They also own Him as Son of Man, in His official dignity as judge of the living and dead, who will punish with everlasting destruction the corrupters of the earth, before whose face the dead will appear to receive their sentence—the first at the beginning of His kingdom, the last when it is given up (Rev. 20. 12). Nor do they forget that rewards await all who have faithfully served during the day of His rejection; none will be forgotten, nothing done to His name will be left without due recognition.

□ This last vision is introduced between an historic one commencing chapter 10. verse 18 and ending 11. 13. Here, seals and trumpets—which affect the world in general—give place to familiar objects well known to John. A voice from heaven bade him ask the mighty angel to give him the little book which stood open in his hand. This book centres our attention on things which specially concern Israel during the last three and a half years of the great tribulation. As he received it he learned that its contents would produce joy and sorrow. Sweet as honey in his mouth—for it unfolded the ultimate blessing of his nation; but bitter in his belly, as he digested its contents, and pondered the rough and stormy path which led to the desired haven. He is not now merely an interested spectator, but an active participator. “*Thou* must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (ver. 11). From this point he finds himself in familiar scenes; the Temple, the Altar, and the worshippers are before him. “The Angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein” (chap. 11. ver. 1). Even in that awful day God will measure and distinguish between real worshippers and the general body of the Jewish nation. A reed like a rod is given to John. The “reed” is a fitting emblem of the feebleness of the people, the “rod” of God’s power made perfect in weakness. With a “rod” He once delivered them out of Egypt; this rod is thus a pledge of deliverance, and preservation. John then learns that the court of the Temple will be invaded by the Gentiles during forty-two months, who during that time will trample under foot God’s earthy people.

Two candlesticks now replace the seven of chapter 1.—another incidental proof the church has gone. These “sons of oil” are typified in the two olive trees of Zechariah 4. 3. During this dark and gloomy period they will be God’s witnesses, shining as lights in the midst of moral darkness. The Golden

Candlestick, with its olive oil, illumined the sanctuary when the shades of night fell; so, in the face of Satanic opposition they will witness for twelve hundred and sixty days, maintaining the truth as to God and His Christ’s right to the earth.

Competent witness under the law was in the mouth of “two” witnesses. Two is here a mystical number, telling us God will maintain an ADEQUATE TESTIMONY. It is not said they are Moses and Elias. John Baptist fulfilled the promise as to Elias. What we learn is that their testimony will be similar in character to that of Moses and Elias. Their actual number may be two hundred, or even two thousand.

God never leaves Himself without witness. In the teeth of the most deadly persecution, opposition, and oppression, a light for God is maintained during this, the darkest part of Israel’s history. Empowered during that time to pronounce death on all who hurt them, shut heaven like Elias, smite the earth with plagues, like Moses. In them God demonstrates He is still God. His witnesses vindicate him, He vindicates them, approves their mission by wonders and signs. Their covering of sackcloth outwardly indicates their inward sorrows.

A new power now appears upon the scene. The head of the revived Roman empire—here called the beast out of the bottomless pit—marshals his forces and comes to the aid of his colleague in sin, the Jewish Antichrist, sitting in the Temple claiming universal homage. He makes war with and overcomes the witnesses; for the set time of their testimony has come.

The “City of Solemnities”—over which the tears of Jesus once flowed, in which the gracious works of Jesus were wrought, and the tender tones of entreating love heard—is no longer a “holy” but a “great city.” Great in oppression like Egypt; great in corruption like Sodom; great in guilt, like Jerusalem of old, for there “our Lord

was crucified." The same generation now murder His witnesses who once murdered their Lord; refuse them burial, so that they might gloat their eyes on their dead victims. Jerusalem makes merry, sends gifts to each other. Congratulations are on every lip, exultation in every eye, when suddenly, to their dismay, after three days and a half these dead men live. There is no mistake about their being alive, for they stand "upon their feet." The spirit of life from God has entered into them; their once lifeless bodies are animated, and a great voice from heaven invites them to "come up hither."

Unlike the resurrection and ascension of Christ, which was unseen by the world, theirs will be publicly, before all. The God of resurrection will thus demonstrate that if He permits men to kill the body they can do no more. A cloud received their Lord and Master; they also ascend in a cloud; in clouds we shall ascend to meet the Lord in the air; thus the first resurrection goes on: Christ the first-fruits, afterwards those that are Christ's, but all in their due order.

Awe-stricken, their murderers gaze at this unexpected end to their mirth, and are filled with terror as the earth trem-

bles underneath their feet, and the foundations of the city totter. In the fall of the tenth part of the city seven thousand names are blotted out of earth's register, carried off by a sudden and violent death. Panic-stricken the survivors ascribe "glory to the God of heaven." This ascription might be taken for an evidence of repentance did we not know it will be "earth," not heaven, which God is then claiming for His Christ. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." Then men will say: "The earth is ours, we have a right to everything in it;" so instead of giving God His place they say in effect, "Heaven is God's sphere; let Him remain at a distance."

Alas! man dominated by the "god of this world" will still pursue his unrepentant course, only to find deeper woes, more solemn judgments; for the seventh trumpet with its third "woe" will usher in the seven last plagues, and in them is filled up the wrath of God! That "wrath" is now revealed; then it will be poured out on men who have despised the *love* of God, rejected the *grace* of God, and repented not at the *goodness* of God.

Light and the Word.

"In order that we may know God—The God who has condescended to interpose in the affairs of this world—**MERE LIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH**" ("Gospels, Synopsis," p. 15; New Edition, p. 17).

* * * * *

"The Word was made flesh. . . . It is **MORE THAN LIGHT**, which is pure and shows all things; it [the Word become Flesh] is the expression of what God is, and God in grace, as source of blessing . . . grace, patience, mercy, love, as shown to sinners" (p. 388; New Edition p. 463-4).

* * * * *

"In answer to seducers who sought to terrify them [believers] by new notions; as though Christians were not really in possession of life, and, with life, of the Father, and the Son, **THE TRUE LIGHT NOW SHINES** (1 John, p. 437; New Edition, p. 523).

J. N. D.

Night and Night Seasons.

(JAMES GREEN).

THE opposing thoughts of night and day, darkness and light, run through the whole book of God. On our first introduction to the condition of this earth we find it wrapped in impenetrable darkness; and when the beneficent action of the Creator has brought light in and divided the light from the darkness, our attention is called to the latter by the emphatic word used to describe it, "The darkness He called *night*"—"layelah." And so the alternation of each continues through the history of this world, expressive of the conflict between good and evil which day and night symbolize, until, in the eternal state, we are brought to the blessed light of a day which knows no night, and the awful darkness of a night which knows no morning. Happy the soul that is included in the Apostle's words, "Ye are the children of light and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness" (1 Thess. 5. 5). The night season of judgment and wrath shrouded the Saviour, in which there was no relief for His soul, and no answer to His cry (Ps. 22. 2). The three hours of darkness, the distance that belonged to sin, the forsaking of God, were His portion on our account, in order that we, who were sometime darkness, might become light in Him. Hence the believer resting on His perfect sacrifice, need not dwell in the night seasons which marked souls under the Old Testament dispensation. They had not the full knowledge of redemption, were conscious of their ignorance of God, and yet yearned after Him; but now the splendour of the revelation of God in His Son has shone forth, and so perfect and complete is this that it can be said, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," and the blessedness of our place before Him is in the light, as He is in the light.

God often takes advantage of the night, when men are in solitude and withdrawn from the influence of their fellows to press His word upon their

consciences (Job 33. 14-17), and many a heart has found at such seasons their night of soul-anxiety melodious with songs of deliverance (Job 35. 10), and has arisen to show forth His lovingkindness in the morning, whose faithfulness had been made known in the night. On the other hand, Satan is the ruler of darkness, and often seeks to take advantage of moments of weakness to distract the soul in the night with perverted views of the truth of God, which will not bear the light of His Word. Here the soul's resource is in the full light of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who ever lives to sustain His own in the Father's love and all His purposes for His people. In the knowledge of this lies the resource of the believer amidst the trials and difficulties that sometimes cause sleepless nights. To cast all our care upon Him, and in the consciousness that He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. 121. 4); to lay down in peace and sleep in His safe keeping (Ps. 4. 8); thus may we express our confidence in Him, and awake with the sense of His sustaining love (Ps. 3. 5).

Prophets, seers, and kings have borne witness that God has drawn near to them in the night watches, and made His mind and will known, while the world around lay in sleep and in ignorance that God was active, and that His purposes lay outside of the schemes with which man was busy during waking hours. Then how blessed was our Lord's experience in His night occupations: in prayer (Luke 6. 12), in the remembrance of the name of Jehovah (Ps. 119. 55), meditation in His word (Ps. 119. 148), instruction (Ps. 16. 7) and the laying open of the inmost springs of His soul before God (Ps. 17. 3). What fragrance arose from the incense altar of that perfect life while men slumbered, and what communion with heaven was there, while darkness covered the earth. Truly for Him the night shone as the day.

"Your Own Salvation."

(PHILIP WILLIS).

"Work out your own salvation."—(Phil. 2. 12).

WHAT endless discussion have these simple words given rise to. How they have been misunderstood. How many sincere people have taken them to mean that by their own efforts they must make security against coming judgment. What a number by earnestly seeking to address themselves to work out such a problem have plunged into the helplessness of despair.

These words were addressed to a company of saints at Philippi, where the jailer was the first convert, and the answer to his most earnest inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Salvation, then, for him at least, would not be in his own effort, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. A mighty change took place in that convicted jailer that same night; he rejoiced in a newly found Saviour, and therefore in the salvation he found in Him, believing in God with all his house.

The Spirit of God brings the subject of salvation before us in different ways, and we may rest assured that one passage of Holy Scripture never contradicts another.

Salvation is presented from God's side, and from ours. On God's side all is presented on the side of favour, apart from human co-operation. On our side, as the result of this grace bestowed, God looks for a loving response in willing obedience, and in this obedience lies present salvation, not from the penalty that our sins deserved, we have that through our Lord Jesus Christ, but from the seductions of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is the true solution, I believe, of the difficulty.

We are saved by the reception of the gospel of God's grace presented in our Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture is so plain

on this point that we often wonder how any one can dispute it. "Who hath saved us." "He *saved* us." "Which *are* saved." These statements are plain, decided, and unmistakable.

This is true of all believers; it is all grace on God's side; it is clearly presented as that in which we have no hand. On our side as rebels we had no wish to receive the gospel, until God broke us down and made us willing. When made willing we were glad to receive it as that which saved us from spiritual bankruptcy and eternal misery.

We are absolutely and eternally saved by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; He bore all the stripes, that we might be saved from bearing them; He defeated the whole power of Satan by entering his stronghold, and saved us from being his slaves or prey. As David's victory over Goliath was the victory of all Israel, so Christ's victory is our victory. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously."

When we believe in His triumph we see Him triumphant; when we see Him in resurrection victory as the triumphant One we can sing as victors, because we are victorious in His victory, as Israel sang when they saw the waves of the sea roll over their foes. It is in the knowledge of victory that a man can sing; a defeated man cannot sing, he has nothing to sing about. *A man who knows that he is saved is triumphant, and a triumphant man is a saved man.* He can truly sing, "The Lord is my strength and my song, He is become my salvation." He lifts up his head with joyfulness because his heart is made happy, and his happiness is expressed in song. Salvation, victory, and happiness go hand in hand. "A merry heart is a continual feast."

Though this be all perfectly true on

God's side, yet there is a sense—a very real sense—in which we need daily salvation—we have enemies to meet in our wilderness pathway, as we travel along our pilgrim way, home to the rest of God. It is here where many of us have experienced defeat and suffered loss; it is here we are exhorted to work out our own salvation, or spiritual triumph, "with fear and trembling."

On God's side there is no fear as to the final result. No sheep of Christ can ever perish; He says so: "They shall NEVER perish." Why, then, "with fear and trembling?" because we never know how or where Satan or the flesh may attack us; where the seductions of world may stealthily wait to allure us. If not preserved in continual watchfulness, and dependence on God, these might overcome us, and prove our spiritual defeat.

If we look at the context where this passage occurs in Philippians 2. we shall find Paul commends these dear saints for having "always obeyed." Beautiful commendation to receive! What earthly father could desire more from his child, and what could give a parent's heart more delight, than to find his child "always obedient"? If the father were always wise in his commands that would be the moral safety of the child continually.

Now that Paul was about to leave these dearly loved saints, who had been such a joy to his sorely tried heart as their spiritual father in the faith, he as much as says: "Just you continue in the pathway of obedience." That will enable you to go on safely, and triumph to the end.

Obedience is following the pathway that the will of God has marked out for us. In the pathway of His holy will there is salvation from every trial, whether it be that of seduction or attack.

SELF is really our greatest enemy, and self-pleasing our greatest snare. By choosing God's will we set aside and utterly ignore self-pleasing. Therein

lies our present salvation—our greatest safety. In that pathway we shall find not only God's power working in us to support us, but we shall find God for us, to beat down our foes before us. "If God be for us who can be against us;" "Greater is He which is in you than he that is in the world."

If we try to escape the difficulties of the path of obedience we shall fall into far worse; every device of self or the enemy will only lead us into greater difficulties and deeper sorrow; and we shall have a bad conscience and a grieved Spirit, the result of sin working in us, for sin is the deviation from the path of obedience to God's holy will.

Jesus is our pattern, and forerunner in the path of obedience. What a great privilege and high honour it is to be called to follow Him! He knows all the difficulties on the road. What a leader Jesus is! He did the will of God to the utmost, and found all His joy and strength in doing it. In lowly dependence upon God and perfect obedience to His will He overcame continually. He never knew defeat, and that that was His apparent defeat (the cross) was His greatest moral victory.

That we might be enabled to "work out our own salvation" and gain **SPIRITUAL VICTORIES** over every opposing foe, our great Forerunner has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Having felt every sorrow and been tried to the utmost, He is now, in the power of His sympathetic love, able to **SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST**—right to the end of the journey.

UTTERMOST—the uttermost is a very strong word—**UTTERMOST SALVATION** is our privilege **DAILY**, if we only draw upon the infinite resources that are now invested in Him, for the weakest, feeblest, and most tried of us. "Wherefore He is able to save unto the uttermost, all who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7. 25).

“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4. 15). How very comforting and touching these words are; He is **TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING** of our weaknesses. All the sympathy we so much need is in Him: let us go boldly to Him and avail ourselves of it for practical daily use. He will encourage us with the encouragement of God. He will never say nay to us, nor disappoint us. Besides, He will never upbraid us for our weakness, or our past failure, “He upbraideth not” and “He giveth more grace.”

Call upon Me “in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” There is no doubt of it. “Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord **SHALL BE SAVED.**” “He is rich [or abundant] in grace to

all that call upon Him.” Many have proved in their measure like Paul who, at the end of a life of continual trial, said, to the praise of his Lord and Master, “And out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

Yet if he was in trouble, and had troubles of various kinds threatening on every hand, he rings out the note of a man in the experience of **UTTERMOST SALVATION** when he said, “This shall turn to my salvation.” How well he knew the all-sufficient grace of his Lord!

“The laws of God are as fixed for the path of obedience as the laws of the Universe.” May nothing be allowed in our most secret moral being which would hinder us or turn us out of that path which is our salvation, until we hear His

“**WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.**”

“A more Excellent Name.”

“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”—(Hebrews 1. 4).

TO those who are familiar with the Hebrew idiom, the scriptural peculiarity of the word **NAME** is well known. It does not describe a conventional distinction merely, but the distinction of nature and fact. When applied to the divine Being, it expresses all possible perfection, comprising that infinite and eternal glory which belongs to God alone. Hence, in the devotional parts of the Old Testament, the faithful are represented as trusting and taking refuge in the *name of the Lord*, making it the object of invocation and of plea in prayer. So that when our Lord is said to possess a name more excellent than the angels, it is to His nature, His essential qualities, and not to His title or His official rank or dignity, that attention is primarily and specifically

demanding. Whatever appellation, therefore, is described as a transcendently excellent name, must express those inherent and eternal attributes by which He is distinguished from all finite beings.

Nor is it without significance that our Lord is said to possess this more excellent name *by inheritance*. The expression appears to indicate the existence of unalienable right—right not resulting from gift, or from meritorious toil or suffering, but from nature and geniture. An earthly heir comes into his inheritance because of his relation to his ancestor. Our Lord is heir because He is **SON**—because of His eternal and ineffable relation to the Father.

(Adapted.)

The Lord's Death and the World.

(J. T. MAWSON).

The Lord of Glory was crucified by **THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD.** They who did this deed were the best the world ever produced, and they were the willing and proud builders of the great world system, an edifice which is still in course of construction according to the plans of Satan, who is the architect of it as well as its god and prince. They could find no room in their system for the Son of God. He was the Stone that would not fit into their pretentious schemes, and He could not be tolerated. They could not ignore Him, so they heaped ignominy upon Him to the uttermost, and judged Him worthy of the most shameful exit from the world that their malice could devise. The crucifixion of the Son of God was the consummation of their wisdom and the exhibition of their inveterate hatred of God. This being the case it should be evident to all that there cannot be oneness of thought and action between those who owe everything to Christ, and are in the fellowship of the Lord's death, and the world that crucified Him. They stand on one side of the line and the world on the other, and every principle that governs the one must necessarily be opposed to and destructive of the other. "For what

fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel" (2 Cor. 6. 14, 15).

The cross of Christ is the world's condemnation, it was tested by His coming into it, and by rejecting Him it has demonstrated beyond question the fact that it has not a single thought in common with God, and that it is in irreconcilable rebellion against Him. God's plan is to gather His saints out of it and bring them "into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Every attempt at compromise with the world on the part of the Christian profession is spiritual adultery—unfaithfulness to the Lord. To be true to that fellowship into which God has called us means heart-separation from the principles upon which the world is founded and the wisdom and movements in which it boasts. Thence the call to all who belong to it: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you . . . saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6. 17, 18).

Emmanuel.

(R. H. TARRANT).

EMMANUEL, Thy name we bless,
The risen Lord, our righteousness.
To Thee we bring our sweetest praise;
To Thee shall swell our highest lays.

O Love, that swept from glorious height
To depths on depths, to gloom and night—
Redemption crowns Thy glory now:
All beauty glows upon Thy brow.

Thou wilt not fail—Thou death didst face,
Beneath death's veil didst death embrace,
Thy wounded feet and side proclaim
A story sweet, a Saviour's name!

With Thee our Shield, our Sword, and Bow,
On battlefield, we fear no foe;
Thou Star and Sun of every age,
All glories are Thy equipage.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Seven Words upon the Cross.

Enquirer.—It is generally said, and we believe correctly, that the seven words, recorded in the Gospels, of the Lord Jesus on the cross were uttered in the following order:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

2. "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

3. "Son, behold thy mother. . . . Mother, behold thy son."

4. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

5. "I thirst."

6. "It is finished."

7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Can we Stem the Tide of Infidelity?

A.W.—We know of no scripture that would warrant our cherishing the hope that any effort we may put forth will stem the tide of infidelity and indifference to God. On the contrary, it is plain that things will go from bad to worse, even in those lands where the light of the gospel has shone so long. We are told that "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3. 13); and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; 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). Eighteen centuries ago these prophetic words were written, and we are now in the fulfilment of them. But this should not weaken our hands. On the contrary, it should make us all the more determined to obey the exhortation: "Preach

the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." The short Epistle of Jude also brings vividly before us the condition of the last days, in which days we are, and there we learn that our business is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (ver. 3), and to be "building up ourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude, vers. 20-23).

Things will be put right by the judgments of the Lord at His coming; meanwhile we have to hold the fort for Him by maintaining the truth.

The Cause of Failure.

M.H.B.—Failure is the result, generally speaking, of indifference to or disobedience to the Word to God, and both indifference and disobedience arise from the decline of first love to the Lord. It was here that all the failure in the churches commenced (Rev. 2.). Thank God, the love of Christ changes not, and when our love grows cold, and disobedience has brought disastrous failure

upon us, the way to restoration still stands open for us.

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

If we were abiding in the brightness of His love, we should keep His Word with delight, and so be preserved from failure (see John 14. 21-24).

The Old Testament Saints.

E.A.T.—The Old Testament saints will share in heavenly blessing. Hebrews 11. 16, and 40 indicate this. They will not, of course, form part of the church, which is the Lamb's wife;

their place at that glorious marriage festival will probably be that of those who "are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19. 9).

The Burial of Joseph.

The point, we believe, in the commandment that Joseph gave concerning his bones is that his faith had laid firmly hold of the promises of God. His glory was great in Egypt, and the natural tendency would have been to seek satisfaction and rest in that; but the faith of Joseph prevailed over such a temptation. God had made promises to His people concerning Canaan, and his thoughts and hopes were bound up with God's promises, and if when Israel

departed from Egypt there was nothing left of him on earth but his bones, these must go up with them to the promised land. In the natural order he would have had a notable funeral in Egypt, and a great monument erected to his glory there. But he did not wish to have any memorial in that land—Canaan was all his desire. His was a fine example of the reality and power and triumph of faith (Heb. 11. 22).

Christian Privileges.

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12. 13) undoubtedly includes all who have believed the gospel, and of course all Christian privileges are the privileges of all such; but it is one thing to know that these privileges are mine, and quite another to be truly enjoying them; for

the latter, subjection to the expressed will of the Lord is necessary. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37).

"Judge not" (Matt. 7. 1. "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7. 24).

C.A.A.—Yes, the word "judge" in these two passages is the same. The contexts in which the word is found make the Lord's use of it clear. The first has to say to that which is so natural to us, the readiness to pronounce judgment upon the words and doings and motives of others, and to spare ourselves; to take the mote out of our brother's eye when there is probably a beam in our own. The exhortation is a very needed one. In John 7. it is

a question of the Lord's works, which were plain evidence as to who He was, but the Jews condemned Him because He had done one of these works on the Sabbath, and so in their eyes had broken the Sabbath. The judgment they pronounced was according to appearance, and was not a righteous pronouncement. The two exhortations are not contradictory; each is perfectly right in its place.

We Thank Thee now our God.

Words by E. Whyte.

Tune—"Nun danket alle Gott."

{ We thank Thee now our God, Whose ear we know is bend - ing
 { To hear Thy peo - ple's praise From grate - ful hearts as - cend - ing.

Je - sus our Priest on high Has passed the veil with - in, With

bold - ness we draw nigh, The blood has purged our sin.

2. As Father Thou art known,
 Thy love has been declared,
 Thy well-beloved Son
 With us His place has sharèd.
 In Him in glory bright
 Within that heavenly land,
 Unspotted in the light
 Before Thy face we stand.

3. As incense sweet we bring
 That Name, all names excelling,
 Of Him in life and death
 Thy glory ever telling,
 And now, as those who live
 In Him who dies no more,
 To Thee we worship give
 Blest Father, we adore.

The Secret of Helpfulness.

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”—(Ps. 27. 14).

THOSE who know God best and live most in His presence will be the greatest helpers of their fellow-men in these times of trouble. For those who know Him best will trust Him the most, and it is written, “Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE, whose mind is stayed on Thee: BECAUSE HE TRUSTED IN THEE” (Isa. 26. 3). This is true. It has been proved experimentally by the servants of God in the storms of the past; it is being surely proved by many of them in the present distress, and it will be proved still until days of strife end in universal peace under the sceptre of Him whose right it is to rule.

We have no word to say against natural fortitude, but the great need is men who are not stayed upon any human quality, however admirable, but upon Almighty God. These will be kept calm in the midst of panic. Yonder tree preserves its green leaf in time of drought because it is planted by the river, and its roots, striking deeply through the soil, are in touch with the waters, while other trees, less fortunately placed, wither and die.

The one who knows God and lives in communion with Him is like that tree. He is not distracted by circumstances, but is superior to them because God is his refuge and resource. For himself he can say, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” And to his brethren in Christ he can say, “Wait upon the Lord, wait, I say, on the Lord.” Such a one has a place of absolute serenity and repose, for he can boast, “In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me.”

This is the portion of the man who makes the Lord his choice and who seeks only after Him.

How God-honouring are the words, “Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His holy temple.*” His own safety and concerns are put by this man into God’s hands, and he confidently leaves them there, seeking only to know the will of God and to dwell more deeply in communion with Him.

This confidence in God will not make a man unpractical, or indifferent to the distress and anguish of others. It will not make him think or act selfishly, like those who would store their houses with provisions against a time of famine regardless whether their poorer brethren have food or not. No, being with God and having God with him, he will be entirely free from self-concern, his heart will be compassionate for those in distress and he will go “about doing good,” as did his Master and perfect Example. He will greatly strengthen his more fearful brethren by his own quiet but exultant faith as he says confidently, powerfully, effectively, “Wait on the Lord,” for in so saying he will direct them to the One in whom is infinite strength, the ALMIGHTY GOD, the LORD OF HOSTS, whom every blood-bought child of God can address as Father, the One whose power and loving-kindness he himself is proving. May God give us men of this stamp to-day for His people’s good, and for the blessing of the distressed multitudes.

“Armageddon” and “Universal Peace.”

NO, this is not Armageddon, nor will universal peace follow upon the conclusion of this most terrible war in the world's history. Some who direct the thought of the nations have stated that this latter will be the blessing that will issue from the conflict, that humanity, staggered by the appalling carnage, will insist upon general disarmament, and that all the nations of the earth will become pacific henceforward and forever. This is mere conjecture. A forecast made regardless of mighty forces which will still play their part in the terrible drama of man's continued rebellion against God. These forces are: the incorrigible evil of the hearts of unregenerate men; the determined opposition of Satan to God's plans and purposes; and, last and most terrible of all, because of the inflexible justice of it—the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty.

Armageddon—“the war of that great day of God the Almighty” (Rev. 16. 14-16, N.T.) *cannot take place while the true church of God is on the earth; the Lord's coming for His saints* (1 Thess. 4. 15-17) *must take place first.* It will not be a European war merely, but north, south, east and west will gather their armies for it. It will not be fought in France, Belgium, or Germany, but in the Holy Land, which land Satan will do his utmost to hold against the Lord, so that the promises made by God to Israel of old may not be fulfilled. The Euphrates will be dried up to make a way for the almost innumerable hosts of the kings of the East (Rev. 16.)—the yellow races, probably, who are already beginning to turn their attention to European affairs. The kings of the revived Roman Empire will gather under the leadership of the Beast—Satan's marvel, the superman. And not these only but the kings of the whole habitable world will be marshalled for this supreme war.

The energy of the whole world will be thrown into the conflict, for they

will beat their plowshares into swords and their pruninghooks into spears (Joel 3. 11). There will no longer be the restraining power of the Holy Ghost, for He, who now does restrain for the sake of the assembly which is still upon earth, will have been taken out of the way at the rapture of the assembly to the glory of God (2. Thess. 2-7).

The lust of war will be upon all men—so that those who are weak will say they are strong for the battle (Joel 3. 10)—Poor doomed dupes of the devil! They will be gathered by the spirits of demons—Satan's angels (Rev. 16. 13), his purpose being undoubtedly to annihilate the Jews, that shall then be gathered in their land, so that God's purpose to make them the centre of the renewed earth may be frustrated. But God will be there also, and the pride of men and the subtlety of the devil shall be made to serve His purpose. For then shall His judgment fall upon the whole force of man's rebellion against Him. The wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God shall be trodden by Him who is the faithful and the true, who in righteousness will judge and make war; the fowls of the air shall be filled with the flesh of fighting men; and the nations shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel by the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

From that wrath to come we have a deliverer, even Jesus, the one who shall execute that wrath. Him we await from heaven. Blessed hope of our souls!

Universal peace shall follow that great war, for the outcome of it shall not be whether a nation shall be the supreme world's power or not, but that all thrones and kingdoms shall be Christ's, for all opposition to Him will be crushed, and as the Sun of Righteousness, He shall arise with healing in His wings. That the crowns might at last be placed upon the rightful brow; and for the sake of this groaning creation, we pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven.”

Prayer according to the Word.

“**I EXHORT** therefore, that, **FIRST OF ALL**, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made **FOR ALL MEN**; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2. 1-4).

Subjection to this exhortation of God's Word will preserve Christians from praying according to a narrow nationalism as though God were the God of one nation only, or of one nation and its allies. In former days, when God for His own purposes proclaimed Himself as the God of Israel, it was right for Israel to pray thus, but it is entirely wrong now, for God's attitude towards all men of every nation is the same in this dispensation of grace—He will have all men to be saved—and “there is one God, and one Mediator between GOD AND MEN, the Man Christ Jesus.” If we are to pray intelligently and in a way acceptable to God we must pray according to this revelation of Himself, otherwise we falsify His character, and this would be a serious thing for those who belong to His household to do.

“**ALL MEN**” excludes none, whether they act as enemies or friends; indeed, it would seem right on the Christian's part to be the most in earnest in his prayers for those who are against him, for has not the Lord commanded His disciples so to act, and did He not Himself leave us an example in this when He cried from the anguish of the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”? We pray for the salvation of the souls of British soldiers and sailors on land and sea—*young, careless, perhaps, standing face to face with death*—and much they need our prayers; but the souls of those by whose guns they are menaced are of equal value in the sight of God, and He who has no favourites among the nations

of the earth commands us to pray for these as well; and for the silent, sorrowing multitudes, mostly women, in the background. How much these need to know a Saviour-God, and His great compassions. It is true that our responsibility begins at home, in the circle nearest to us, but God's heart goes out to the whole world, and ours should embrace the same wide circle.

“**FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL THAT BE IN AUTHORITY.**” Not for one king only; we are to *honour* the one king under whose rule we are (1 Peter 2. 16), but to *pray* for kings, and all who rule; for the liberty of the Christian to serve God, and an open door for the gospel depends so much upon the acts of rulers of the earth, and it should be a matter of equal concern to us that God's people are able to serve Him, and that the gospel should be unhindered in other lands as in this. God's testimony—that He is a Saviour-God is for all men, and we must connect ourselves with this world-wide grace, or we shall be out of the current of God's thoughts.

And for “**ALL SAINTS.**” In Christ “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free [British or German]: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3. 11). There are many fellow-members with us in the body of Christ who are forced by the laws of their land in which they dwell to take the sword, in what may appear to be an unrighteous cause. These are bound to us by stronger and more enduring ties than any the world knows, and as we pray for all saints these must not be forgotten, or our prayers will grieve the Holy Spirit of God who indwells them, as He does us. May God grant that these in their trials, with us, and all others who love the Lord Jesus, may in these last days be established in holiness before God, even our Father, and be preserved in spirit, soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An Old Letter.

IN looking over some old books in a house in which I am staying, I found a letter which had evidently been laid between the pages of one of them for many years, for it was written from one friend to another during the time of revival that followed the Crimean war. The following is an extract from it:

“ . . . I feel very anxious about my soul just now, and have need of all your prayers for me that I might be saved. B—— has been very anxious for a long time, but I am happy to tell you that she has found rest; she found it three weeks ago, and is so happy now that she cannot hold her tongue about the sweetness of her Saviour. I trust that we shall all find Him soon. A—— and I are both trusting in the Lord, but we have not found peace yet. Since B—— was saved three of her neighbours have found peace. What a blessing it must be! We have been long in the darkness thinking we were all right, but my conscience tells me that I am not, but I will never rest until I get hold of Him.

“ Grace N—— has found her Saviour too, about six weeks ago. If you could only see her letters! Such happiness she has got! The P——’s are just in the same mind; and what a difference in W——, he is so anxious about his soul. They hold a prayer-meeting twice a week there. . . . Mr. P—— is there; he is so kind, and so anxious for the conversion of souls; it was through his words that I was awakened.”

Many have been the longings and prayers, perhaps too half-hearted and desultory, for a widespread and genuine work of God such as this simple letter

records. Could there be a more suitable time than this to ask more definitely and in greater faith that our eyes may see it now? Days of anguish have often been days of blessing to the children of God and to others who do not know Him. “ He maketh the wrath of men to praise Him,” and He can turn this breaking loose of the worst passions of men, with its attendant devastation and broken hearts, to His glory in the salvation of souls; and this, as we well know, is of infinitely more value than the march of prosperity which has so suddenly been called to a halt.

All blessing from God is the fruit of His unmerited grace. Yet He has connected it, in His wisdom, with the exercises and prayers of His saints. Let us then not be slow in seeking His face; in divesting ourselves of the spirit of the age, and readjusting our souls to His thoughts and will that we may be vessels meet for His use, and have some part in carrying forth this blessing to hearts that are burdened and broken. Then we may see His gracious working pass from heart to heart and many lips opened to own Him. Not for the sake of men merely, though for their sake truly, for we know that God is not indifferent to their sorrows, for His compassion for them has been well-proved by the life of Jesus here; but firstly and mostly that His own purposes may be furthered, the number of His assembly made up, and its rapture to heaven take place, that the Lord’s return to earth as the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, may be hastened, for not till then shall the nations learn war no more.

The Triumph of Faith.

Theoretically we know that He doeth “all things well,” and that “all things work together for good to them that love God”; but it is a triumph of faith which brings great glory to God when,

in the time of nature’s sorrow, the whole soul of the believer rejoicingly accepts whatever happens as the Lord’s dealings. “Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires” (Isa. 24. 15).

Armageddon.

(EDWARD CROSS).

AT a time of special stress like the present, when the face of Europe is a war map, and the strife of nations is suggesting to the minds of many the word "Armageddon," it may be well for us to take heed to our bearings, and recall afresh the great principles laid down in Scripture, which would enable us to find our way through the actual circumstances in which we are found. And first, we have to consider the governmental ways of God with this world; and then, His special purposes in regard to the church. And let it be clearly understood at the outset that, great and terrible as may be the carnage, and the destruction of men and money, with all the consequent horrors of this gigantic struggle, taking into account, too, its end, whatever that end may be, it is not the "Armageddon" of Revelation 16. 16. Call it Armageddon if you like, and a very suitable name it might be for it in a topical sense; but, terrible as the thought of what the struggle may be, it is not even the "beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24. 8) that are yet to burst, in the red-hot wrath of God, on a world that has so long defied His authority, blasphemed His name, corrupted His holy things, crucified His Son, and deliberately endorsed its rejection of Him and its choice of a highwayman and a murderer in His stead. Action and reaction, in the physical world, are equal and opposite. Cause and effect are commensurate, though at first sight the consequences may seem disproportionate, for a spark may explode a powder magazine; but in reality the apparent disproportion is governed by an inexorable law, and he who would apportion the one must understand its ratio to the other. It might appear a small thing in the history of the world to kill a man; but what that act involved in the death of Christ is understood only by its relation to the glory of God. If Christ is the incarnate Son of God, the Hope of Salvation, and the divinely appointed channel of bless-

ing for mankind, then the treatment awarded Him by the world, both Jew and Gentile, religious and imperial, must eventuate, when the patience of God has run its course, in a judgment commensurate with the crime; God's ways in government must be vindicated, and "judgment must return unto righteousness," from which it has been so long divorced, and then "all the upright in heart shall follow it."

This is all laid down in the Old Testament as the basis of the ways of God in government with this world. Its principles are immutable; its action is inexorable, through all times and dispensations; the sphere of its operation is universal. The Apostle Peter in his epistles extends these principles into Christian times, and expands them into the eternal world, basing what he says on the utterances of the prophets, dimly apprehended by them. But all this must be kept clear and distinct from the purposes of God with regard to the church. The throne of God in government, and the purposes of God in Christ, are subjects of paramount importance, each in its own sphere; but they must not be confounded.

"He made known His ways unto Moses," and the great lines on which they run are laid down in brief in the Pentateuch, and expounded in greater detail in the prophets; "He made known His acts to the children of Israel," that with the evidence of their own experience they might put their trust in Him (*cf.* Ps. 78.); and to us "He has made known the mystery of His will." Each of these is distinct from the other, and they must not be confounded; but they are all bound up in the revelation He has been pleased to make, and compounded into the unity of the whole.

Government is the power that keeps everything in right relation to everything else in the sphere in which this

power is exercised. The order of the universe hangs upon it. Every sphere in creation is dependent on it for its stability. It is true alike in the physical and in the moral world. God sits on the throne of the universe. The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament is a witness to His handiwork. There order reigns supreme; and the intelligence falls prostrate before the picture of its perfection.

Israel was set apart to be the exponents morally of the government of God on earth. They were His "witnesses" (Isa. 43. 10-12). But they did "worse than the heathen"; and when Christ came to call them to repentance, "they cast Him out and killed Him." It is true that, in the grace of God, that death has an atoning character; but in His governmental ways the nations of the world that banded themselves in that wicked deed, beginning with Jerusalem, must pay the penalty of their wickedness. In Matthew 24. we have the prophetic outline of the "great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be; and if those days had not been cut short no flesh had been saved"; while in Luke 21. the Lord forecasts for His disciples the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, as preliminary to the distress that is still future. This is "the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30. 7), and the result will be the deliverance of the remnant, who will then "serve the Lord their God and David their king" (Jer. 30. 9), corresponding to the establishment of "the kingdom of God," according to Luke 21. 31.

Now it is important to take note of this, because it is quite plain that such is not the result of any of the wars that have hitherto taken place, nor can we look for such an issue from the conflict of nations which we see to-day before us. No doubt all things tend to the accomplishment of God's purposes; but, *ceteris paribus*, this war is the same essentially as any other war, bringing suffering and sorrow in its train. The

sword at all times is one of God's "four sore judgments" (Ezek. 14. 21). But our business is to vindicate the righteousness of God in sending it, to look to Him to show mercy to His poor people in the midst of it, and to keep our souls trusting Him through it, whatever may happen. We would do well to remember His word in Psalm 37. 8: "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." It is as true to-day as when the Psalmist wrote it: "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their strength in the day of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him" (Ps. 37. 39, 40).

Now all this has to say to the governmental ways of God, and the subject is dealt with, as stated above, in the epistles of Peter, showing the delivering power of God for the righteous out of all their troubles. The Apostle Paul has another line of ministry altogether; not in contradiction to that of Peter, but supplementary to it, as completing the word of God. His gospel introduces another phase of divine power, according to His purposes in grace; a power of deliverance, not "out of," but "from" the evil. It is thus his gospel begins, as appears in his epistle to the Thessalonians. They were recently converted, babes, as we might say, in the faith, to whom he addresses himself as a "nursing mother" (Thess. 2. 7). To them he would naturally give the first rudiments of the gospel, setting them in the fundamental relationships of Christian life, and instructing them in the primary truths of this new religion they had but lately received. Mark how he opens his letter to them (chap. 1. ver. 9): "Ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, our deliverer from the wrath that is coming." He does not say "deliverance from out of it," but "from it" altogether. This wrath, long foretold, is coming surely. It is coming on the Jew and on

the Gentile; but Jesus is our deliverer from it. Accordingly, we are not looking for deliverance *through* it; we are "looking for the Lord Himself from heaven, who shall come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16).

In 2 Thessalonians the Apostle briefly and graphically pictures out the trend of things as regards this world, the apostasy and Antichrist, the climax of ungodliness; truly an appalling picture to contemplate. Evidently the minds of the saints had been troubled by the "signs of the times" and rumours, and the cataclysm they seemed to portend. The Apostle sums it all up before them with prophetic prescience and paints the picture to them blacker than they could conceive. But then he rallies them in the assurance, repeated from his first epistle, and more strongly enforced here, that their part is outside of it all. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2. 13, 14); and he urges on them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him," according to 1 Thessalonians 4. 13, etc., "not to be soon shaken from a steady and soberly judging

mind," nor deceived by any means, however specious, "as though the day of the Lord had come" (2 Thess. 2. 1-3). Before that day comes on the earth we shall be caught up to meet the Lord from heaven. Whatever happens among the nations below, our place, and for ever, is with the Lord above. Great changes in the map of Europe will probably result from this titanic struggle. Dynasties may fall, and other forms of government replace them. But the present coalition of the powers is not what Scripture leads us to expect, when the forces of the north and the south, as presaged by Assyria and Egypt, prepare for the final shock, in conflict for universal power and the possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Land (*cf.* 2 Kings 23. 29; Jer. 46. 2). David slew the lion and the bear and the Philistine—picture of the forces of the south and the north and the power of Satan in the land—and delivered the defenceless people of God—type of final salvation by the outstretched hand of the Great Shepherd.

In result, then, and in view of present circumstances, we must not confound the righteous judgments of God upon the nations with His purposes in regard to the church and the rapture of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, before these judgments fall. Enoch was caught away—translated by the power of God, before the flood; Noah was saved through it. In whatever trouble we may find ourselves, we may always trust the Lord to bring us through it, even if He land us at the other side; but our hope is *Himself from heaven*. ere the great day of trial comes.

Strength through Weakness.

My faith looks up to claim that touch
divine,
Which robs me of this fatal strength of
mine,
And leaves me resting wholly, Lord, on
Thine.

Yes, makes me such an one as Thou
canst bless,
Meet for Thy use through very help-
lessness;
Thine, only Thine, the glory of success.

What is the Position of a True Believer in Regard to the Nations?

(H. J. VINE)

THE position in which God has set the believer is a threefold one; or, more correctly speaking, he is set in three distinct positions as to the nations.

1. As being "in Christ," *he is above them.*

2. As being of God's house, *he intercedes* for their rulers.

3. As one of God's people, *he is subject* to their authority, which is "set up of God" (Rom. 13. 1, N.T.).

A word of explanation as to these three important positions may be helpful.

1. IN CHRIST.

Having redeemed us by the blood of Christ, God has blessed us in Christ, whom He has set over all things, according to His purpose; and we are destined to share in His future reign over the nations. We shall reign "over the earth" (Rev. 5. 10, N.T.). The position of Christ determines the position of those who are in Him. Having borne our judgment upon the cross, God raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to the place of supremacy. We are blessed in Christ where He is, according to God's purpose; and though the public reign of Christ over the nations is future, yet the Spirit of truth enables the believer to enter into the fact now, and to rejoice in it. It is in this sense, as being in Christ, that *he is above the nations.* Thence he has a higher glory than theirs to seek, even the glory of Christ.

2. OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

The church, or, more correctly, the assembly, is the house of God. It is established in the Lord as a habitation for God in the Spirit here upon earth. In Christ the believer's position is above the earth: in the house of God his position is upon the earth. It is here he

intercedes for the rulers of the nations. This position is little understood. The erroneous idea that buildings of brick and stone and wood are houses of God is very common. Many minds are terribly clouded by this idea. The truth is, there is only one house of God upon earth, and it is a house of prayer for all men. It is made up of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. God's people of old, Israel, had one house in their midst—the temple. The house of God of which we speak now answers to that. When the house is restored to Israel, God says He will make them joyful in His house of prayer (Isa. 56. 7); and all shall be at liberty to pray there, for He continues, "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." The difference as to the house of God now is that we pray for all: in the future day all nations will be able to pray there themselves. We now pray for the kings and rulers of the nations (1 Tim. 2. 1), that we who belong to God's house may honour Him in "a quiet and tranquil life in all piety and gravity" (N.T.), though others may be engaged in ungodly strife.

Believers are a spiritual house, and in this sense are above all nationalities, and so pray not for one king merely but for "kings" and for all men. There are no separate or conflicting national interests in the house of God. There are brethren beloved who belong to it in other nations than the one we may be immediately connected with. Did we not therefore pray aright, we might be found praying in opposition to our brethren whose lot was cast in another nation. Then it would be a house divided against itself. The truth is, Christ's interests are our interests; and as we pray in view of the welfare of all who are His everywhere, we know that this is a very great help in regard to all men everywhere. The position of the

believer is therefore that of *an intercessor for all the rulers of the nations.*

3. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

In the ways of God on earth, as to outward advantage, Christendom is in the place of Israel. We are grafted into the olive tree (Rom. 11.); and when Israel turns to the Lord again apostate Christendom will be cast off. Now, as being one of God's people, standing in a present favoured position, the believer is told to be subject to the national authorities (Rom. 13. 1). It is in this sense that the name "the people of God," which properly belongs to Israel, is two or three times applied to us. But again there is a contrast between Israel and ourselves, that, whereas they rightly sought and prayed for national power and pre-eminence over other nations, we do not strive thus; but quietly and peacefully accept the place of subjection to the ruling power, in whatever land we live, while we await the coming of God's Son from heaven. It is just in this earthly position that we

are spoken of as "the people of God"; otherwise we are saints by the call of God, brethren of the risen Christ and children of God as begotten of Him. Not seeing these distinctions the Romanists and others seek to gain and exercise authority over the nations now, and so have become Babylonish and unfaithful to the rejected Bridegroom of the assembly. The public rule of our blessed Lord is yet future, as we have said; therefore rule is yet future for us also. His present position determines ours, as He said to the Father, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world."

When our Lord stood before Pilate He meekly accepted, and bowed to, the authority which was divinely given to the Roman representative. What a sight! The King of Israel, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, yea, the Son of God receives an unjust sentence without resisting the authority that then was! How becoming then it is that the believer who follows Him now should be *subject to the powers that be.*

This is our Confidence.

In a factory where whistling bands and whirring wheels and darting shuttles and a thousand threads bewilder and confuse the stranger, the maiden who tends the frame sits by, singing her song untroubled, for she knows full well that every turn, the shooting shuttle and all the thousand threads are working out the pattern. She has seen the design and she is intelligent as to the method by which it is to be worked into the fabric that she weaves. We also, if we

have read aright the Word of our God, may have this holy, happy confidence that no turn of the wheel of fortune, or flying, changing circumstances can disturb.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8. 28.)

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him" (1 John 5. 14).

Our Hope.

The sailors on the Southern seas sing, "Midnight is past, the cross begins to bend." And we, as voyagers through these troubled ages, in which "the sea and the waves are roaring," and the wrath of men has risen to break up the peace of nations, may sing "Midnight is past!

the morning star arises, we are soon to see our Lord." All things point to His speedy coming.

"Our hearts beat high,
The dawn is nigh
That ends our pilgrim's story
In His appointed glory."

The Person and Works of the Lord Jesus.

Hebrews 1. 8-12.

The Son is true God. He sits upon a throne of divine perpetuity. He maintains a moral government of matchless and inflexible rectitude. Himself immutable and eternal, He must remain in peerless majesty when the material universe which His hands have made have passed away for ever.

The Lord's Way.

How precious to know that Christ is ever the same. There can be no change in Him. His face always shines upon "His own" with undimmed lustre. His love is ever the same towards them, no matter what their treatment of Him may be, and our souls are most surely edified as we consider Him. Nothing can be more affecting than His ways with His disciples. We blame them for going to sleep on the Holy Mount, let us rather adore the grace of our Lord that awoke them to behold the departing rays of His glory when He was transfigured before them. We lament their weakness in sleeping when He was passing through those awful anticipatory sorrows in Gethsemane's garden, but let us not overlook His deep and tender concern for them when He said, "If ye seek Me let these go their way."

When Christ's glory, or Christ's sufferings, were displayed, His disciples slept, but when they were in peril on the lake they were wide awake; that was their selfishness. Nevertheless He used His power to still the storm out of sweet consideration for them.

We are not unlike those disciples. A suffering and glorious Saviour often finds us asleep to both His sufferings and glories, and yet when in storm and stress we are ready enough to call upon Him. And how tender and gracious He is; He does not spurn or despise us, for His love is a perfect love.—(Nunnerley).

The Beginning of Miracles.

The miracle at Cana was, we are told very expressly, the beginning of miracles. Here the Lord tolled for the first time the great bell of the universe that summoned men to listen to His sermon. In it God, as a bountiful benefactor, provided for His creatures' happiness. He had said at the beginning, It is not good for man to be alone, and His first miracle was a benediction upon that primal institution; and as marriage is a season of gladness, He provides a fit accompaniment—provides it of the best, and in such large measure as has amazed and alarmed the timid moralist. The quality and greatness of the gift were worthy of God; and we see the generosity all the more clearly when we remember that *this bountiful Creator had a little before refused to create bread to relieve Himself of hunger pangs.*—(Nichol).

The Last of the Miracles.

The glory that began to shine at Cana shed a greater brightness at the close of those eventful years, when He was being led to the cruel trial—not surrounded, as at the marriage feast, by smiling faces, but by frowning, threatening foes. Malchus, a base slave of the high priest, had evidently offered a gross insult to the Lord, and Simon, wrath-moved, smote at him with his sword, cutting off his ear. Restraining His indignant disciple, and asking for the use of His bound hands, the Lord touched

the ear and healed his wounded foe; and though in their furious hate His enemies were all unmoved by this strange mark of love and power—love manifested to His enemies in their supreme madness, power manifested when He seemed to be weakest—we have leisure to mark the deed, and to see the revelation which for us is highest and most welcome, the revelation of a God showing mercy to sinners in the height of their sin.—(*Adapted*).

The Light of the World.

He could say of Himself that He was the "Light of the World," excluding all other. Light—self-witnessing, as light is: so that rejection of it proved that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And this light was not merely that of His sayings, a message that He brought, a revelation that was committed to Him, though there was that also: but HE WAS HIMSELF THE LIGHT, as He says in the exactest possible way defining this—"As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world" (John 9. 5).

"God is light": and here is One who claims to be so absolutely that, that when a disciple expressed a desire to have the Father shown to him, the Lord rebuked him with the words, "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known *Me*, Philip? He that hath seen *Me* hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9).

Nothing could be more absolute in statement that as to God Himself, morally, there was none else to see—there was no one back of Him, who was "the brightness," or, as in the Revised Version, "the effulgence of (God's) glory, the exact image of His person" (Heb. 1. 3), "the Image of the invisible God" (Col. 1. 15).
(*Grant*).

"By Him and for Him."

"All things have been created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1. 16). BY HIM. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, is His; He wields it; He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. FOR HIM. He is not merely an inferior workman, as Arianism afterwards pretended, creating for the glory of a higher master, for a God superior to Himself. He is the end of created things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."—(*Liddon*).

The Creator.

In John 1. the WORD was the Creator: "In the beginning was the Word, and all things were made by Him." In Hebrews 1. the SON was the Word, the Creator: "God has spoken to us in the Person of the Son, by whom also He made the worlds." In Colossians 1. it was THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, who made all things. And to whom do these great names belong, and this great power by which the worlds were made? To JESUS. Certainly these names were His before He became the Man Jesus Christ on earth; but He has not given them up, that could not be, and now He is inseparably Man and God, and Head of all things. Moreover, He went down into death for the church, and rose again from the dead, and is the Head of His body, the church, also. If any one denies that He is the eternal Son of God, or denies that He was eternally in relationship with the Godhead as the Word, then they deny the glory of the Person of Christ, and for themselves have destroyed it.—(*G. J. Stewart*).

How to Walk.

(EDWARD WHYTE).

According to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

IT is remarkable that in this, the highest of Paul's epistles, where the believer is looked at as being "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ," "accepted in the Beloved," and "seated in the heavenlies in Christ," so much should be given as to one's walk; and yet it is not remarkable either, for while God would have us know and enjoy the wonderful position He has given us, and would have us talk of heavenly things, He would have us to walk as heavenly men also. Our prayer should be as we read this epistle and marvel at the abundance of the grace with which we are blessed in it:

"Oh make us each more holy,
In spirit pure and meek;
More like to heavenly citizens
As more of heaven we speak."

In chapter 2. verses 1-3 we are reminded as to what our walk was previous to the intervention of God in His quickening power. That same power which acted in a threefold way in regard to Christ as given in chapter 1. verses 19-22—first, raising Him from among the dead; secondly, setting Him down at His own right hand in the heavenlies; thirdly, giving Him the place of supreme authority not only in this age but the coming ages—that same power is seen acting in a threefold way towards us who believe in this second chapter: First, quickening us from our condition of moral death (ver. 5); secondly, setting us also in the heavenlies in order that, thirdly, in the coming ages, when Christ takes His place of supremacy, we should be associated with Him, showing forth for God's glory "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (ver. 7).

This grace shines upon a dark background sketched by a master-hand, for in these first three verses of the chapter there are described the fearful pit of

moral death, and the miry clay of wilfulness and wickedness from which we have been taken. Dead we were when God began with us, and, but for God, dead we should have remained. Sometimes we hear people say, "If I could only live my life over again what a different life it would be." But the truth is it would be no different. Could one's life be re-lived, one's youth renewed, one's birth repeated, without the intervention of God in His quickening power, it would mean but a repetition of the same sad history. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

"According to the course of this world."—Going with the crowd. There are various kinds of crowds; some outwardly religious, others openly sinful; what kind makes no difference. They all form part of that world-system which is opposed to God—Cain's world, where happiness depends on the exclusion of God and His Son, a world where earthly things are valued and heavenly things despised.

"According to the prince of the power of the air."—The ruling authority of this realm where God is welcomed not. Satan's influence is everywhere present in this domain of darkness, and it is his evil spirit that energises the subjects of his kingdom in their opposition to God.

"Children of disobedience."—It was through disobedience Satan gained the fall of man, and still the desire of the rebellious race is that God should depart from them, for they desire not the knowledge of His ways.

"Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind."—Whether controlled by animal passions or engaged in intellectual pursuits, the life of the natural man is all for self-gratification or self-glory. There is no desire in the human breast to gladden the heart of God or live for His glory; and, being born subjects

of this rebel kingdom of darkness, we were children of wrath. Oh, what a state to be in! But God, blessed be His name, was not content thus to leave us. We who were children of wrath, and might have been for ever vessels to show forth His wrath and judgment against sin, have instead, because of the riches of His mercy and greatness of His love, been brought forth in newness of life, that we might be vessels for the display, in the coming ages, of the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. What mercy, what grace, what infinite love! Not unto us, O God, not unto us, but unto Thee be all the glory.

But then, if this is His purpose for us in a day yet to come, and this is the place we are destined then to fill, has He no purpose for us now? and is there no path that is His mind for us till then? Indeed, He has such a purpose; there is such a path; we get it in verse 10: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The path already trodden to perfection by Him who said, "I do always those things that please Him," is the path the believer is called upon to tread. Our ways and works are to be the natural outcome of the new nature. Just as by nature we were "in Adam," and consequently walked as those possessing such a nature would walk—spontaneously the characteristics of the old nature came out in us—so being no longer in Adam but in Christ, God would have our walk to be marked by good works after the pattern of those that came out so perfectly in His Son.

When we come to chapter 4. verses 1-3 we find our walk is to be in keeping with the vocation wherewith we are called. That is in keeping with what is brought out towards the end of chapter 2., the truth of (A) the Body, (B) the Building.

A. The One Body.—If we walk in keeping with this truth we recognize the link that binds us to all our fellow-

believers; a company entirely severed from the world, Jewish and Gentile, which united in crucifying Jesus. How wonderful that God should use the same means by which the world showed itself one in rejecting the Son of God.—For did not Herod and Pilate sink their differences and shake hands over the rejection of Jesus? And did not the combined languages of the world written over the cross of Calvary proclaim to the universe that Jew and Gentile were one in their desire to be rid for ever of the Father's beloved Son? How wonderful that God should "by the cross" (chap. 2. ver. 16) slay the enmity existing between Jew and Gentile and, by making individuals from both cease to be either, reconcile such, not only to each other, but both unto God, so that, united in one body, not as at Calvary in opposition to God, they might both have access through Christ by one Spirit to the Father. This is the only unity we are to recognize, and according to it we must walk, giving countenance to nothing that would substitute any other form of unity for this. If I recognize in my walk or ways any bond of person or creed that embraces less than all the members of the one body, I imply that the unity already formed is not sufficient and must be supplemented by additional bonds. To walk in this unity may cost us something. It cost Paul something; indeed, for this very truth he found himself in prison, as he tells us in chapter 3. verse 1. But counting it an honour to be the prisoner of the Lord, from his place of incarceration he sent forth the cheering exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

B. The Building.—A building made up of living stones taken from Jew and Gentile, united and held together by the Chief Corner Stone—a living and growing building—destined to be God's dwelling-place throughout all ages. This too is part of the calling wherewith we are called. In Revelation 21. the Spirit brings this before us, under the figure of that holy city, new Jerusalem,

the dwelling-place of God during that age of millennial glory, and, as the tabernacle of God with men, in the ages of ages. As we go over detail after detail of this wondrous vision we see how every taint of sin will be removed, and all shine forth resplendent with the glory of God. This is our calling, and with this vision before us let us turn once more and read the words: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

When, however, we come to the practical carrying out of these great truths, we find that, because of the variety of temperaments associated with the various individual believers as they are at present constituted, a good deal of heavenly lubricant is necessary to overcome friction and make for smooth working; such oil we get in verse 2 of chapter 4. How much cause for thankfulness there is when we see Christians getting on well together, people so opposed naturally to each other in their dispositions that but for the grace of God it would be impossible for them to work in harmony for ten consecutive seconds. How lovely are these traits of the Christ character of self-abnegation, and in what striking contrast they stand to the self-assertion, arrogance and overbearingness of the Adam nature.

Loveliness and meekness are not considered valuable assets from the world's point of view. How readily we resent any slight and stand on our dignity, forgetting that He, in whose face the world spat, and from whose cheek the hairs were plucked, has left us in these, as in all else, an example that we should follow His steps.

Longsuffering and forbearance.—How trying we oftentimes are to each other, and how soon, too, our patience becomes exhausted. How readily we see faults in each other, and how ungraciously we try to correct these, priding ourselves that we are dealing faithfully with our brother. Of course, occasion arises when reproof is necessary, and would

often be gladly received if "faithfulness" were tempered with grace, instead of being resented when this latter quality is lacking. An old writer puts this thought somewhat as follows: "He that uses great vehemence in correcting a fault in his brother is like a man who took a club to kill a fly on his friend's forehead. He killed the fly, but he did his friend much injury."

If chapter 4. verse 1 tells us how to walk, verse 17 tells how *not* to walk. Certainly not as those around. We went with the world's stream when we formed part of the world. It is much easier, causing far less exercise, to go the way of least resistance, but how dishonouring to God it is if one who has been quickened by God chooses to go along with the world instead of walking in the path prepared by God. The Christian, having put off the old man and put on the new, is expected to cultivate the heavenly features of the new nature. In the garden of the unbeliever there is nothing but weeds, and every one knows that these grow without cultivation. In the garden of the believer, on the other hand, while there are weeds only too ready to grow and spread, for the flesh is still within, there are also flowers and fruits that will not grow without cultivation. So that towards the end of this fourth chapter we are exhorted to stamp out the weeds and cultivate the flowers and fruits.

Then we get the means by which these features of the divine character can be cultivated. It is not by continually looking within to see how we are getting on; but in chapter 5. verses 1-2, being God's children we are to be occupied with, and imitators of, Him who is the source of this new nature. As we live close to the fountain head, divine love flows into our souls, and from us flows forth to each other, just as Christ lived with His head on the Father's bosom, and from Him love flowed forth in every word and act of His wondrous life, bursting all bounds in His death: in giving Himself for us His offering and

sacrifice were to God a sweet-smelling savour. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." This is the standard of love placed before us.

What, now, is to be our attitude to the evil, unrighteousness, and deception all around? We are to "walk as children of the light" (chap. 5. ver. 8). Just as the "love" of the divine nature is to mark us in our dealings with one another as the children of God, so the "light" of that nature is to shine forth without compromise when the question of evil arises. Such was our condition when away from God that the Spirit says not only that we were in darkness, but that we were darkness itself, and on the other hand such is the extraordinary grace of God towards us and the holiness of the divine nature that it can be said as truly, "Now are ye light in the Lord." If a believer walks as a child of darkness it is wholly inconsistent with the divine nature, "for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth" (chap. 5. ver. 9, N.T.).

Then lastly we are exhorted to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," etc. (chap. 5. vers. 15-17). Days are darkening and becoming more and more difficult. Evil is increasing on every hand. The leaven of error is permeating with alarming rapidity the teaching of Christendom. Nevertheless we are not left in the dark as to what the will of the Lord is, we have His precious Word; the knowledge of His will will enable us to walk carefully as wise men who, having an object in view, waste not their time straying in bypaths, and because the days are evil we shall redeem the time—buy up the opportunities—opportunities of getting to know more clearly His will, opportunities of shining forth as lights here for Him, opportunities of showing forth to our fellow-believers, ay, and to those who are not believers, the love of God, seeking by occupation with the Lord Himself to be more and more like Him while we wait that day when He shall present the church to Himself holy and without blemish.

"The Person of the Christ."—No. 1. (G. J. STEWART).

Matthew xvi. 13-20.

THE Person of the Christ" is the paramount subject of Scripture. It is the rock foundation and the top stone. It is the "all and in all." Take away the Person of the Christ and you have no truth at all, for all truth, standing as it does in relation to God, can only be known in the light of the Person of "the Christ." The above scripture speaks of Him in two ways; first, as the Man Christ Jesus, and then, as the Son of the living God.

The chapter brings out first the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They had before them the greatest sign that God had ever given to man, viz. "Immanuel, God with us." God had said to King Ahaz of old, "Ask thee a sign . . . either in the depth, or in the height

above," but he would not have the sign, nor be brought into the presence of God. He said, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." It would not have been tempting God to have asked a sign, seeing He had told him to do so; but he would not come near to God. Then God said He would give him the sign, despite the fact of the King's refusal: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel," which is, being interpreted, "God with us" (Isaiah 7. 11-14). And there He stands now—the God-given sign in the presence of these Pharisees, and yet they ask of Him, "Give us a sign from heaven." Did they really want a sign? No. It was a subterfuge of their unbelief; they, while recognizing in Him undeniable power, were indifferent as

to its source and who He was who manifested it. It was in view of that that when He came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The surmises about Him were various, and all good, so far as mere human opinion went. They recognized in Him a man of power and grace, but they had not divine intelligence to fix who He was, as to the glory of His person. They did not know that everything hung upon the glory of that Man, not on the phenomena of what He did, but on the secret of who He was. The disciples replied to Him, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets." Then He said, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Now, first Jesus was the Christ, that is to say He was **THE MESSIAH**. Peter and all His disciples recognized that. He came as "the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15. 8). They had recognized that He had come, as the fulfiller both of promise and of prophecy; but that was only a part of His glory. Jesus, the Son of Man, was the Messiah, a Jewish title, but He was more than that, He was the Son of God, divine.

He had been recognized as Son of God before this chapter 3. 17. In many places where the expression "Son of God" is used it means as born on earth, the Son, of the 2nd Psalm: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Kings and rulers shall yet own Him thus, whom they rejected when He was here, for as Messiah, Son of God, He introduces the Kingdom; and so Nathanael owns Him, the Son of God, and the King of Israel (John 1. 49). Martha, too, recognized Him as the Christ, the Son of God (John 11. 27).

Here Peter confesses Him to be "the Christ, **THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD**": that is God, in contrast to dead idols, is the source of life and power.

Christ, the Son of the living God, is the declared vessel of life and power on earth. Who can overcome that? No one! The Son of the living God is superhuman, divine. On this rock would be established the royal hopes of Israel, in the glory of a kingdom without end (Isa. 26. 16; Luke 1. 33), while on it also He would build His church, against which the gates of hades would not prevail.

Another thing is this: Peter knew it, not from any superior intelligence in himself, but by the revelation of the Father. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee."

Now, flesh and blood means here everything that goes to constitute a man—body, soul, spirit, mind, conscience, heart—everything. Nothing in man could discover that Christ was the Son of the living God. The knowledge of it did not come from that source. Peter spoke from another source altogether. That source was "My Father, which is in heaven."

If any of us has been able to take up Peter's confession, and say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," it is the outcome of the Father's work in our souls, a revelation from the Father to us. God, the Father, is revealing His Son thus unquestionably. Where should we be if He were not? Is He doing it all through the present time? Yes! That is the subject of the revelation of God to every soul thus confessing Jesus. Do you "thus confess Him"? Then it is the Father's grace that has revealed it to you.

Again, "And I say, I also, unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

That rock is Christ, the substance of Peter's confession. Christ is the Rock foundation—the Son of the living God. He said, "I will build." He was not then building it. He did not begin to build until He had gone down into death, and, rising again, had proved that the gates of hades (that is, the power of the

grave) had no power over Him. The gates of hades could not prevail against the Son of the living God. Upon that rock the church is built, and hades has no more power over it than over the Builder. It is His building; He is the builder of it.

Many a time the enemy had thought to get the upper hand, and never did he seem more likely to succeed than when Christ was in the grave, with a great stone at the mouth of it, sealed with the Emperor's seal, and with a Roman guard to guard it. But what were man's precautions against the power of God?

A mighty angel came down, caring nothing for the Emperor's seal (which it was death to break) and rolled away the stone, not, indeed, to let Christ out. No, but to let His disciples in to see He was not there. Not even our sins could keep Him in the grave. He rose at the moment appointed. The great stone was rolled away, and the disciples could go in to find the grave was empty, and that great fact was the text of their testimony henceforth. The Emperor's seal was broken! The guard of the Empire fell back and became as dead men! He that sat in the heavens laughed. Jehovah had them in derision (Ps. 2). Christ was risen, hades' gates could not detain Him.

Turn to Romans 1. 2-3, and there we have it the other way. The argument here is not from Jesus, the Man, to the Son of God, but from the Son of God to the Man Jesus. It is beautiful to see how the Spirit of God approaches this magnificent subject. The gospel of God is concerning His Son. The intervening words are parenthetical. Let me read it to you as it should be: "The gospel of God concerning His Son come (rather, become; cf. John 1. 14) of the seed of David according to (the) flesh and marked out Son of God with power according to (the) Spirit of holiness by resurrection of (the) dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." Here he begins with God's Son. The gospel is about God's

Son. Mark, He was God's Son from eternity—what follows shows that. He became of the Seed of David according to the flesh. Here, God's Son became Man. He was David's Son according to the flesh; that is, He was the Messiah, the One who should establish the Kingdom. He was very Man in flesh! Now flesh here is equivalent to flesh and blood. In Hebrews 2., as also in Matthew 16., He was a true, real man; spirit, soul, and body; but as such He was Son of God, divine as well as human.

Now notice the two expressions, "according to flesh" and "according to Spirit." There is no article! You have them thrown into antithesis in other scriptures also. In Timothy 3. 16 we have: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in flesh, justified in Spirit." Again in 1 Peter 3. 18: "He was put to death in flesh, but quickened (made alive) in Spirit." In each case "in flesh" and "in Spirit" are characteristic. The Spirit of holiness, that is what characterized Him in His province here on earth so that death had no power over Him; contrariwise He had complete power over death, both as regards Himself and others. Accordingly He was marked out Son of God in power, by resurrection of (the) dead.

The fact that He raised the widow's son from death at the gate of the city of Nain, and the daughter of the ruler of the Synagogue; that He stood at the grave of Lazarus and said, "Lazarus, come forth," when he that was dead four days came forth; but above all, His own resurrection declared Him with power to be Son of God by resurrection, Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed be His name! Paul, arguing as to the gospel of God and that which brings out God's heart, tells us that He was the Son of God first; made of the seed of David according to the flesh—the Messiah; declared on earth to be Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness; and with power by resurrection from the dead, culminating in His

own resurrection, the Son of God in resurrection. That was Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 1. 18 tells us He was the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. This does not mean simply that He was in the bosom of the Father then, it is a participle, not a time tense—who has this character that He is in the bosom of the Father, now come down to declare Him. The only begotten Son declares the Father.

Another scripture in this same chapter, John 1., shows us that He knew all that was in Nathanael's heart, and He knows all that is in our hearts also. Blessed man! Blessed God! That is the One we have to do with.

A WORD OF WARNING.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. (See 1 John 2. 22-25). There you have a word of warning about this very truth. There are those who deny that He is the Christ. If any man deny that Jesus is the Christ, he is a liar. That was the Jewish form of opposition to the truth. Then there is one coming who will deny the Father and the Son, that is, the relationship of the Father and the Son in the Godhead revealed in Jesus. That is "the antichrist."

He says also: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father, but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." Deny that He is the Son, and you have not the Father, for if there were no Son to send into the world, there was no Father to send Him. If you acknowledge the Son, you have the Father also.

Then the Apostle says, "Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning." What is that? The true Deity and the true humanity of Jesus Christ. If that abides in you ye shall abide in the Son and in the Father, and with this is connected the subjective knowledge of eternal life known in the soul of him who abides in this truth.

1 John 4. 1-6 shows there are wicked spirits, false prophets gone out into the world who deny "Jesus Christ come in flesh," *i.e.* they deny the person of Jesus, who He is. They deny that He who was here in flesh was truly a divine person—they deny the Godhead of Jesus. "The mystery of godliness is a great one." The first man is under judgment and a new Man is come. It is not possible to say of Him, He was a man apart from Godhead, or that He was God apart from manhood. The two things go together in Him henceforth. He took upon Him the body prepared for Him, and Godhead and manhood were inseparably united in that blessed Person. This is the mystery of godliness, which no man can fully comprehend (Matt. 11. 27). Let none inquire: How?

One other verse: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of the Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9.). "The Christ," now, compasses the Man Christ Jesus, and the Son of the Father; so that, if a man does not abide in the doctrine of the Christ, he hath not God, doesn't know anything truly about God at all. But if he does abide in the doctrine of the Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. Just a word about whosoever transgresseth, that is, whosoever goeth beyond. If a man goes beyond a certain thing, he transgresseth. What does he go beyond here? The Word of God about Christ. He does as the Gnostics did. They said Christianity was a very good thing initiatively, but it wanted to be developed by the mind of man, in order to make a good system of it. That is going beyond. What is it going beyond? The Word of God. Beware! The next two verses put it upon our consciences to see if our hearts are in allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. "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."

“To Cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.”

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

It is asked whether “to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” refers to justification or sanctification.—(1 John 1. 9).

IT may be helpful to note briefly the place this clause has in relation to the truth of the epistle of John. It occurs in the introduction which extends to chapter 2. verse 4. Verses 1-4 depend upon the name of the Father. Eternal life is announced to us as having been ever in the Son with the Father, but now manifested in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, whom the apostles had heard, seen, looked upon, and handled. He was the Word (*λόγος*) of life, as Himself the life and the perfect expression of it. It was a life, then, of relationship with the Father, and for the apostles (and for us now through their testimony), of communion with the Father and His Son, in which the fullness of joy would be found for ever. Verses 5-10 give us “the message” which declares the nature of the life to be that of God and characterizes our enjoyment of it. It depends upon the name of God. He is light in essential Being, only now fully manifested, so that everything is brought to the test of the light, while the means of the introduction of sinners such as we into the light is found in the blood of Jesus Christ His Son that cleanseth us from all sin. Following upon this, in chapter 2. verses 1, 2 there is the provision for our only too sadly possible failure, and restoration to the communion that has been interrupted by the smallest allowance of sin; verses 3-11 adding the proof and test of the possession of the privilege by the practical expression of the life in the two essential traits of it in man, obedience (3-8) and love (9-11).

But the message is what is now to occupy us. It is to be remarked, and this is generally true of the epistle, how everything is expressed in the most absolute way. “God is light, and in Him

is no darkness at all.” The light is then the true knowledge of God, the darkness its antithesis, where God is unknown. This is at once brought to bear upon the profession of the possession of the privilege, when there is the absence of its distinguishing characteristics. The “if we say,” three times repeated, of verses 6, 8, 10 is opposed to the positive truth of verses 5, 7, and 9; and similarly “he that saith” (chap. 2. vers. 4, 6, 9). Thus if God is light, and in Him no darkness at all, the profession of the philosopher or the like to have fellowship with Him, when he walks in the darkness without the true knowledge of God, is proved to be false. The wonderful position of the Christian is given in verse 7; he walks in the light as God is in the light. It is not a question of *how* he walks yet, but of *where*. God is perfectly revealed, and in the full light of day of that revelation the Christian walks, in contrast to the darkness which was once his condition. In the light he has communion with his fellow-believers in the joys of a life and nature of which they partake in common. And the basis of the whole position is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, which cleanseth from all (or every) sin. Observe that it is no question of its application here; for this we should have to go to Hebrews 10. to find that when once applied there is no more conscience of sins; the conscience is perfected as to every question of sin as uninterruptedly as Christ is sitting at God’s right hand. But here is the testimony of God to the value of the blood of Jesus, and this is of incomparable value to our souls.

To say that we have no sin is to prove that we are self-deceived and the truth is not in us; because the effect of the truth upon the soul subjected to it is to

bring out that we have nothing but sin in us—that in me, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell. Observe it does not say, If we say that we are not sinning. We ought not to be sinning, as chapter 2, verse 1 shows. It is the denial of the far deeper discovery of *sin in us* which is in question. But who could take the place of not having sinned? The first effect of the light is to bring sins upon the conscience; our first step Godward is to confess them, with the immediate assurance that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The knowledge of forgiveness thus rests upon God's faithfulness and righteousness, having found in the blood of Christ what has infinitely glorified Him as to every question of sin. The Spirit of God does not use the forensic or judicial word of Paul in Romans, "justify," although it is the same precious truth, but "forgive," as answering more to the character of the relationship into which we are brought with God as reached by the light.

And then comes the word that gives the touch of perfection to the unfathomable grace with which we have to do—"and to cleanse us from all (or every) unrighteousness." If we consider what the meaning of unrighteousness is it will help us to the force of the clause. It is the opposite of righteousness, which is a relative term, save with God; the righteousness of God is His own consistency with Himself. But in the creature it is consistency with the relationships in which He has placed us, with Himself first of all, and then in every subordinate one. To be cleansed from all unrighteousness, then, involves nothing short of the removal of everything unsuited to the soul's relationship with the blessed God in unclouded light. The *guilt* of sin that had to be met by the blood is not the only way the soul is affected by it, there is the *defilement* of it, and purification needed by the water of the word. All kinds of falsity and deceit too belong to the realm of darkness out of which we have been delivered. Hence the blessedness not only of the man to

whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, but "in whose spirit there is *no guile*," of Ps. 32., which in its last verse brings the forgiven one to the shout of joy of the *upright* soul. He has been cleansed from all unrighteousness. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did" would express it with the woman of Samaria, as she becomes Christ's first witness to the men of Samaria, telling of the right relations with God into which she had been brought.

But the principle of the truth in the expression we are considering is of wider application than to the sinner first coming to God. John writes that we sin not. But oh, how well it is for us that the possibility of it in the child of God is supposed, in my own case in chapter 2, verse 1, in my brother's in chapter 5, 16, lest otherwise what we have observed as to the epistle generally, in the absolute way without any modification the truth is stated, we might be driven to despair. There is a resource if I have sinned. There is an Advocate with the *Father* (for there can be no change in the relationship in which He stands even to His fallen child), "Jesus Christ the righteous," who is there in His own personal perfection, "the righteous," and in all the subsisting value of His work as "the propitiation for our sins," so that no charge of it can stand against us. The effect of such an Advocate is to bring me to judge, all the more that there can be no imputation of it, the seriousness of having sinned against the light and love and the intimacy of relationship into which I have been brought. And then verse 9 comes in; confession is the resource as I am led by Him to the detection of sin or whatever has come in to hinder or mar communion; and there is not now, in the case supposed, the forgiveness of non-imputation—that never could be reversed—but that of the Father in the holy discipline of His child. Here, again, how important and blessed for us that it is accompanied with the cleansing from all unrighteousness, the removal of every cloud between

me and the light of His presence, of every shade of moral distance.

Is it not illustrated in the Lord's ways with Peter in John 21. ? He knew that he was forgiven when the Lord turned that look of unchanged regard upon him, that broke him down completely. But much was yet needed for his cleansing from the effect of his fall. "I go a-fishing" did not tell of practical righteousness, of true relations with the Lord who had once called him from it. With his poor unsatisfied heart it was a fruitless night of toil. But with what exquisite grace and tenderness the Lord took His own way with His servant to probe indeed Peter's conscience in His faithful love. How had he stood the test who had boasted that he loved Him more than all ? "Lovest thou me more than these" brought him to the root of his failure in his confidence in himself. To whom could he turn ? "Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest

that I love Thee." And the Lord can commit to him the most precious interests that He had on earth, and give him, in the power of communion with Himself, the path he had sought to take in nature's energy, signifying to him by what death he should glorify God. I do not doubt that the cleansing from all unrighteousness in such a case was symbolized by the Lord in John 13., when He not only washed His disciples' feet but wiped them with the towel wherewith He had girded Himself.

As to sanctification, Ephesians 5. 26, "that he might sanctify it (the assembly) having cleansed it (as it must read) with the washing of water by the word," leads me to believe that sanctification has rather to do with the normal growth of the soul under the ministry of Christ (*cf.* John 17. 19), and is not what is contemplated in "cleanseth us from all unrighteousness."

The Purpose of God.

(R. H. FAHRANT).

ERE the earth was founded
By Creation's Lord;
Or the sea was bounded
By His mighty word.

Ere the sky unfolded
At His great decree;
Or the planets moulded
Sang in unity.

Then the Father knew me,
Then He marked my way,
Then His Eye did view me,
In the perfect day—

Then, all pure and spotless,
In His purpose I
Reign'd in glory fadeless,
Reign'd beyond the sky—

Then He gave the nectar
Brimful in my cup.
He, my great Protector,
Bound Life's bundle up

With a cincture golden,
Jewelled and fair,
Not one name withholden,
All were numbered there.

Then IN CHRIST He saw me
Perfected, complete,
His bright mantle o'er me,
Reaching e'en my feet.

Marked out for adoption
Ere the world began;
Subject of redemption—
This His holy plan.

Yes! this is the story,
This He did decree,
Through the Blood, the glory,
This my title free!

His, the joy, the blessing,
His the glory fair,
He all things possessing,
I, WITH CHRIST, an heir!

What Grace Does for Us.

(J. T. MAWSON).

WE knew a man who was brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour in his old age. His gratitude for the grace that had saved him was very deep, and it was always a pleasure to talk with him.

He was, on his eighty-second birthday, to partake, for the first time, of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the Lord in death—the greatest privilege that any Christian can enjoy on earth—and we called at his house on that Lord's Day morning to help him to the gathering where this was to take place. He told us that he had passed through a great conflict during the night. He had been thinking of his long life of sinful selfishness, and of his own utter unworthiness, and the devil had attacked him in his self-occupation and said, "You are not fit to sit down with God's people and take the Lord's Supper. You are altogether unworthy, and had better give up your intention of doing it." He told us that his distress was very great for hours, when quite suddenly the thought came to his mind, If his Majesty the King were to invite me to feast with him at his palace, he would have to provide me with a suit of court dress, for I am a poor man and could not purchase one myself. And if the Lord invites me to His "banqueting house" to feast with Him, will He do less than this? Then he remembered the parable of the prodigal, upon whom the best robe was put. He remembered the wonderful words of Ephesians 1. 6, which tell us that God "hath made us acceptable in the Beloved." These thoughts banished all the darkness and distress from his mind and made him exult in that abounding grace that does everything that is needful for its objects, and in that great love which had put him in Christ and clothed him in all His perfection.

In the consciousness of this he rejoiced that morning; and being set free from self-occupation was able to glory in the Lord.

There may be some amongst our readers who are often in similar distress about their unworthiness. Let us say to such that self-occupation can only distress you the more, though self-judgment is always wholesome and needful. Grace looked for no merit in you when it laboured to win you. The Lord did not save you because of your worthiness, for you had none to plead before Him, and it is not now a question of what you are, but of what He is—

"Thou art healed by His stripes,
Would'st thou add to that word?
And He is thy righteousness made,
The best robe of heaven on thee He has put;
Oh, could'st thou be better arrayed?"

Your unworthiness, if you think of yourself, could not be more absolute than it is, but Christ who bore your load of sins upon the tree, and who is now raised from the dead, is your righteousness, your acceptance, your beauty in the sight of God, and the highest angel in heaven is not so well clad as are you, nor so fit to be in presence of God as you are *in Christ*.

Then give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1. 12); and gratefully and with lowliness of mind take up every Christian privilege that He puts within your reach for His name's sake.

So shall the devil's intentions be thwarted, for he would make your heart miserable and your mouth dumb so that God shall get no praise from you, for he knows that whoso offereth praise glorifieth God.

The Lord in Resurrection—John 20.

(HUDSON BROOK).

GLADNESS filled the hearts of the disciples when the Lord appeared to them in the upper room. They had miserably failed, but His intercession and priestly grace on their behalf had not failed (Luke 22. 32), and His presence with them was proof of this. The news of His resurrection had gathered them together. He put the seal upon His blessed service of grace towards them by coming into their midst and speaking peace.

Through storm and stress they had come, and what *they* were in themselves had been painfully evident; but now He had drawn them together Himself, their Lord, and Centre of gathering, to set their hearts in peace, so that they might see and hear what He had done, and what He would still further do for them, and what He is in Himself in personal excellency. Like balm upon their wounded spirits was His salutation "peace unto you," telling as it did the state of His mind toward them, and setting them free in His presence to appropriate the fruit of the victory which He had won and which He would give them to share with Him.

We may notice how the presence of the Lord delivered them from all fear of external circumstances as also from the depression of their own experiences. As they looked upon His pierced hands and side every element of fear was banished by the gladness His presence brought.

All the forces of evil had been arrayed against the Lord at the cross, every peace-destroying element was there, for the "prince of this world" had marshalled his forces, and men, his willing slaves, had united with the powers of darkness to crush the Son of God. In the midst of that encircling darkness the Lord was—as the Sin-bearer—*forsaken by God* also, and under His righteous judgment, but He had

come through all blessedly and triumphantly, proclaiming peace. How it sobers our spirits to meditate upon what He passed through. There never was sorrow like unto His. It lies entirely beyond our comprehension, and it can never fully be told.

But when the Lord appeared to the disciples the night of His sorrow had passed and the joy of the morning had come. He had borne the judgment of God against sin, God was glorified by His "perfect offering," and the question of sin (calling for a solution from the day Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden) was answered, and a righteous basis laid by which the sin of the world will be taken away. And what is the issue of this sorrow and conflict as to death and the forces of evil? The Lord of life entered into death and annulled him that had the power of death, that is the devil. He passed triumphantly through the powers of death and evil, and by and by He will finish the work of subjugation by shutting up *all* the forces of evil in the lake of fire (Rev. 20.).

In the meantime, as we have said, He appeared to the disciples bringing to them the fruit of His victory for their appropriation, and so turned their sorrow into joy.

In contrast to their past experience of loss and sorrow, how great was the gain of having Him again and being brought into that realm of peace which had ever distinguished Him in passing through a bitterly hostile world. They were now to be His witnesses in the world which had hated Him without a cause—and which would hate them because they were His servants—but His peace was to keep them in it all. And more than this, as victorious Man, who in spite of all the powers of evil had laid down His life and taken it again, He breathed on them, communicating the same life

in which He now lives as the Son of God in resurrection to each and every one there.

How changed were their circumstances! The absence of the Lord had desolated their hearts for a time, they had lost Him in whom they trusted, and their every hope was dashed to the ground; but now everything was changed, and in His presence they realized their folly and smallness of faith. They had their Lord in a new way, and that which they had imagined to be a great disaster had turned out to be a glorious victory.

Is it not the same in our history? In wisdom the Lord often allows that to break down in which we trusted. Then how varied and how humbling are our exercises, yet withal most profitable to us, and this thought of profit might well encourage us as exemplified in the history of the disciples as we have been viewing it. The same grace that met the disciples in their breakdown meets us, and with a wonderful patience their Lord and ours waits upon our slow-moving hearts until His purpose—of making Himself altogether supreme in our hearts—is reached by us.

Wonders in Heaven.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—XII.

“There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads.”

(Rev. xii. 1, 3).

IN the closing verse of chapter 11. we begin a new section of this book. The temple is open, the ark is seen, but, like the visions of chapter 12., it is viewed from a heavenly standpoint. There is no actual temple in heaven (Rev. 21. 22); that is found at Jerusalem only. But what a comfort to the worshippers on earth who thus learn heaven's interest in them as set forth in the ark! The ark, with its golden mercy-seat, the propitiatory for their sins and the assurance of God's intervention, in faithfulness to the covenant pledged thereby. The quaking earth, the lightning's flash, and the thunder's roar indicate the sorrows which will mark the close of Israel's eventful history and the final stages of the ways of God with their enemies.

Those courts above know no monotony. Scarcely have the echoes of the Elders' song died away, and the Temple is seen opened in heaven, before John beholds wonders and signs (see chap. 12.).

A mountain summit commands a view impossible in the valley, hence the Seer of Patmos leaves earth, and from heaven's high altitude beholds stupendous events taking place below. In seventeen verses we have a panoramic vision, beginning with the birth of Christ; going on to His session at the right hand of God; the ejection of Satan from the heavens; the miraculous preservation of Israel and her final supremacy over all nations. The real though hidden actors in these great events are brought to light, and behind the power of Imperial Rome we are allowed to see that the real agent of her diabolical activities is that old serpent, the great dragon, called the devil and Satan.

Two wonders, or more properly "signs," appear. A woman decked with the sun, having the moon for a footstool, crowned with a diadem of twelve stars. Who is this woman in whose person is centred supreme, subordinate, and derived authority? No

thoughtful mind can doubt that Israel is here portrayed. Psalmist, prophet, priest, and lawgiver all concur in their testimony that all kingdoms are to be subordinate to Israel. It is by divine decree that all nations who will not serve her shall perish (Isa. 63. 12; Deut. 32. 8; Ps. 48. 2). Joseph's dream will find its literal fulfilment in her during the millennial day. An incredulous world may regard Zion's supremacy as an idle dream, but the day is not far distant when every nation will repair to Jerusalem to do homage to the King—the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 14. 16).

To-day they are a people scattered and peeled, having no national standing, yet, wonder of wonders! the Word of God is clear as noonday, that neither London nor Berlin, Paris nor St. Petersburg, is destined to wield universal rule as the world's metropolis. That honour is reserved for Jerusalem alone.

Is it because they are either a great or good people that they are to be the head and all other nations the tail? Neither. But because in the providential ordering of God, the One and only Potentate, the King of the whole earth, is of a Jewish stock. Out of that nation the ruler comes forth who is from the days of eternity (Micah 5. 2). Their special glory, their highest honour, and the procuring cause of their future elevation lies in this, that through them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God-blessed for ever (Rom. 9. 5).

Here she is seen as a Queen-mother travailing in birth, who brings forth a Man-child, whose destiny is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. "His hands will grasp the reins of universal government, crush to atoms every opposing power, shiver sceptres and crash kingdoms with the irresistible might of His power." He is the Son of Man of Psalm 8., the King of Israel of Psalm 2., the lowly Jesus, the holy Babe laid in Bethlehem's manger, Emmanuel—God with us of Matthew 1. 23.

A second "wonder" now appears. A great red dragon, with seven coronetted

heads and ten horns, whose tail cast a third part of the stars of heaven to earth, stands ready to devour the Man-child as soon as it is born.

Who does this "dragon" represent? Despotic power in its most complete form is indicated in its "seven heads." The extent of its dominion is seen in its tail drawing the "third part" of the stars. Its sanguinary colour shows the deadly methods employed to carry out its ambitious designs. Its name of "dragon" that it is the willing agent and tool of Satan, who is here seen as the real source of its diabolical cruelties. The world-power dominant at the birth of the "Man-child" was pagan, imperial Rome, and answers to these marks.

Whilst heavenly hosts were announcing the birth of Jesus, and wise men from the East came to render Him homage, the dragon was instilling his murderous designs into Herod's mind. The Idumean king was a vassal of Rome and fell a ready prey to Satan. The result being that lamentation, mourning, and weeping filled every household in Rama, for his bloodthirsty sword swept away every infant under two years old in his attempt to "devour" the Man-child. Sheltered by divine care, providentially preserved, Jesus escaped unhurt.

The great facts of the death and resurrection of Christ are all passed over in silence. His advent and His ascension, when He was caught up to God and His throne, are alone mentioned. Israel's history is also passed over in silence, the thread being taken up again at the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. From verse 6 we learn that she will have a place prepared for her, be fed, sustained, watched over by God for 1260 days. After Satan's expulsion from heaven she again becomes the target of the dragon—see verse 13—who vents his persecuting rage on her. With eagle-like swiftness she flees, pursued by a flood intended to sweep her out of existence, but miraculously preserved of God. Some settled power here called the

"Earth" comes to her aid. In this we see another proof of the truth of God's word, "When the enemy shall come in *like a flood*, the Spirit of the Lord shall put him to flight" (Isa. 59. 19).

Disappointed in his design to wipe out the nation altogether, he will carry on a destructive, diabolical war "with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." This remnant will be the godly among the Jews who seek to obey God's word, and maintain that Jesus is their true Messiah and rightful King. Then shall be the time of Jacob's trouble, when outwardly all will be black and hopeless. For the elect's sake the days will be shortened ere faith has left the earth.

An important parenthesis is found from verse 7 to 12. There we learn that Satan is now in heaven. There are three heavens. The highest is where God dwells in unapproachable light. Neither Satan nor Michael, Cherubim nor Seraphim, have ever penetrated there. One Man only—the Eternal Son of God, in virtue of His equality with the Father—sits enthroned in that glorious light. The middle heavens appear to be the abode of the unfallen angels; whilst the air, or lower heavens, is Satan's present abode. Demon hosts, principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, are under his sway (Eph. 6. 12). He is a dragon in cruelty, a serpent in subtilty, a lion in power, angelic in form, a devil in slander, and implacable as an accuser and adversary. For some wise reason, known to God alone, he is not confined in hell, but is allowed to range over the earth, and penetrate the council chambers of kings, or the breast of a Judas. His action, manward, is to blind minds (Eph. 2.); saintward, to deceive as an angel of light, or persecute as a lion (2 Cor. 11. 14, 1 Peter 5. 8), whilst Godward he is the accuser of the brethren who accuses them day and night (Rev. 12. 10).

This book unfolds his future. Our Lord prophetically announced his fall as lightning from heaven when the disciples recounted their victory over the demons (see Luke 10. 18). Here we get the moment of his expulsion and the means of its accomplishment. Afterwards, for a thousand years, he is chained in the pit (Rev. 20. 2), and eventually eternally confined in the lake of fire (ver. 10).

The time of his expulsion is during Daniel's last half-week. The means employed being angelic agency. Michael is the national guardian of Israel (Dan. 10. 21). He it was who contended with Satan over the body of Moses (Jude 9). His name means "who is like to God"! He alone is called an "archangel," and under his command are numerous angels. These unitedly expel the dragon, and thus prove that he is but a creature, powerful indeed, but still a creature. Henceforth his place is found no more in heaven, and the hosts there are called to rejoice. But what produces joy in heaven means woe and sorrow on earth. Henceforth all the concentrated hatred of that awful being is directed against the godly remnant of the Jews. His time is short, and he hastens to persecute them even to death.

Victory all along the line has been won by the blood of the Lamb, the Word of God, and the unselfish witness of saints who loved their Master better than their lives. Dim as their spiritual light will be, feeble their knowledge of God compared to ours, yet they willingly part with life itself rather than give up their testimony.

What a cheer it will be to them that the ransomed in heaven, whose day of trial is over, can call them "our brethren," and connect Satan's downfall with the speedy setting up of Christ's kingdom (see ver. 10). The end draws near. The next chapter reveals the culmination of evil in a demon-formed trinity opposed to God and His Christ.

Psalms 69. 70.

THE four concluding Psalms of Book II. take us over similar ground to that in the preceding group with further light on the kingdom in Psalm 72., and a fuller exposure of the sin of the unbelieving nation in Psalm 69. in its hostility to Christ, as we learn from the references in the New Testament (see John 2. 17 and 19. 28, 29; Rom. 15. 3). Yet there are difficulties in reading the whole Psalm as the utterance of Christ personally, for foolishness is confessed as well as sin in verse 5; and in verse 18 redemption for the soul is sought and deliverance, or rather ransom, because of enemies, implying the need of price to be paid. This could not be thought of in connection with Him who gave Himself a ransom. Nevertheless in His spirit the blessed Lord entered fully into the conditions which the sins of His people had entailed on them, and words are given suitable to them, and in certain cases applicable to Him personally (*cf.* Dan. 9. 5, 6, 20).

The character of the suffering in this Psalm is worthy of some attention; there is the hatred and persecution from man (see verses 4, 14, 18, 19, 20). but not this alone; the soul realizes the smiting of God in verse 26 (see Isa. 53. 4 and Zech. 13. 7). Evidently in Zechariah this smiting goes on to death, and this constitutes the chief sorrow of the Psalm; the "waters," "the deep mire," "the floods" in verses 1, 2, repeated in verses 14, 15, with the addition of the "pit" surely lead to the conclusion that the wages of sin, administered by the government of God, are before the soul of the Sufferer, and he cries to Him who is able to save out of death and is heard. Messiah identifies himself in loving sympathy, not with the sins, but with the state which the sins of the nation brought

on the believing remnant (Heb. 5. 7, 8), but goes further; He bears their sins and suffers the forsaking of God, as seen in Psalm 22.; this is atonement, in order that they may be cleared from their guilt in righteousness. It will be remembered that the consequence of this atoning work in Psalm 22. is unmingled blessing (see vers. 22-31), while in Psalm 69, in striking contrast, righteous retribution is sought for upon enemies who oppress not only the Speaker but others whom He associates with Himself—"Thy wounded ones" (ver. 26). In accordance with this we read in verse 13, "My prayer is unto Thee, O Jehovah, in an *acceptable* time," while in Psalm 22. it is, "O, my God, I cry and thou hearest *not*." The use of the divine names Jehovah and God, contrary to the general use of Books 1 and 2, point in the same direction. As to the radical difference of the two characters of sufferings exhibited in these two Psalms respectively, I may quote Mr. Darby: "It is impossible that a spiritual mind, one who knows something of the value of divine favour and being able to look to Him, however deep the inward distress, be it even through sin and failure, can fail to understand the immense and absolute difference of these two states." Further, as Zechariah 13. 7 has been referred to, it should be noticed that the result of the smiting of the Shepherd is the scattering of the sheep, while the true result of His sacrificial death is to gather them (John 11. 51, 52). Evidently suffering for the sins of others in order that God's righteousness may be maintained, while the sinner is pardoned, is very different from a suffering of association in spirit and circumstances with those who are enduring the consequences of their own sins under divine government, and these are the two characters of suffering we

desire to distinguish; the former is in Psalm 22., the latter in Psalm 69.

The historical occasion of our Psalm may be found in the circumstances recounted in the closing chapter of 1 Samuel. Perhaps David was never so entirely isolated from all human aid and friendship as when, in chapter 30. 6, "the people spake of stoning him." He would feel that the disasters befalling him at that time were the result of his own departure from the path of faith, and in the consciousness that in God was his only hope, would cry, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul,—Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from Thee." In 1 Samuel 30. 24, etc., he restores what he had never taken away, a principle of acting accomplished in an infinitely more glorious way, when Messiah retrieved the glory of God which had been so marred in all the sad history of the first man.

In regard to the structure of the Psalm, it is interesting to notice that, like Psalm 22., twenty-one verses are occupied with the sufferings, then, as already noticed, in place of blessing flowing to the ends of the earth, righteous retribution on the enemies of the faithful is desired; then in 29. the prayer for salvation (see ver. 1) is repeated, and praise is promised as the result. This ensures a witness to God's ways in deliverance, so that the meek see it and are glad. The last two verses form a section in which the purposes of God in blessing to His people are declared.

Pleasing God.

Pleasing God is the highest service. This was Enoch's service, and "without faith it is impossible to please God: he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently *seek* Him." Some seem to intimate by their acts that God is a rewarder of those who diligently *work* for Him. It is a healthy sign when

Psalm 70. repeats with small difference the last five verses of Psalm 40. A title is added, "to bring to remembrance," showing, according to Isaiah 62. 6, the special class for whom it is written, "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." What urgency of exhortation! And how the same Spirit seeks to impart urgency in prayer: "O God to deliver me, O Jehovah to my help *make haste.*" So also in the last verse of our Psalm, instead of the touching assurance of Psalm 40. 17, "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me," we have, "*Make haste* unto me, O God." Those who are thus pressed by the Spirit to pray in accordance with God's purpose for them are those who love His salvation and whose chief desire is—"Let God be magnified" (ver. 4).

The need of such remembrancers in the church to-day is manifest, and we may learn from Revelation 22. 16, 17 the character of desire testimony suitable to the last days of our sojourn on earth. There is no thought of restoration of Pentecostal blessing, but the Bride, in company with the Spirit, looks heavenwards and invites the return of her Lord. There may only be few in the state suitable to the title of Bride, but hearts and voices will not be wanting. The Jewish Bride, on the other hand, is entitled to expect the renewal of earthly blessing, when the name of the city shall be Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there.

saints are zealous of good works, but I believe there is nothing so likely to sap the soul as the satisfaction one derives from the feeling that one is useful. When you have been much in active service you need to go to the "desert to rest awhile" with the Lord. The soul who does not seek this, and long for it, is the soul that needs it most.

Has Christianity Failed?

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

A VERY important question! That it has at least exerted a highly beneficent influence we must all admit; and, further, had its maxims been allowed to prevail effectually, that influence would have been far greater. But it has been encountered by the keenest opposition everywhere on account of the very holiness of these maxims. It is not only that its advocates have been punished by fire and sword, not only that its printed page has often been consumed; but it has had to deal with a heart and mind in every soul of man which rebel against its doctrines. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Still, spite of all, its influence has been, and certainly is, purifying, refining, and elevating.

And just as imitation is the highest flattery, so have the holy and purifying truths of Christianity been widely acknowledged. But does that count for much? Alas, it does not! That which is not more than skin-deep will soon wear off. Mere admiration means nothing. Let us look at the state of things in which Christianity found the world when it came into it. I will quote from Romans 1. 29-31, which gives an inspired and accurate picture of the condition of the inhabitants of the world at that point of time; they were:

"Filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

Here we have an indictment of twenty-two terrible counts preferred by the unerring Spirit of truth against the

fallen and guilty race of Adam. Scout it who may; turn away if you please from a picture so revolting; decline to believe the divinely given photograph; say it must be an exaggeration if you will; but there it hangs before the gaze of man in the gallery of Scripture. That was, spite of all incredulity, the actual and *de facto* state and condition of the race when the glorious light of Christianity burst through the darkness and shone upon men. That was man, that was—to use a very favourite word of to-day—humanity! How essentially loathsome! How beneath the brute creation morally viewed.

It is long since I have ceased to be an admirer of man as such—ever since I learned what he did at Calvary. There we can see the inherent wickedness of his fallen nature, when he crucified the greatest benefactor the world ever saw—the lowly Son of Man, the ever-blessed Son of God!

All the counts of the above indictment, and more beside, concentrate in that crowning sin. That is enough—that is man.

This is not misanthropy, not in the least a jaundiced appraisal of humanity. It will stand the test of experiment and demonstrate its own accuracy.

Let us eschew the poor infidelity of the present day which denies the fall in Eden, and the all too patent fact that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" thereby.

Yes, but that picture was painted two thousand years ago, and allowance must surely be made for all that Christianity has wrought.

Very well, let us see what that really is, and whether it was ever intended that Christianity should regenerate the world—whether that were its object. I will again quote the same inspired pen as it describes the state of things in the circle

of Christianity when it shall have reached the last days of its testimony—not the end of the world, but that of the system of which we are speaking. The reader will be struck by the indictment:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.”

Here we have eighteen counts almost identical with those in Romans 1.; but notice the nineteenth and last, “having a form of godliness but denying the powers thereof” (2 Tim. 3. 1-4).

Compare these two pictures—the first depicting the state of the world at the entrance of Christianity, the second describing that of the very sphere in which it had been professed during these twenty centuries when its last days have arrived.

The reader must admit that there is very little difference between the two, and will conclude that Christianity has been, in its own showing, a failure, and that it leaves things in the world no better than it found them.

But what was God’s purpose in Christianity. Was it intended to be a lever to exalt the world as such, or was it designed to deliver souls out of the world and its inevitable doom? The latter assuredly. Hence the command to repentance and separation from the world.

“Now,” we read in John 12. 31, “is the judgment of this world.” The cross of Christ is its moral end before God. The verdict is passed. Friendship with the world is enmity against God. The Spirit is here to convince the world of sin because of its rejection of Christ. “The whole world lieth in the wicked one” (1 John 5. 19). “This present

evil age” is how the Christian period is described. “Evil men shall wax worse and worse” (2 Tim. 3. 17). Scripture holds out no hope for the world as such. Its sentence must end in final judgment. The profession has utterly failed. Then, secondly, in what respect has Christianity not failed? What has it accomplished?

Its victories, and victories they are, are purely spiritual. The kingdom of God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, pursues its holy career, apart from the material forces of men. Like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, it gains its triumphs secretly. Its first breath on the glad day of Pentecost severed three thousand souls from an untoward generation and incorporated them in the new structure called the church (the “called out” ones), and so, onward through these nearly two thousand years, the same silent work has proceeded, and will proceed, till the Lord shall come again and present that church to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5. 27).

Many interests connect themselves with the life and destiny of the church on which we may not enter here. But it is just in this divine work—and not in the imitation of it—that we see the reality. This, the building of God, shall remain. The gates of hell shall not prevail here.

In this, which is indeed its only mission, Christianity is no failure. Externally, as to its mere profession, it has been parodied beyond all recognition. It has been degraded to a vast and godless Babylon whose judgment lingers not. But, in itself, as the work of God it shall appear faultless. That which we witness to-day, in the false profession of it, is but a huge travesty, possessing little more than technical terms, and phrases indicating the connection—a form of godliness, indeed, where the power—the only true and distinctive mark—is denied!

This—the false profession of Christianity—may indeed be “a failure”;

and on it the severest of judgment shall burst ere long. In "one hour" its desolation shall come (see Rev. 18.) sudden, swift, and final, and only too well-deserved.

But the purpose of God, that which He has wrought, shall abide. The heavenly city shall be seen complete, perfect, "having the glory of God," the witness of His grace and power, His wisdom and love. "That which God doeth shall be for ever."

Let us distinguish very clearly between the false and the true, the kernel and the husk, that which God builds and that which results from the building of man, and take our stand accordingly.

This last is, if you please, "a failure." It has reached the end foretold of it. There is no need for surprise nor alarm. The profession has utterly collapsed and broken down. The imitation has, of course, proved lamentably defective.

It appears at the close to be identical with the awful condition which existed at the beginning. The indictments are almost interchangeable; only there is the added crime of light rejected and truth despised—an awful addition!

These are solemn facts as we contemplate the imminence of two near events: first, the coming of the Lord for the removal to heaven of that which is genuine; and second, the subsequent swift and terrible judgment that will overtake the false. We are nearing these crises.

The church at Philadelphia was cheered by the promise: "Behold, I come quickly." That at Laodicea was warned by the announcement: "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

May His grace make every true Christian to carry and exhibit all the marks of a vital Christianity.

Our Glorious Morning.

Xenophon tells us about the morning when his ten thousand Greeks, from a lofty hill-top, looked down and saw the blue waves of the Mediterranean flushing in the sunlight, and shouted with one united voice: "The sea! the sea! the open sea!" We, too, look for a morning, the dawning of which shall draw

from our lips a mighty and joyful shout, a morning, the light of which will be brighter than any that even shone on sea or land. The light will be the radiant countenance of our coming Lord, and the shout will be our united response to His shout of triumphant love as He descends to meet His church.

The Weary Sinner's Hope.

Ye desolate children of sorrow!
Your hopes, have they passed away?
Your dreams of a brighter morrow,
Gone fleet as the bloom in May?
The chill breath of time, does it wither
The boughs where ye build your nest?
Ah, come then, ye mourners, come
hither,
I'll tell you of perfect rest.

I'll tell you of Him who hath spoken
Sweet peace to my weary heart,
And healed it, though withered and
broken,
With love's all-availing art.
It was He, 'twas the Lord of the glory,
Who died on the cursed tree,
On Calvary, stricken and gory,
A suffering Lamb for me.

A Great Change.

(HENRY J. VINE).

GREAT and wonderful is the change which takes place in the believer in Christ, in his moral being, in his spirit, mind, and affections, when his thoughts are elevated in the power of the Spirit to view the truth of God from the divine side, from the heavenly standpoint; no longer to view it *only* from the side of man and his responsibility, but to see the grace of the Lord in activity, for the joy and satisfaction of His own loving heart in our eternal blessing.

Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are rightly and necessarily pressed in the preaching: God now commands all men everywhere to repent. Works meet for repentance are rightly looked for. The joy of God's great salvation can only thus be known; but what a change takes place with the one who knows this, when he discovers that the very God he had sinned against took the initiative in his salvation and blessing, and that *for His own pleasure*. His joy in this is infinitely greater than ours can be. His redeeming love has been made manifest not simply to meet our need, but according to His own good pleasure, and to the praise of the glory of His grace.

The fifteenth chapter of Luke is the chapter of divine merrymaking. We read there of the joy of the Shepherd, and of the woman, and of the father, over that that was lost. These show to us the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father, the Persons of the ever blessed Godhead, all having their part in our blessing. "It is meet that we should make merry," says the Father. It is the expression of God's great joy over the one who was lost and is found, was dead and is alive again; and though the son's joy is doubtless full, God's joy must be immeasurably greater. The Lord sought and found us; He put us on His shoulders rejoicing, and He sets us in liberty before the Father's face, in all the value of His own precious

blood. To see this in the power of the Spirit of truth, who is here to lead us into all truth, works a mighty change with the believer, and nullifies for him the subtleties of many temptations; giving his soul to rise up and find its joy in His joys, to find its triumph in the Lord's triumphs; its satisfaction in that in which He finds His.

I witnessed the wonderful effect of this in a dear old believer who had passed the three score and ten years, known as one who loved our Lord Jesus Christ, and who rejoiced in the preaching of the word to the unsaved. I was only able to see him occasionally, for he lived in an out-of-the-way country district.

On one of these visits the old saint had something very special to tell me. A copy of "Scripture Truth" had been sent to him, and from it he had learned that *it was the Lord* who had sought him; that *it was the Lord* who gave all to have him, and not he who gave all to have the Lord. He had learned that it was our blessed Saviour who was the Seeker and the Merchant Man of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, who gave all for the treasure hid in the field, and for the pearl of great price. He saw that the treasure and the pearl were not our salvation, but ourselves; not our blessing, but the church—the assembly, the body and bride of Christ. He had discovered that he was part of this for which Christ gave all that He had; yea, for which He gave Himself—Christ loved the church and *gave Himself* for it (Eph. 5. 25). His delight knew no bounds as he spoke of his great joy in this wonderful discovery.

Such incidents have their value, not simply in the interest which their relating inspires, but in the encouragement they impart to those who minister the truth of God from the divine standpoint, as that which produces such much to be desired results, such holy and happy changes for God's praise and glory.

“Whence Come Wars”?

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE SELF-WILL OF MAN.

THERE is an important statement of truth in Acts 17. 26: “*God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations, that they should seek after God.*”

It should be evident to all that if men dwelt together as being of one blood and were contented to abide within those bounds set for them by God, humanity would not be disgraced by strife and bloodshed. But the history of the world is one long record of man's insubjection to God's ordering in this respect. Not that a man's habitation is sufficient to satisfy his heart no matter how wide the bounds of it may be. Alexander got the whole world, and then wept like a disappointed child because there were no others that he could get. God's intention was that men should seek after Him, for it is in Him alone that the human heart can find satisfaction, and when God is found by a man he is contented with his lot. So we read—“*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*”

In the day when **THE TRUE KING** shall rule with equity men shall no longer be insubject; “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree” (Micah 4. 4)—that is, each will be contented with the holding apportioned to him, and he will not attempt to transgress the bounds of it; but that will be because he has found his satisfaction in God. “And in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree” (Zech. 3. 10); that is, all shall recognize that they are of one blood and shall seek each other's good. The best that a man has in knowledge, skill, and strength will be put at his neighbour's disposal. Then the sword shall give place to the plough and nations shall learn war no more, but that day cannot come until the law of God is put into men's hearts and written

in their minds; that is, the law of God will be loved by them, and it will control them—the law which says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.”

But this much-to-be-desired condition does not yet exist; men are still in rebellion against God; they are lawless, and *sin is lawlessness*.

Sin has affected man both in his relations with God and with his fellow-men. As regards God he is insubject, as regards his fellows he is envious of their prosperity and covetous of their possessions. He is self-centred and will not admit God's right to command him and wants the best his neighbours possess for himself, and will not scruple, should a favourable opportunity occur, to bring all his powers into play to seize their wealth or land or glory. He will not **LOOK UP TO GOD** to find the satisfaction that no earthly possession can afford, for with his heart he hates God, but he looks North, South, East, and West, and tries to satisfy his covetous and empty heart by reaching beyond his appointed bounds and grasping that which belongs to others. This is one of the great causes of war and strife, whether between nations, individuals, or brethren.

“*Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war*” (James 4).

SATAN'S PART IN IT.

But Satan works behind the lawlessness and covetousness of men and makes use of them for the perpetration of his own designs.

Man supposes that in throwing off God's yoke and in doing, as he believes, his own pleasure, he is a free man. The fact is that when he first exercised his sinful will in opposition to God's will

he became the servant and dupe of Satan. Through man's sin and his rejection of Christ, who is the Prince of peace (Isa. 9. 6) and the true God (1 John 5. 20), Satan has acquired the place of prince of this world (John 12. 31), and god of it (2 Cor. 4. 4). He exercises his authority in the counsels of nations as the prince of the world through the spiritual powers that serve him—the universal lords of darkness (Eph. 6. 12, N.T.; Daniel 10. 13; Luke 4. 6).

Now he to whom men have yielded and allied themselves in their opposition to God's claims is a murderer from the beginning (John 8. 44), he is the dragon or destroyer (Rev. 20. 2). There is no pity in his breast, no mercy in his works, no peace for his dupes. Satan's domination of men must mean, so long as it lasts, "no peace" on earth. That he has strange, spiritual forces under his command for the stirring up of strife on the earth, when it suits his purpose, is revealed in connection with the great "Armageddon," which, as we pointed out in our last issue, is not yet. The Seer saw "three unclean spirits . . . the spirits of demons go out to the kings of the whole habitable world to gather them together to war of that great day of God, the Almighty" (Rev. 16. 13, 14, N.T.). This remarkable revelation to John lays bare for us, we believe, an important secret as to the reason of warfare. It proceeds from the devil and it is fomented by demons, the devil's angels, and in this belief we are confirmed from 2 Chronicles 18. These are wholly evil, and though they may unite to oppose God and destroy men, love is foreign to their nature, and hatred is characteristic of them; thence strife must prevail in Satan's kingdom of darkness to which they belong, and to which also all men belong who refuse the gospel. The fact of Satan being "god" and "prince" of this world, then, is another cause of the shoutings of armed men upon the battlefields and the sobs of broken-hearted women at home.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

But there is another side to this question, namely, the supreme government of God. His government is not yet in manifestation, for as we have pointed out, the devil is the prince of this world, and so we pray, "Thy kingdom come." Nevertheless, God has not abandoned the earth to the will of man and Satan. He is the Judge of the whole earth, and the Almighty God. He says of unscrupulous men and to the forces of evil, as He says to the waves of the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." And the wrath of man, when it breaks forth, shall be made to praise Him, and the remainder of the wrath shall He restrain (Ps. 76. 10). So that whether it be the will of men or the malice of Satan they shall both alike be made to subserve the will of God.

Now the sword is spoken of as one of God's sore judgments. "For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast" (Ezek. 14. 6).

Israel was greatly favoured by God in those olden days, and because they did not answer to the favour shown to them they came under His judgments and were punished by the sword. In this present period, the Gentiles, for the effectuation of God's purposes, have come into Israel's outward place of favour. They, a wild olive branch, have been grafted into the olive root, while Israel, the natural branch, has been broken off for the time being (Rom. 11.). How specially favoured of God have the European nations been, and particularly has this been so in respect to those that came under the cleansing and invigorating power of the Reformation. They have had free access to God's Word,—that priceless treasure. But to what account has this favour of God been turned? They have turned it to their own aggrandisement. Unbelief,

pride, and high-mindedness have flourished—the sins against which special warning is given in this very connection—and there has been very little of the fear of God before their eyes as a result of His favour (Rom. 11. 20). We believe that this must be taken into account at this present time, for the greater the favour the greater the responsibility, and this men cannot escape. And if God has at this time withdrawn in measure His restraining hand, giving men and the evil powers behind them a loose rein for a while, may it not be one of His sore judgments upon the nations that have set His will so completely at defiance?

But such dealings of God with nations must not be confounded with His wrath that is still to come upon men at the coming of Christ because of their ungodliness and rejection of Christ, nor with the individual judgment of all who die without mercy at the great White Throne.

Every nation involved in the present war must suffer enormously, whether victorious or defeated, but can any say as they consider the way God has been defied and His Word rejected, by these nations, and their pride and unrighteousness, that chastisement is not overdue? We do not dogmatise about it, but so it seems to us.

To GERMANY was given the Reformation in large measure; and the Word of God put into the hands of the people proved to be a great lamp in the darkness for all who feared Him. But from this same Germany has gone forth that destructive criticism of that same Word, which has rolled in a whelming flood over the whole of Christendom, clearing the way for all that evil teaching which dethrones Christ from the throne of Deity and exalts humanity in a godless and terrible pride. For the place that New Theology, Christian Science, Theosophy, and kindred blasphemous teachings have gained in Christendom, modern criticism, which originated in Germany, is largely responsible. Has not God seen this? And may it not

be that at the very end of the church's history upon earth He will open the eyes of multitudes of His saints who have been deceived and seduced by this German "learning and culture," by showing that the casting off of God and His Word by a highly favoured nation can only result in so great an increase of human pride, that at last neither the fear of God nor man can hold it within bounds.

FRANCE refused the Reformation and stained her annals, under the influence of Rome, with a St. Bartholomew and many other persecutions of the saints. She has been humiliated in the past, but has not learned the lesson. Her atheism and immorality are world-notorious. The name of God has been obliterated from every textbook in her schools; her legislators have openly boasted that the name of God has been banished from state, schools and homes. Some years ago all religious orders were swept from her borders, not because she abhorred these abodes of vice and superstition, we fear, but to be rid, as far as she was able, of even that which professed to own God. And not many months ago a high festival was held in Paris in honour of the Sun—an obvious return to heathenism on the part of many there.

BRITAIN above all nations seems to have had a place in God's providence, for from these countries have gone out missionaries world-wide, and wherever her flag has flown there has been secured an open door for the gospel and the truth of God. For this we may be thankful. But of late years what a change has passed over the land. She has slighted the Bible which good Queen Victoria spoke of as the cause of her greatness. Her Universities have opened their doors to "modern" thought; German rationalistic and atheistic teachers have been lauded and honoured; her theological professors have bowed the knee to the Baal of "higher criticism"; and a large percentage of the pulpits of the land have been captured by the progeny of colleges in which

human intellect and culture are everything and the Word of God despised or openly antagonized. And, as though this were not enough, the mission fields, many of them won by the soul-agony and blood of devoted men of God, have been invaded by this same proud, Bible-despising, humanity-exalting cult.

The necessary consequence of the weakening of the authority of God's Word has been the decline of the fear of God, the growing indifference to spiritual things, and the mad rush after pleasure, and luxuries and wealth, until London and the larger towns run almost neck to neck with the Continental pleasure cities.

RUSSIA and the persecution of the Jews are almost synonymous words. And the atrocities committed upon the Congo natives by Leopold's, the late King of the Belgians, servants cannot be forgotten. What an estimate must both Jews and heathens have formed of the God whom these "Christian" nations professed to own as a result of the cruelties that have been inflicted upon them. And God's eye has witnessed these things.

“Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” is an inexorable law in God's ways with every man, and it is equally true in the history of nations. If nations persistently sow disregard of God's will they must reap the evil results of the wills of man and Satan. If they sow military pride they must reap unrestrained lust for war. If they sow diabolical engines of destruction for land and air and sea they must reap a

blood-drenched earth and sobs and tears and misery and death.

In God's governmental ways with nations He may use one as His rod with which to punish another; this we constantly see in Old Testament Scriptures; but woe betide the nation so used if she becomes lifted up with pride thereat, for as surely as God rules with justice so surely shall she be justly humiliated in her turn. For of all alike it is true that there are “sins with you, even with you against the Lord your God” (2 Chron. 28. 10).

The Christian may rest in the fact that this affair can only go as far as God permits, and that He will keep it within bounds as long as His church is here. His saints as long as they are here are the salt of the earth, preserving it for the while from these overwhelming sorrows that must sweep over it, when the church has been raptured out of it, and in the meanwhile the Christian's position in the midst of it all is that of the intercessor. He can be of more use to others in this position than in any other, for the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Abraham and Elijah filled this place in former times; it is open to every child of God to-day; but if prayer is to be of use it must be according to the current of God's will, and it can only be thus as there is great nearness to Him. In His presence we are lifted above all national prejudices; we are able to appraise things according to His thoughts, and we pray according to the breadth of His grace and the feelings of His heart—for “ALL MEN” AND FOR “ALL SAINTS.”

The True Standard.

Corot, the great landscape painter, said: “When I find myself in one of Nature's beautiful places, I grow angry with my pictures.” Pleased with them in his studio, in sight of Nature's glory, the artist was humbled. Judging our-

selves in the light of the world, we may easily find grounds for personal satisfaction; but to judge ourselves in the light of the Lord, to measure ourselves by the Divine standard, is to put our pride to shame.

The Voice of God in the War.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THIS great war has lasted but a few short weeks, and already the lists of killed, wounded, and missing on each side have risen to many thousands. The very thought is appalling! Thousands maimed in body for life and sent back to their different homes as cripples and dependents. Thousands hurried, in the prime of manhood, into an eternity for which possibly not many were prepared. Thousands of widows left to weep, and tens of thousands of children bereft of a father's guiding hand.

Whatever the military result or the political gain or loss may be, it is only too clear that the deepest and widest wave of sorrow that ever rolled across the face of the earth, in all its history of tears, must roll this year. Future occasions may witness even deeper waves, but to us who live to-day the immensity of the conflict comes as a thing wholly unknown.

One precious result may be perceived in the prayerful sympathy of the church at large, and the commonly felt need of the Throne of Grace at such a moment. Possibly never before has prayer to the "God of the spirits of all flesh" been more importunate. The convulsion is so enormous, and, in view of it, the arm of man so feeble, that hearts turn, wellnigh spontaneously, to the God who "doeth as He wills in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," that He, who alone has the power, may show great mercy and arrest the flow of blood on all hands. Prayer for such mercy is surely meet.

Possibly, too, the hearts of all His dear children—those in whom His Spirit dwells—are consciously knit together in this common cry. It is they who know His mind, His desire, His heart; who stand in His counsel; who seek to represent Him here below; who are imbued with the nature of the love which is of God; who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They feel, as others cannot, the need of divine intervention, and therefore in deep,

secret intercourse with God they plead for the one thing which that Throne alone can bestow—mercy and grace for help in time of need (Heb. 4. 16). Shall they cry in vain? Never! But might not this blending of hearts in prayer, this unison of sorrow, lead to a greater and fuller union in life and testimony?

It is not the world alone which must suffer by this terrible war; the church, the saints, must share in the common woe. Bereavement, trial, poverty will enter many a Christian household, and over it too shall roll the wave of sorrow. Is no lesson to be learned by this? If one member suffers do not all suffer? May there not therefore be a great deal more practical sympathy between all the members of Christ, be their nationality what it may?

If one effect of this time of sorrow should be to reunite in true, divine and holy love the entire family of God, now so disunited, so divided by party and school, to bring together, under the tears of a common lamentation, hearts which should never be divided, to lead us, all the world over, to humble ourselves before the God whose chastening hand is stretched out over all the nations, and to concentrate our thoughts and affections on our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, Lord and Head, and that in view of His speedy return—if such an effect should result, then the wave of sorrow would have rolled with blessing indeed. The curse of war would in mercy be turned into healing, and the reproach of a divided body be wiped away.

God has a voice for His people in the fearful upheaval. May He grant us the open ear that hears His voice.

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him" (Ps. 91. 15).

Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God's voice in response to mine is its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine.

A Day of Trouble.

(II. NUNNERLEY).

IT was a day of trouble in Jerusalem. Sennacherib's hitherto invincible hosts encompassed the city, having previously laid low six mighty nations. Within lay a company utterly unable to cope with their powerful foe, whose haughty envoys summoned them to yield immediate submission. They listened in silence as their weakness was exposed, their enemy's strength lauded, and Jehovah, their God, blasphemed. Had they no resource in "this day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy"? (2 Kings 19. 3). Had not God pledged Himself to hear the cry of His people in such circumstances? He had (see 2 Chron. 9. 3). Hezekiah trusted in God's word, and with clothes rent, and covered with sackcloth, he looked to God in the temple where He had placed His Name. **AND GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED.**

An invading host caused the enemy to look to the safety of his own land and return in haste thither. Before commencing his retreat a threatening letter was borne by his messengers to Jerusalem, with a vow to return and execute summary vengeance. Again Hezekiah seeks the Lord's presence, and in His temple spread out the contents of the letter. Deep, heartfelt prayer, earnest and fervent supplication, went up to God for His intervention on behalf of His people. When daylight broke next morning, without Hezekiah lifting a finger, the proud Assyrian's camp was strewn with 185,000 dead corpses, for the Angel of the Lord had dealt out death and destruction during the night. Soon after Sennacherib himself was laid low, slain by the hand of his two sons. "Verily thou art a God that heareth prayer!"

It was a day of trouble in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 20.). A great host of Moabites and Ammorites came against Jehoshaphat to battle. How did the king—unable to cope with his enemies—meet the difficulty? He turned to God. Sustained by that sure word which had

pledged help in the evil day, when the "sword and judgment" menaced them (ver. 9), he entered the new court of the sanctuary and pleaded in earnest prayer to God to intervene, after having himself personally sought the Lord, and proclaimed a fast for all Judah. How touchingly their utter weakness is owned. "We have no might against this great company. Neither know we what to do" (ver. 12). They lacked wisdom, but they asked it of God. They lacked strength, but their eyes turned to the source of all strength. "Our eyes are upon Thee." **AND GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED.**

A strange sight was seen the next morning. A host marching to battle without sword, spear and shield, led by white-robed singers praising the Lord, for "His mercy endureth for ever." Down in the valley another strange sight might be seen. The allied armies of Ammon, Moab and Seir were warring against each other, and when this praising company reached the watch tower where the valley lay open to their view, dead bodies strewed the earth, none had escaped; all they had to do was to strip their enemies and return laden with spoil. They are again in the house of the Lord, not now to pray, but to praise the Lord for His goodness in hearing them in their "trouble," and delivering them out of their "distresses."

It was a day of trouble in Jerusalem. Absalom, the murderer of his brother, had revolted against his father, and forced King David to flee. Behold the sweet Psalmist, the conqueror of Goliath, fleeing barefoot, with covered head, and heartrending sobs, as he ascended Mount Olivet! (2 Sam. 15. 30). Listen to Shimei, denouncing him as a man of Belial, throwing stones at him and cursing. Picture David's feelings as he dwells upon the perfidy of Ahithophel, his guide and acquaintance, with whom he had walked to the house of God in company, and taken sweet counsel, now

plotting his destruction. Above all an accusing conscience, as he remembers how he had received his son back, although a murderer, and a murderer who had never confessed his guilt, or humbled himself as to his crime.

In Ps. 3., which recounts his experiences during this calamity, we learn that many others had risen against him; those who troubled him had increased (ver. 1). They told him there was no "help" to be found "in God" for a man like him. Nothing can exceed the sorrow of such a scene. It was indeed a day of trouble: an ungrateful son and a false friend seeking his death, an accusing conscience, an enemy's curses, and troublers taunting him that God would no longer be his help. These were deep waters for the man who had written, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." What and who is his resource in these calamities? He had been in many afflictions, but God had been his deliverer. To God he turns in this day of trouble. He unburdens his stricken heart as he cries to the Lord with his voice. He clothes his grief with words, he makes his requests known to God. This storm cloud which has darkened the heavens, and burst so suddenly and unexpectedly upon him, drives him to his knees in fervent prayer and earnest supplication. He knew God. He turned to God, that God of whom he had written: "God is for me" (Ps. 56. 9), should still be his confidence. His head was low, his enemies were many, but God was a shield about him, his head would surely be lifted up. "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me." He thus sets omnipotence between his weakness and the enemy's power; it is now a battle between God and his adversaries. Like Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah he could exclaim, "Verily thou art a God that heareth prayer." Calm in the consciousness that God had heard his prayer, he laid his weary head on a pillow and slept. Cared for and watched over by the Lord who loved him, he awaked, awaked to find his outward circumstances unchanged, but awaked to praise, like Hezekiah.

No destroying angel had decimated his enemies' camp during the night, none of his adversaries had slain each other. Absalom was still in Jerusalem, Ahithophel still plotting his destruction, Shimei still cursing, and his miserable comforters still saying, "There is no help for him in God." But David is no longer cast down, he is not afraid of tens of thousands set in battle array against him (ver. 6). Why? The Lord had "heard" his cry, he had sustenance from on high, the peace of God now garrisons his heart. The enemy still rages, disturbance and distracting elements abound, but all is peace within. *David is changed.* Salvation had come from the Lord. How? By garrisoning David's heart with the peace of God, a peace passing all human comprehension. He rose, elevated in soul, calm in mind, peaceful in heart, superior to all the sorrows of that day of trouble. God did not take him out of the trouble, but He made a way of escape so that he was able to bear it.

What an object lesson for us these Old Testament saints, these men of faith are! They experimentally knew what we are doctrinally taught. They not only knew that God was a very present help in trouble, but proved in themselves the blessedness of the man who put his trust in the Lord. They illustrate the peace and rest a saint may enjoy in the midst of the most distressing circumstances. They were careful for nothing, but in everything made their requests known to God. Two of them experienced the delivering hand of God. David learned the power of God to sustain without being delivered. He got the sense in his soul that God had heard him; knowing this, he had the gracious sense that his requests were granted.

The tender grace and goodness of God so filled his heart that he exclaimed, "Thou art my glory!"

If this experience is to be ours in this day of trouble we must make our "requests known;" and so learn that "salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and His blessing is on His people."

What Abides.

(EDWARD CROSS).

“**I**F thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” There were some who did not faint; “for the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and builded” (Neh. 4. 18). They did not stop building because of their weakness. They did not stop building because of the enemy’s strength. There were valorous men among them; men who feared God, and trusted Him, and God prospered them.

To say that God could not maintain the truth would be to make Him a “No-God” (Deut. 32. 31). When the cause of King David was at its lowest ebb, we read: “A wench went and told them; and they went and told David” (2 Sam. 17. 17). All the fortunes of Israel, and all the purposes of God concerning them depended on, and were safeguarded by that wench’s message. Everyone, everything has failed but Christ. But by Him all is secured. “All the disciples forsook Him, and fled.” But Mary clung to His sepulchre, and from it carried the gospel of glory to the scattered sheep.

To suppose that you must do wrong in order to maintain what is right is a faint-hearted counsel, it is not even logical. It betrays a myopia that sees nothing but what is visible. It comes really from an *unjudged self* at bottom, that throws a cataract over the eye of faith; an un-acquaintedness with the cross of Christ, that covers the “I” with the profession of His name, while it leaves it, like the head of a “*tænia*,” to propagate indefinitely.

If the truth is not the truth, then give it up, since there is no truth. If it is the truth, then let it be the girdle of your loins. Suppose that you gave up the truth, one thing at least is certain, God will not give it up. “*Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.*” Truth abides. It is indestructible; and it destroys all that is opposed to it. And all that really

concerns us is that God, in His mercy, should preserve us in the faith of it, i.e. in the living, operative faith of Christ; not a mere creed, or system of doctrine, or profession of faith, but as walking in the life, and mind, and spirit of Christ; in humility and self-judgment that would damp off the allowance of those proud and haughty, selfish workings of the flesh that would grieve His Holy Spirit.

But besides faithfulness and purpose of mind, we need intelligence also. See the anxiety, the prayerful, earnest desire of the Apostle (Eph. 1. 16; 3. 14), the “agony” as he expresses it (Col. 2. 1), that the saints be alive to, in the spiritual intelligence of the heavenly purposes of God in respect of the church in Christ. And what else could save us from being swamped in the course of “this present evil world,” with its religion and its politics, its wars and its wickedness—its hopeless, irremediable, Christ-rejecting state.

And so we read, “But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away—apostatized from their influence—and believed on Jesus” (John 12. 10. 11). Whereupon Jesus says, “Now is the judgment of this world” (John 12. 31). That judgment He pronounced then, and that judgment abides the same to-day, and will abide, until the Lord, who pronounced it, removes it in the world to come.

Meanwhile, He says of His disciples, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17. 14, 16). And our business is not with the course of it, but with Christ and with His interests, as we are passing through it. If we are lowly enough to make the interests of Christ our own, we shall find that the truth is as true to-day and of God as ever it was, every false way notwithstanding.

Counsels of Love.

(J. M. S. BOY.).

FATHER, our ransomed souls would bless Thy name,
 As all Thy purposes before us shine;
 Conceived before the earth or starry frame
 Burst into being at Thy Word Divine.

Before Thy works of old Thine eyes beheld
 That radiant sphere, in which Thy love should rest;
 And where its sacred triumphs should be swelled
 In endless song by souls supremely blest.

'Twas man that filled Thy vision, not the host
 That flame about Thy throne in splendour bright;
 Thyself the Object of his holy boast,
 Thy love, of his rejoicing heart, the light.

Chosen in Christ, Thy well-beloved Son,
 Blameless in holiness before Thy face;
 One, in the unity of nature, one;
 One, in the greatness of Thy heavenly grace,

With Him who, here where Thou dishonoured wast,
 Thy Name and nature fully glorified;
 And, lest the foe should triumph to Thy cost,
 Upon a gibbet as a felon died.

No creature knows how dear He is to Thee,
 Nor Thine appraisalment of the work He wrought;
 We who a little know, on bended knee
 Desire in this to be more deeply taught.

With Thee He lives; and we rejoice to know,
 The gloom and grief and passion all are o'er;
 The sorrow and the shame, the cross and woe,
 Have no admittance thro' the heavenly door.

And there our place prepared is even now,
 In Thine own home, in love's unclouded light,
 Where glory bright encircles every brow,
 To Thy deep satisfaction and delight.

And there that love that prompted Thee to send
 Thy Son to succour us, and Him to die,
 Shall be our portion, where shall never end
 The joys which power of praise or speech defy.

O holy, living Father ! God of light,
 And love, and peace, and truth, and righteousness !
 With heart, and soul, and strength Thy saints unite,
 Thy name—the Father's and the Son's to bless.

The Deity of the Lord in Paul's Epistles.

WE must believe that Christ is God, if we are to read the great Christological passages of the Apostle Paul without doing violence to the plain force of his language. Substitute, if you can, throughout any one Epistle the name of the first of the saints, or of the highest among the angels, for the name of the Divine Redeemer, and see how it reads. Accept the Apostle's amplified challenge. Imagine for a moment that Paul was crucified for you; that you were baptized in the name of Paul; that wisdom, holiness, redemption, come from an Apostle who, saint though he be, is only a man. Conceive that Paul ascends for a moment his Master's throne; that he says "Anathema" to any who loves not Paul; that he is bent on bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Paul; that he announces that in Paul are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; that instead of protesting "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for

Jesus' sake," he said, "Paul is the end of the law to every one that believeth." Can you conceive it? What, then, is it in the name of Christ which renders this language, when it is applied to another man, unintelligible or intolerable? Why is it that when coupled with any other name, however revered and saintly, the words of Paul respecting the Lord Jesus Christ must seem not merely strained and exaggerated, but blasphemous? Through all these Epistles, and not merely in particular assertions, there is the underlying truth of Christ's Deity. It is taken for granted. It is the very soul and marrow of the entire series of doctrines, and when this is lost sight of, all is misshapen and dislocated; but when this is recognized, all falls into its place as the exhibition of infinite grace and power, clothed in a vesture of humiliation and sacrifice, and devoted to the succour and enlightenment of men. For He came into the world to save sinners. *(Liddon.)*

The Character of the Lord.

HIS character was marked by the balance as well as the perfection of excellence. Great virtues are nearly akin to vices, and in men we never find the balance preserved. Dignity passes easily into pride, reflection into coldness, sincerity into bluntness, civility into insincerity—in short, a finite and sinful nature exhausts itself by efforts in a temporary direction. But in Christ there is no want of balance. Attention has been called to the balance He observes between severity and tenderness. None denounces evil with such terrible force. The generation in which He lives is adulterous, evil, sinful, wicked, perverse. And yet He is profoundly tender along with it all. He weeps over doomed Jerusalem, defends

the condemned adulteress against her accusers, and absolves the sinful woman who bathes His feet with her tears.

Coming into the world at a time when force was worshipped as virtue itself, He made much of the passive virtues. When Peter commends His example, He says: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously." Patience, meekness—these were placed by Him in their true place. We are forbidden to select any virtues as specially characterizing Him, for in Him all the virtues meet in supreme excellence and perfect harmony. But we may note the prominence He gave to these. *(Nicoll.)*

He Left Us an Example.

HOW humbly He bore Himself among men, how tenderly among His disciples; how pitiful He was to the poor, to whom He made Himself like in all things, and who seemed to be His own special family; how He despised none nor shrank from them, not even the leper; how He paid no court to the rich; how free He was from the cares of the world, and from trouble about the needs of the body; how patient under insult, and how gentle in answering, for He sought not to maintain His cause by keen and bitter words, but with gentle answer to cure another's malice; what composure in all His behaviour, what anxiety and

tears for souls, for the love of whom He also deigned to die; how He offered Himself as a pattern of all that is good; how compassionate He was to the afflicted; how He condescended to the imperfection of the weak; how mercifully He received the penitent; how ready in serving all, according to His own words, "I am among you as He that serveth"; how He shunned all display and show, all singularity; how He avoided

He avoided all occasion of offence; how constant in prayer, sober in watching, patient in toil and want, how peaceful and calm in all things.

(*R. de Savonia.*)

The Father of Eternity.

THERE is a title given to the Lord in Isaiah (chap. 9. 6), which seems hardly to have been realized in its fullness of meaning. It is that of "Everlasting Father," which is given in the margin of the Revised Version as (more literally) "Father of Eternity." It is given to Him as One upon whose shoulder is the government of Israel, but of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end; and the titles given Him show His capacity for this rule. He is no ordinary king, but the "WONDERFUL"—"a phenomenon," says Delitzsch, "lying altogether beyond human conception or natural occurrence. Then He is the "COUNSELLOR," whose purposes in their deep and unfathomable wisdom need no help from others; who find, on the other hand, in Him their wisdom. For, thirdly, He is *Elgibbor*, "THE MIGHTY GOD," infinite in resources, almighty in execution of His will; and *Abi-ad* the "FATHER OF ETERNITY," and "PRINCE OF PEACE," which is the enduring effect.

But what, then, does this mean, "Father of Eternity"? It is an inconceivability, says a recent commenta-

tor; for "eternity has no author." But the eternal state—eternity in that sense—has an Author; and it is just the glory of Christ, and coming here most perfectly in place among His other glories, that He is the Author of it. It is here that His "counsel" comes into full manifestation; it is here that the might of His Deity is seen in execution of His counsel; it is of this, finally, that peace is the necessary and abiding result. He it is who brings that which endures and abides for ever, because in it divine love can rest in full satisfaction, eternity being only the seal of that perfection in which it can rest.

Thus Christ is the Father of Eternity. The incorruptible seed of it was Himself: the corn of wheat dying that it might not abide alone. But it is when power is in His hand openly and His kingdom is established that it will be seen fully how the "times of restitution" have been waiting for Him and, what this implies, namely, that restitution is not bringing back that which has passed away, but the bringing in of that which cannot pass away.

(*Grant.*)

Is Man partially good or utterly bad?

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

IT is of the highest importance that men should know and own their true condition and their position with regard to God. The remedy for a state that is partially good will necessarily be quite different from that which is adapted to a state of utter badness.

Some years ago at the close of a gospel meeting in a busy Midland manufacturing town a young man remained for conversation and prayer. He was interested and seemed really wishful of being saved, but it was evident that he was far from realizing his lost and helpless condition. I felt led to read to him that verse from Romans 7., where Paul says, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth *no good thing*."

"Now," said I to the young man, "you confess that you are a sinner, but you do not acknowledge that in you there is absolutely no good thing?" He was not prepared to go so far as to admit that; and though I tried to get him to see it, and confess it, he would not; and after some time he got up rather impatiently and went away.

The reason why this should hinder any one from getting blessing is not hard to see. As long as a man believes that there is *some* spark of good in him which only requires to be fanned into a flame, he will not feel his desperate need of a Saviour.

It is as if a man had a hard lump growing in his body. At first it is not very painful, but soon it becomes more troublesome and he decides to consult a doctor. He fancied that it is a mere harmless growth which the surgeon will not have much difficulty in removing. But imagine his consternation when the surgeon says to him, "It is a cancer, and it is a matter of life and death for you." At once he is terribly alarmed; how anxious he now is to know if there is any chance of recovery.

I want you to know, my reader, that it is no slight trouble from which the

human race is suffering. It is *cancer*—the awful cancerous disease of sin that makes men incapable of appreciating or working righteousness, that renders them totally unfit for God's presence and exposes them to the horrors of eternal doom.

Ever since Satan succeeded in sowing the seeds of distrust of God in the human heart man has been essentially a hater of God. It is a mere symptom of this that 250,000 French lads tattooed upon their arms a few years ago the letters "A.D." (anti-Dieu—"against God"). *Every* man, till God works in his soul, is this. No need for him to tuck up his sleeves. It is not tattooed upon his arms, but branded upon his very soul.

An amiable young lady who had many friends and who had never done anything particularly wrong made this discovery when the Holy Spirit began to deal with her. She exclaimed, "I don't want to say it, but it seems to me that I hate God."

Many who do not make the discovery and who would not so frankly admit it in terms are none the less haters of God. We read, "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8. 7).

I may be told that while this is more or less true there is yet in most cases, if not in all, an undercurrent of right desires and good intentions which need but to be cherished in order to assert themselves. Is this what *you* think?

Somewhat akin to this was the idea which Nansen had when he first started in quest of the North Pole. He thought that if he could penetrate the barrier of ice and navigate his ship to a certain point he would find a current by means of which the vessel could drift northwards without much difficulty. He found the current, but it was flowing in the very opposite direction to that which he anticipated. So with the deep-flowing currents of human nature. Men may imagine that their direction is God-ward, but if Scripture be true (and that is the

only standard to which we can appeal) their drift is in the opposite direction.

Now the question arises, Is there any remedy at hand? Can a new start be made? Is reformation possible? Certainly a new start can be made, but of what use is that? See that crab tree. Its fruit is bitter and worthless, but every spring it gets a new start. Its crop of sour fruit is gone, and fresh buds and blossoms give promise of better things. But wait awhile. Let the blossoms fall and the fruit develop, and you find that it is just as acrid and bitter as before. The new start has only resulted in a fresh crop of the very same quality as the previous one. And thus it is with every possible "fresh start" that a man can make. The final result is but a repetition of that which suggested the need for a fresh start.

A good hen may sit upon a bad egg most diligently for twenty-one days. The bad egg, however, will not be improved by this, even though it be surrounded by good ones all the time. Nor will the most careful religious culture, even when combined with the most desirable environment, in any way improve that corrupt nature of man which the Bible speaks of as "the flesh." Our Lord's words are as true to-day as when first uttered. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3. 6). Religiously inclined flesh it may be—cultured, educated, refined—but *flesh* it still remains. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8. 8).

Then, what can meet the case? Nothing but the intervention of God Himself producing something in man that is not flesh—something of Himself—a nature that loves Him and delights in His things. Only by this means can man be made capable of knowing and appreciating God.

A man is paying a visit to a picture gallery. If he is to properly appreciate the pictures he must not only have a ticket of admission to the building but a taste for painting and a knowledge of art. In like manner, to dwell in God's

presence and to be at home with Him one needs not only the perfect title which Christ's precious blood affords, but the capacity to know and enjoy God. This He produces by His own work.

To take another illustration, a photographer exposes two plates. The first is a plain piece of glass, and nothing results from its exposure. The light of the sun does not affect it in the least. The other plate has been sensitized, and in this way prepared for the sun's light to act upon it. Somewhat similar to this is the result produced by the work of the Holy Spirit in new birth. There is a divine preparation of the soul that it may be affected by the light of God.

Any one can see that new birth is a very different thing from a mere new start. The latter is the outcome of a man's own resolve and action; the former is the direct result of God's own work by His Spirit.

It is not that this is all that the Holy Spirit works in a man. New birth is but the initial stage of His work. Throughout the whole course of our Christian life that work continues, and whenever we receive the word to profit such reception is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

In days like these, when man is set upon a pedestal and almost deified, and when humanitarianism is displacing Christianity in the minds of many, it is increasingly needful to insist again and again upon the truth that there is in man no good save that which is wrought in him by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. And what is thus wrought is really *Christ*.

Christ is the only Man in whom God can find pleasure. And if God is to find pleasure in any of us, it can only be through Christ being reproduced in us. Thank God we Christians can say Christ is in us (Col. 1. 27), and whatever we do for the glory of God it is Christ in us who does it. Happy is he who is no longer "in the flesh" but belongs to Christ and is "in Him" before God.

“Remember.”

(DR. SA'EEB, PERSIA).

WE generally love to remember the dying words—the last message—of a friend or a relative; and even if we want to forget them we cannot. I well remember my father's dying words to me, and whenever I think of him, I think also of those words.

And so it should be with us in connection with our blessed Saviour. We should delight to think of His last words—His dying request—“this do, *in remembrance of Me.*” He wants us to remember Him in a world that forgets Him. He has instituted the way in which He would have to do this. He wants us to express to Him that we miss Him every day. How *could* we forget HIM! But we should not only be reminded afresh of Him in His death, but also of ourselves—what wretched creatures we were and are. We should “remember the days of old” (Deut. 32.); how He found us far away from Him, in a desert land—a howling wilderness. He led us, instructed us, kept us as the apple of His eye, watched over us, took care of us, fed us, and blessed us abundantly (Deut. 32. 7-14). And He brought us into a good land, a land of brooks and fountains, a land of plenty (Deut. 8. 7-9).

We are told, also, to look back over the past, and “*remember all the way*” which the Lord our God led us (Deut. 8. 2).

I remember the story of a Persian shepherd, Ayaz, who by his great devotion and faithfulness to his king, Mahmoud, was at last raised to the position of prime minister. All the other ministers were very angry that a shepherd should have been so highly honoured by the king. They protested, “He is not of noble birth, he is not even of high rank; and now he has been raised above us.” But the king replied, “He is my most faithful and trustworthy servant, and that is why I honour him.” These nobles then determined to find some evil in the man to report to

the king; and they watched him very closely, but could find nothing wrong. At last they observed that once a week he went to a little room which he kept locked, and shut himself in for an hour. The nobles informed the king of this, and said they were now certain that the shepherd-minister was making a secret hoard of the king's jewels, or some such precious things. The king did not believe it, but gave them full permission to break in and search the minister's room, when he was not there. Accordingly they waited for an opportunity, and then went and searched his chamber. The only thing of any suspicion they could find was a little bundle lying in a corner. They opened it, and to their astonishment found an old pair of shoes and an old dress. These they brought to the king, who asked the minister why he kept those things, and what he did with them every week. He replied, “Those are the shoes and that is the dress I used to wear when I was a shepherd; I open them out and look at them once a week, lest I should forget what I once was, and how unworthy I am of all the kindness and honour your Majesty has bestowed upon me.”

So should it be with us. We not only remember our Saviour's goodness and love, but also what we have been saved out of, and our own utter worthlessness. “Forget not the Lord thy God . . . lest when thou hast eaten and art full . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt” (Deut. 8. 11-14). “Remember that thou wast a servant, and that the Lord brought thee out with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm” (Deut. 5. 15). We have been made rich, but it was through His poverty. We have been raised high, but to do it He humbled Himself, and went down unto death, even the death of the cross. But let us never forget the dust from which He raised us. “He hath exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the

hungry with good things" (Luke 1.). Well may we exclaim, "Who is like unto the Lord our God who dwelleth on high, who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people" (Ps. 113.).

"And you who are dead in trespasses and sins. . . . But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with

Christ (by grace ye are saved)." (Eph. 2.).

The thief on the cross could say, "Lord *remember me.*" As sinners we asked Him to remember us, as that thief did; and now He says to us, "Remember Me." How wonderful that the Lord of glory should want to be remembered by us! It is good for our souls to remember who we are, and what we were, when we come to remember Him; and then there is fresh cause for a poured out heart in worship and praise, such as He seeks. And surely we cannot help but praise Him, our adorable Lord.

"Agreeable to Him."

CHRISt never asks of us such busy labour
As leaves no time for resting at His feet:
The attitude of patient expectation
He oftentimes counts a service most complete.

He sometimes wants our ear, our rapt attention,
That He some sweetest secret may impart;
'Tis always in the time of deepest silence
That heart finds deepest fellowship with heart.

We sometimes wonder why the Lord doth call us
Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure,
That nothing we call work can find an entrance,
There's only room to suffer, to endure.

Well—God loves patience! souls that dwell in stillness,
Doing the little things, or resting quite,
May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,
Be just as useful in the Father's sight,

As those who grapple with some giant evil,
Clearing a path that every eye may see:
Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence,
Rather than for a busy ministry.

And yet, He does love service where 'tis given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed,
But work that's done from a mere sense of duty,
Be sure He gives to such but little heed.

Then seek to please Him, whatso'er He bids thee
Whether to do, to suffer, to lie still;
'Twill matter little by what path He led us,
If in it all we sought to do His will.

Psalms 71. 72.

PSALM 71. has no title prefixed, but the first three verses are so nearly identical with the beginning of Psalm 31., and verses 13 and 24 are also found in Psalm 35., both of which are "of David," that the presumption is strong that the one now under consideration is by the same writer. Its style and character lead to a like conclusion. With others in Book 2, it may be attributed to the time of Absalom's rebellion, when the king could speak of himself as in the time of old age (vers. 9, 14) and to outward appearances forsaken of God, so that it was safe to pursue and take him when his great deliverer was not present to help (ver. 11). It naturally falls into three parts, each terminated by a refrain repeated in words not identical but similar. The first eight verses present the distress of the faithful under the oppression of the wicked, unrighteous and cruel man (ver. 4), and his confidence in Jehovah, by whom he had been held up from the day of birth (ver. 6), who had also been the object of trust from his youth. Now under the pressure of enemies and with no manifest intervention of God on his behalf, he was "a wonder unto many." This is true of any saint suffering under the chastisement of God. The book of Job (and what a "wonder" he was to his friends!) was written to explain such a case, a righteous man suffering because of what he was; righteous and yet too self-righteous (see Job 36. 7, 8, etc.). In David's case the occasion had been given in what he had done, and even the wise and cautious Ahithophel, whose advice is mentioned in verse 11 (*cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 1), considered it diplomatic to turn against his erring master. But God had other thoughts. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous," and when the man, wise

only with the wisdom of this world, discovers he is on the wrong side, Judas-like he seeks to escape by self-destruction.

The second section (vers. 9-15) exhibits the deepening of trouble, but hope in God abides (ver. 14) and the increase of pressure leads to increase of urgency in prayer. "O God, be not far from me, O my God, make haste to help me."

The third section, verses 16-24, introduces the delivering power of resurrection, illustrating the Exodus character of this Book 2. "Thou who hast showed *us* many and sore troubles, shalt quicken *us* again and shalt bring *us* up again from the depths of the earth." The use of the plural as correctly given in R.V. shows how David had others with him in his sorrow and in his deliverance, and thus the whole Psalm may be interpreted as applying to the faithful in that future day of the old age of the nation, like David in its guilt as in its salvation from it. An interesting element in the Psalm remains to be mentioned, the recurrence of the word "righteousness" and its connection with "praise"; the former is found in verses 2, 15, 16, 19, 24, and the latter five times, and the expression of it more frequently. Righteousness consists in the fulfilment of obligation, and is used here in the sense of God's faithfulness to His promises. When, despite all appearances to the contrary, the believer has the consciousness that God is for him in righteousness, praise rises to Him before the deliverance he seeks is manifested. This is perhaps the main lesson of the Psalm for the Christian, who will thus learn how to rejoice in the Lord always and praise Him "all the day." It will be found in a practical way that if prayer without ceasing is needed to

maintain lowliness and dependence, power is realized as we walk in the spirit of thankfulness and praise, the more continuously the better.

In Psalm 72. righteousness has a little different character, it is the apportioning by power of what is due according to an exact estimate of right and wrong; this fulfils the obligation of the throne in direct government as in the previous Psalm by providential means. Accordingly the prayer here is, "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son;" that is that as God's representative he might administer *His* judgments and *His* righteousness. In Psalm 82. we see the failure of Israel's judges (Hebrew, "elohim") in this very matter. For a time Solomon answered in measure to these petitions; Adonijah, Joab and Shimei are dealt with in stern justice, and the king's decision in the case of the children of the two harlots witnesses "that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment" (1 Kings 3. 28). Nevertheless the initial step in his subsequent failure had already been taken. Rehoboam was born one year before his ascension to the throne, and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess (1 Kings 14. 21). Corruption was already present to spoil in its unchecked growth a scene of such fair promise. So our Psalm passes from that which is applicable to Solomon, richly gifted as he was, to the greater Son of David who abides, and whose throne will be established in everlasting righteousness (ver. 7). To Him David looked in his last utterance: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds." Such is Messiah's kingdom, such was not Solomon's.

If we compare this with other kindred Psalms its distinctive character is evident, there is a beautiful combination of glorious greatness and condescending mercy which is most attractive and secures the true happiness and piety of all who own Messiah's sway. In Psalm 101. He Himself recites the moral principles of His rule. In Psalm 145. He praises in the great congregation; in Psalm 45. His character and person are described, and the union with Him of the earthly bride, but none of them give what we find here which exhausts the desires of David the son of Jesse (20).

Certain difficulties in interpretation may now be referred to. In verse 8 do the terms imply world-wide dominion? That such dominion will belong to Christ other scriptures tell us, but this verse seems only to assure to the kingdom an extent from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and from the Euphrates to the limit of the Promised Land, according to what was said to Abraham (Gen. 15.). In verse 15 the R.V. translates the first word in the plural and places the singular in the margin. Mr. Grant remarks this is too interpretative, but yet accepts the reference to the afflicted ones previously mentioned. It seems more simple to understand the reference to Messiah, as, in blessed contrast to all preceding monarchs, however great, these have all passed away by death, "He shall live," and prayer shall be made for him continually as He fully answers all the desires of His saints for Him.

The conclusion of the second Book of the Psalter is worthy of the subject; the whole earth will be filled with the glory of Jehovah Elohim, the God of *Israel*. Amen! and Amen! Little wonder that the prayers of the son of Jesse are ended because fulfilled.

If I should keep days sacred to the memory of God's special kindnesses to me, every day of all the year would be a festival! My mercies are more than I

can number or recall. None the less, let me hold in memory those I can, and let me brighten all my years with those memorials.

Not of this World.

(JAMES BOVD).

A TRUE believer in Christ is neither an optimist nor a pessimist, according to the way in which these terms are used amongst men. He takes neither a hopeful nor a despondent view of the state of this world, through which he has to journey to the glory of God. He is not occupied with either the bright or the dark side of things down here. He is not elated by the world's apparent prosperity, nor does its wars and wickedness cause him to imagine that it is coming to its end: this he knows will not take place while the church of God is upon earth. His judgment of it does not arise from what he sees it to be, or from any report he has of it from its own account of itself.

He does not pose as a prophet or the son of a prophet, able to foretell what shall take place on the morrow, by some special insight which he has more than any other human being. The source of his information is as open to every other person as it is to himself, and the knowledge he possesses regarding the state of this great cosmos through which he has to find his way may be enjoyed by all, for it is not a secret sacred to a few.

The superficial veneer of questionable civilization does not deceive him, so as to cause him to suppose any improvement in its moral state has taken place, or any alteration in its innate God-hatingness. Its legislation in favour of the poor and needy, its philanthropic associations, its battles with the pestilences which afflict humanity, its efforts to solve the enigma of life, its endeavours to lift up the fallen, its societies for the amelioration of the sorrows that afflict humanity, look very well on the outside, but he knows that they are but a coating of whitewash upon a midden of corruption:

When the rulers of the world have to confess that they are helpless to quell rebellion; when one set of politicians

accuses the other set of lying, deceit, trickery, and treachery; when women shriek against the tyranny of men, and men in their pusillanimity sink to the level of women; when the judges on the bench declare that they cannot get men, even when on their oath, to tell the truth; when the Christian pulpits reek with Pantheism, Hegelianism, Eddyism, Unitarianism, Socialism, and Spiritualism, the man of God has no different thoughts about this world than he has when it seems to be as tranquil, as truthful, as moral, and as Christian, as can well be imagined. He knows that, whatever garb of religion it may put on, it is just the same old Devil-ruled system that murdered the Son of God, and which, from that day to this, has ruthlessly persecuted His glorious gospel.

And the true believer in Christ knows all this, not because he is, as I have indicated, more wise than others, but just because he believes with all his heart what God has caused to be written for our learning. Not only has the whole origin, history, and doom of the world, been plainly marked out in Scripture, but also the history, fall, and finish of the professing church. The history of the ruin of that which was set up at Pentecost in such spiritual power and moral glory, however sorrowful its reading may be, only confirms the believer in the truth of the sacred narrative. Had the church withstood the seductions of the world we might well have been bewildered, for it is not that which we have been led to expect; but as everything has turned out exactly as foretold by the apostles and prophets of our Lord, nothing is there to shake the faith of the feeblest of His people, but everything to encourage, strengthen, and sustain it.

Men think they will accomplish some kind of deliverance for themselves by their investigations, discoveries, and inventions. A millennium, but a Christless one, they hope to bring about

by their own efforts. They are "working out their own salvation," they tell us. The evils that afflict the human race are about to disappear from the earth. The brute crassitude, which still in measure dulls the intellect of the higher order of creation, is fast vanishing away, and that which is supremely perfect and God-like is making itself visible in every corner of the earth.

"Fools and blind!" for surely a man is a fool who thinks he can do without God. Is He not necessary to our very existence here below? Is it not true that "in Him we live and move and have our being"? Was the Athenian poet mistaken when he said, "For we also are His offspring"? Or are we really the offspring of the toad and the ape? And surely a man must be blind indeed who cannot see that against sin and death no headway is being made at all. He is most certainly a fool who imagines he can improve the world, and he is blind indeed who cannot see that it is drifting farther and deeper into God-forgetfulness.

Nigh two thousand years ago the great Apostle of the Gentiles, standing in the midst of Mars' Hill in the city of Athens, made the solemn declaration, that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He 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" (Acts 17. 31). From that day to this God has been exercising His long-suffering mercy. But the day of that judgment is appointed, and the Man also is appointed who is to execute the judgment. The world that judged Him is to be judged by Him.

This judgment is to begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4. 17). The circle nearest to Himself, and that which has been the most privileged, must be the first to bear the brunt of His righteous wrath. Those appointed to execute the judgments of Jehovah upon Jerusalem

got the command to "begin at My sanctuary" (Ezekiel 9. 6). The judgment, then, will begin at the house of God, but it will not end there, it will be world-wide. But when the judgment begins to fall upon the house of God there will not be one true believer left in it. All will have been removed from this world before the day of wrath and revelation of the judgment of God sets in; for "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. 5. 9, 10). The first to be dealt with will be the head of the Roman Empire, and the King at Jerusalem, the former the beast, and the latter the false prophet. These two will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Next, their armies will be slain, and the fowls will be filled with their flesh. Then the devil is bound in the abyss for one thousand years, before being finally cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19. 20).

In the presence of this plain, perfect, and unvarnished revelation from God, mere human hope or fear, pessimism or optimism have no place whatever. God, who alone can, has written the history of this world beforehand, that we may believe it, be assured of it, and seek a way of escape, so that we may not be involved in its condemnation and overthrow. To close our eyes to the danger is not wisdom, but madness of the most awful kind. It is the prudent man who "foresees the evil, and hideth himself; like Noah, who, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house" (Prov. 22. 3; Heb. 11. 7). May both reader and writer have this foresight and faith given them of God, so that from the impending judgment of an angry God a hiding-place may be sought and found.

But what is to be the attitude of the true believer in Jesus with reference to this world in which he has to do his business, earn his bread, live an honest and peaceable life, honour the king, obey magistrates, pay tribute, and be

subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake? This is a most important question, and one that demands an answer from the same source as that from which we have the true character of the world set before us, and that source is the Holy Scriptures.

In the first place, the believer is not of this world. He was once, but he is not now. He has been born again. He is a partaker of the life of the risen Son of God; and that life is heavenly in its nature and character. It is not the life that he had from Adam, the first and fallen head, but the life of the last Adam and heavenly Head. It is not only that he is justified from his sins, he is a man of an entirely different order from that according to which men are born into this world.

Therefore we have in 1 Corinthians 15. the statement made, "The first man Adam was made a living soul: the last Adam a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and after that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." This is the contrast between the two heads, the first Adam and the Last. The former has his origin in the earth, made of dust: the latter is out of heaven: one earthly, the other heavenly. No greater contrast could be than this.

The Spirit of God comes next to speak of the contrast between the two races, which spring from their respective heads. He says, "As is the earthy (the man made of dust), such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly (the Man out of heaven), such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Here we have, first of all, the two heads contrasted, the earthy and the Heavenly; and next, the two races: the earthy race deriving from the earthy head, and the heavenly race deriving from the heavenly Head. It is the old

creation and the new; the old in Adam, and the new in Christ: "For if any man be in Christ there is new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17, new trans. margin).

The rule and responsibility of the old creation, in its then fallen state, was declared from the burning mount in the ears of Israel, and subsequently written upon two tables of stone, which were placed in the ark of the covenant. Long life upon earth was to be the reward for obedience; death and the curse the penalty of disobedience. This, because of what man is, became to the people a ministration of death and condemnation. No one got life by this means, for no one was able to fulfil his obligations. The debtor had not one farthing wherewith to pay his debts.

Now Christ has come into this world, and has met the whole question of our unfulfilled obligations. He has settled the account to the infinite satisfaction and glory of God, and risen from the dead He has become life to all who put their trust in Him as the only Saviour.

But more than this; in His death not only have our sins been put away for ever from the sight of God, but the life in which the sins were committed has also come under the judgment of God, so that man, and sins, and all, have gone out of existence in the cross of Christ, in the judgment of God. "Our old man (all that we were as of the first and fallen head) has been crucified with Him" (Rom. 6.). Therefore the initiatory ordinance into the profession of Christianity is baptism, in which we are committed to the death of Christ, no longer to live in the life of flesh to the gratification of our lusts, but to live in the life of Christ, of which we have become partakers by His quickening power, to the glory and praise of God. In short, we are not in Adam, but in Christ; not in flesh, but in Spirit; and though the flesh is in us, and shall be in us as long as we are down here, we are not in it, but are to bring the cross of Christ, where it was condemned and set aside, to bear upon it, so that we may have it practically cruci-

fied, with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5. 24).

In Colossians we are told that we are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, and not alive in the world (Col. 2. 20); that is, not in our old life of flesh, taking a place as living men in connection with this world-system, but as risen with Christ, having our minds set upon the things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. We are alive to His world of glory. There our life is at the present moment hid with Christ in God. As long as He is hidden in the heavens our life is also hidden with Him, for on earth to this world we are dead with Him. The moment He appears and takes in hand things here, in that moment we shall appear also. Then, and along with Him, we shall have to do with the ordering of things here, but His present relation to things on earth and things in heaven determines ours. Our conversation, or commonwealth, is in heaven; that is, we are heavenly people, who have all our associations of life there.

The cross has severed all the ties that bound us to this great world-system, and we cannot again enter into its associations as naturalized citizens. When Jesus comes and takes to Himself His great power and reigns, it will be time enough for us to have to do with the government of this world. When He reigns we shall reign with Him, but who among His people would desire to reign during the time of His rejection? No, I say, if you will not have Christ, you cannot have me. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2. 11-13).

To this it may be replied that a true believer is just the man best qualified to take part in the government of this world, as he is inspired by higher and loftier and purer motives than the ungodly. But are we to consider ourselves

wiser than God? Are we to suppose He does not know how capable we are to order things here for His glory and for the good of His creatures? The place He has given us in His wisdom and grace is the place for us to keep, and let us keep far off from that which is obnoxious to His judgment, lest we perish in its overthrow.

But it may be asked, What would come of things here if everybody acted in the way indicated here? What would happen would be this, instead of Christ being in rejection He would be in acceptance, and if He were acceptable here on earth, why would He shut Himself up in heaven? The moment His earthly people say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," He will come to them, and if all the earth said it, He would remain no longer away (Matt. 23. 39). But we need not occupy our time with that which is, not only hypothetical, but unthinkable. The world, as such, will not repent. It hated Him, it hates His people, it hates His gospel; and if it had its way it would not allow His name to be mentioned on earth. A day is appointed for its judgment, and in the meantime God is drawing souls out of it to Himself by the gospel of His grace.

Let us not go back into it. We are heavenly people. We have a heavenly calling. We are strangers and foreigners here. We only desire a plain way through this world. We will keep the king's highway; that is, we will be subject 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 (1 Peter 2. 13-17). We will pay for everything we get by the way, and will commit no trespass, but we must maintain our pilgrim character, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1. 27).

The day of manifestation is coming. When Christ appears we shall also appear with Him in glory. Then He will give to every man according as his

work shall be (Rev. 22. 12). Let us take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth (Luke 21. 34, 35). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore

let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. 5. 3-10).

The Meaning of the Term "the New Man."

(JAMES GREEN).

THE expression occurs three times in the New Testament; in Ephesians 2. 15 and 4. 24, where the word *καὶνός*, new, is used, meaning a new character of man which never existed before; and Colossians 3. 10, where the word *νέος* is employed, in the sense of new, fresh, young, in contrast with that which has grown old.

In the pathway of our Lord on earth there was exhibited a life different in its source, motive, affections and object, to any life that had previously been seen in a man here. Its source was heavenly, He derived His authority from God; its motive, the spring of all His actions, was the will of God, producing a life of true obedience; His affections were undividedly engaged with God; and the object ever before Him was to glorify God. Such a life was true in Him alone before the cross. Scripture, however, never speaks of Him as "the new man," because He had never been characterized by any other life. He was "the second Man" of heaven, in contrast to "the first man" of earth, Adam. But when through the work of the cross others are seen associated with Him in His resurrection, the life proper to such has the same moral character in which He walked, and He is its pattern. This kind of man the Christian is looked at as having put on, and as "the old man" with its affections and lusts was there before, the character

of life of which Christ was the perfect display becomes now "the new man" in the believer. New, because it is a heavenly life and after a different order, and new because it supersedes the old and is seen in all the vigour of youth, going on to its full development when Christ, who is our life, shall appear.

In Ephesians 2. 15 "the new man" is viewed collectively as belonging to the one body, the church, not having the character of Jew or Gentile, but out of the twain created anew, suitable to God in righteousness and true holiness, His likeness. In Ephesians 4. 24 it is seen individually in each member of that same body; while in Colossians 3. 10 it is looked at in its growth, renewed into full knowledge, not a modification of the old life, but the production of a new thing, having as its consummation the image of God. "The new man" is not a matter of attainment, although there are attainments in its development, but it is that character of life which belongs to the Christian as God sees him in Christ, and in consequence of which the practical exhortation of Colossians 3. 12 becomes of urgent importance; "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering," forbearing, forgiving, loving, even as Christ; in other words, His character.

“Business as Usual.”

To Workers amongst the Young.

IT has been suggested that “Business as usual” should be adopted as the motto of all commercial houses throughout the British Isles during the great war. I suggest that that will make a good motto for all who serve the Lord, and especially for those who serve Him amongst the young. If there is a change of any kind, let it be of increased zeal and energy in the Lord’s cause, for the time is shorter and the need greater than ever it was. And in the present excitement the young, who do not realize the intense seriousness of the times, may be less inclined to hear, and this should make us the more intense and prayerful.

Every one who takes up a service for the Lord ought to be able to give some reason why he serves Him, and no service save that which flows from the constraint of love—the love of Christ—can possibly be acceptable to Him. But He has loved us, and we love Him; and love delights to serve. Love, then, must be the motive behind the service. Anything short of this is utterly unworthy of those who claim to be servants of Christ. And if we are constrained by the love of Christ we shall serve Him for His sake alone. “Ye serve the Lord Christ.” We are so apt to serve before others, to do our work in order to gain their approval. When this is the case the quality of the service is very poor indeed. But if we serve as under the eye of the One who reads the heart and knows the hidden motives we shall take care that the ointment of our service is free from the flies that would give it an ill odour.

There are men to-day who preach to thousands; they are much before the public eye; their names have become household words, and they seem to be used of God in widespread blessing, while your service is hidden and unostentatious. Are you ever tempted to

envy these servants who have a great name? Envy them not. Keep in mind that you serve the Lord Christ. He is taking note of every bit of true service done to Him. In His well-adjusted balances all service is weighed, and He knows its true value. Everything you ever did for Him has gone down to your credit in His book. You shall have your recompense—He will speak words of approval which you will treasure in your heart and memory for ever. How blessed to have a Master so tender and gracious! May you be satisfied with His commendation. Those who are praised of men have their reward now; may you be content to wait for yours.

Service amongst the young is pre-eminently a work of faith and labour of love. Patience of hope, too, is called for. You need these three Christian graces very much developed in your soul. It is a work of faith—you cannot count upon anything in the children, your faith must be in the Lord. It must be a labour of love, because the children are tiresome sometimes, and if love is not at the back of it you will grow weary in the service. There must be the patience of hope, because you must look forward for the result of what you are doing.

THE MATERIAL YOU HAVE TO WORK WITH.

Children are, in the first place, empty vessels. Now, grown-up people are not empty, they are full of their own notions, and very well satisfied with themselves. But with children it is not so. Their thoughts and opinions have not been formed, they are empty, and it is our blessed privilege to fill them. Think of the water-pots in the second chapter of John. You remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said to the servants: “Fill the water-pots with water.” They obeyed to the letter.

There was a blessed enthusiasm about them, for *they filled them to the brim!* What did they fill them with? That which the Lord would turn into wine. It is your business also to fill the water-pots to the brim. Fill them with that which the Lord can turn into wine.

I have heard it said that it is useless to teach children the Scriptures. It is all a dead letter to them, say these wise folks. But Paul said to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." His mother who taught him the Scriptures did not think it a useless work. Your business is to fill the children with the water of the Word—the blessed truths of the gospel—which the Lord can turn into the wine of salvation. You may be sure that if we do not fill the children some one else will. The devil is looking out for water-pots, and he will fill them with the poison of infidelity and sensualism, which will kill and destroy. Let it be ours to fill them with the water of the Word.

You will not be able to fill them with the water of the Word unless you are first filled with it yourselves. If you read trashy literature, you must not be surprised if your children turn to folly. Alas, there are those who take up the service amongst children who feed their souls upon mere garbage. No wonder if the children grow up for the world and the devil. Read, by all means. Read anything that can help you in your service, but feed upon the Sacred Scriptures, and make the Bible your chosen book. And do not forget that you must also be in personal contact with the blessed Lord, of whom the Scriptures speak. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Let us, then, be like the servants of John 2., who filled the pots to the brim and then brought them to Jesus. They could not change the water into wine, neither can you. You must do what they did—you must bring them to Jesus; and that necessitates prayer. You cannot be successful unless you are found in dependence and prayer before your Master.

The children are not only empty, but they are every bit as dead towards God as grown-up sinners. You will find it very instructive to search out in your Bible all the cases of children raised from the dead. Study them well, and they will yield you much profit. Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, put his hand to this work. Elisha said to him, "Take my staff and lay it on the face of the child." Ah, but Gehazi had not the spirit for this. He was a self-centred and ambitious man. We can well understand his pride as he walked off with Elisha's staff—the staff that had smitten Jordan, and divided the waters—that mighty staff which had done such wonders! It was in his possession now! Doubtless he imagined he was going to do great things with it as he laid it on the face of the dead child! But there was neither voice nor hearing. Is it possible to take the Word of God—that which is mighty to give life—and use it without effect, so that there is neither voice nor hearing? *It is possible.* If the staff is to be of any use in your hand you must be in touch with the One in whom is life and power. God grant that you may not be powerless, like Gehazi!

Elisha was very different, and he acted in quite another way. He laid himself on the child, and walked about the house and prayed to God. His every movement denoted the intensity of his exercise, the earnestness with which he sought the life of the child, and his dependence upon God. It will be well for you to learn the lessons, for these things are recorded in His Word for our learning.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH TO SERVE.

The one who deals with children must be like his Lord if he is to be successful. There was Peter, he could stand up on the day of Pentecost and preach so that three thousand souls were converted; but Peter, in earlier days, had driven the children away from Jesus. We must be very careful that there is nothing in us to drive them away. The children shrank shy and afraid from

the disciples, but can you not imagine how eagerly they would run to the outstretched arms of the Saviour? Do you think the children feared the Lord Jesus? Was there anything in Him to drive the children away? No. He was infinitely attractive to the weakest of children as He was to the worst of sinners. Mark's Gospel sets the Lord Jesus before us as the true Servant, and in the tenth chapter we see how He dealt with the children. He put His hands upon them, drew them to His arms, and blessed them. They had a place in His heart. If you are like the Lord the children will have a place in your heart. They will feel that you love them, and you will be able, in dependence on the Lord, to communicate to them the blessed things that have made you happy—the things of Christ. The Lord grant that you may be able to do that. But you must be near to Him, for it is at the feet of the blessed Lord that you will learn and be trained for this difficult service.

THE RESULT OF YOUR SERVICE.

Dr. Arnold, the celebrated head-

master of Rugby, once said, when he looked upon the faces of the boys in his school, that he felt there might be among them a future prime minister—a future commander-in-chief—a future leader of the thoughts of men. But you can say something better than this, as you look on the faces of the children. Yours may grow up to serve the Lord, to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Who can tell what may come out of your class? Here may be a soul-winner; there, one who shall be a constant comfort to the people of God; another, who, perhaps in an obscure place, shall shed the light of the life of Jesus for the glory of God and the blessing of men, and last of all and best of all shall shine in the glory of God for ever. This is the great and ultimate end of all our service. If we keep this in view, how earnestly we shall seek that all the children may be the Lord's. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The Infallibility of the Bible.

SOME critics say, "The Reformers made a mistake—they did away with faith in an infallible church, and they put in the place of it an infallible Bible." And they imply that one is as wrong as the other. The Reformers undoubtedly believed in the infallibility of the Bible, and from its pages they got the warrant for what they did, but were they the originators of this truth of the infallibility of the Bible? There never was a greater mistake. The infallibility of the Bible goes back long before the dogma of the infallibility of the

church, and long before the Reformers or Roman Catholicism; it is in the Bible itself. "Until heaven and earth pass away My word shall not pass away." It was not Wyclif or Luther that said that—it was the Lord Jesus Christ. There has been no substitution of a Book for a church. They are not on the same plane. "The infallibility of the church" is a dogma that assigns infallibility to fallible men. Our faith in the infallibility of the sacred Scriptures is a faith in the infallibility of the Word of the God of heaven and earth.

To be made sensible of our own weakness, so that divine strength, which will never be a supplement to the flesh, may come in, is the way of true power.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 26.

(HENRY J. VINE).

His Servants,—Chapters 63-66.

THE servants of the Lord have a remarkable place of distinction in these final chapters of the book, as indeed they have in other scriptures. They are the remnant of Israel, and become the nation. Few in number at first, the smallest becomes a strong nation (60. 22). The apostles of *the Lamb* had this distinguished place, His servants, when Jesus was on earth; therefore they are to sit on twelve thrones over the twelve tribes in the day to come. Paul converted from heaven does not come into this; nor does he speak of our blessed Lord in the character, as "the Lamb." After the assembly is caught up to heaven, then servants of the same character will appear again among the Jews. In Revelation 7. it is said, when great judgment is about to strike the earth, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed *the servants* of our Lord in their foreheads." These servants are "of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (vers. 3, 4). In the gospels they are in view, in such scriptures as speak of Christ's return to the earth, when He finds His *servants* waiting and watching; and He rewards them. There will be real and unreal even as now; but the hypocrites in Zion will be afraid, and be cut off. The servant who says, "My Lord delayeth His coming," and "smites his fellow-servants," will be cut asunder and cast out with the hypocrites, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But, on the other hand, it is said of "the faithful and wise servant" who cares for and feeds Christ's little flock, who are to possess the kingdom, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing" (Matt. 24. 45-51). The unreal will oppress and smite the faithful, but the Lord will judge them at His coming and will say to the faithful, "Well done,

thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We may apply these verses now, for rewards for service will be given in the kingdom. The more we consider the True Servant, the more we shall become like Him. He could say, "I am among you as One that serveth"; and we are to be among His own thus to-day, as it says, "By love serve one another." Nor will the Lord ever give up His precious service. It is said in connection with His coming, "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them." Neither shall we cease to serve, for in the book of the throne, the book of Revelation, we read, "No curse shall be any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM, AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE" (chap. 22. ver. 3). No weakness or weariness will be known then, but with everlasting joy and rejoicing, our blissful service will adoringly flow on, in deepening delight in Him whom we serve, and whose face we see. Even now may He fill *our hearts* to overflowing with Himself—

"His willing servants, let us wear
The seal of love for ever there."

These servants in Isaiah are instructed by Him. The last mention of Christ as the Servant in Isaiah is in chapter 53. verse 11. There the "Righteous Servant" is said to instruct others in righteousness. The first mention of these servants is in chapter 54. verse 17: "Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Then they partake of His character.

One of the first things they say God looked for was, "*Children that will not*

lie." It is striking and significant how Scripture constantly condemns *lying*. The last two chapters of the Bible speaks solemnly of those who "make a lie"; and the last on the list of those who are cast out to the second death are "all liars." Satan is the father of lies, and those who are marked by lying in life and lip may here read their doom, unless they come to the One who can save and sanctify them. The hypocrites at this time make a "refuge of lies" (Isa. 28. 15-17); but "the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies" (Zeph. 3. 12-13). Neither pride, nor guile, nor lying will mark these servants. They take hold of the glorious name of the Lord and with true confidence rejoice in Him, in whom their righteousness is. Through God's work in them they are also able to say, "I hate and abhor lying: but Thy law do I love" (Ps. 119. 163).

They are spoken of nine times in these closing chapters. (1) They pray, "Return for thy servants' sakes, the tribes of thine inheritance" (63. 17). In chapter 64, they long for His presence in power: "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence" (ver. 1); for they knew that the ear had not perceived, nor had the eye seen, the things He had prepared for them (ver. 4). Wonderful indeed it is, that these things are now revealed to believers by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 2. 9-10).

Jehovah replies to their prayer. He says: (2) "So will I do for My servants' sakes" (65. 8). This is the second mention. (3) "My servants shall

dwelling" in My mountains (ver. 9). (4) The hypocrites are punished. "Behold My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry;" (5) "Behold, My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty;" (6) "Behold, My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed;" (7) "Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart"; (8) He shall call "His servants by another name" (65. 13-15); (9) "The hand of the Lord shall be known towards His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies" (66. 14). And this concisely sums up the position at the end. The oppressing hypocrites say they are holier than the others (65. 5); but God says they are a smoke in His nose. Just as proud professing Christian leaders today cast out of the assembly the best brethren (see 3 John), so these men cast out the real servants here (66. 5); but the Lord is at hand with judgment for the wicked and with full blessing for His servants. "The former troubles" shall be forgotten; they shall be blessed in the God of truth. He then says to them, "Be ye glad and rejoice forever;" "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." It will be like a new creation, for He saith again, "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, so shall your seed and your name remain." Happy, happy servants of the Lord; their righteousness, and their happiness too, is of Him; no weapon that is formed against them can ever prosper. Through Him they are more than conquerors; they reach and realize the rich promises of God, which are Yea and Amen in Christ.

Fruitfulness.

The Word of God shows clearly that abiding is the condition of fruitfulness, of bearing much fruit, and fruit which shall remain (unlike that blown from the tree ere it ripen and come to perfection). Further, that when so abiding in Christ and having His word abiding in us, our prayers are all answered, and our walk is in the light, and in accordance with God's holy will.

The more we come in touch with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the more time we spend alone with His Word, the more we realize this: that we are doing most for man when we go away from man into the secret place with God.

The Ways of God in Government and Grace.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

"Did ye bring unto Me sacrifice and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Yea ye have borne Succoth your king and Chium your image, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah, whose name is the God of hosts."—(Amos 5. 25-27).

"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, I remember concerning thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."—(Jer. 2. 2, 3).

THESE two messages, given respectively to the house of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as representing the kingdom of Judah, were delivered to each shortly before their expulsion from the land of Canaan. The first illustrates God's ways in government, and the second and later one His ministry of grace. Both these different dealings, exhibited in their greatest detail in the history of the Jews, who are God's lesson-book to the nations, may also be traced in the lives of individual believers and in the various revivals which have taken place in the history of the church of God. An intelligent understanding of the Father's ways with us is surely necessary in order that we may be responsive to His desires for our instruction.

It will be well to state before entering further on our subject that, as a general rule, to which there may be many partial exceptions, when God in grace brings a soul to the knowledge of Himself, He blots out the past wholly and gives His child a clean page on which to write a new spiritual history. It is sin committed after this which is so serious in its consequences, and this finds illustration in the verses quoted from Amos 5., which plainly tell us that the sin of idolatry into which the people fell in the wilderness, at the beginning of their history as a redeemed people, entailed their captivity by the Assyrian some 700 years afterwards (see Acts 7. 42, 43; also Ezekiel 20. 16). During all those centuries the patience of God waited for recovery, but the result is reached that "there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36. 14-16). Judah is sent

into captivity in Babylon and Israel beyond Damascus. While Amos tells of this dealing of God with regard to the kingdom of Israel at a time when the line of Jehu was represented on the throne by the vigorous and successful King Jeroboam II., Hosea traces the impending downfall of that dynasty not to the sins in which the people were then living, but to the *manner* in which Jehu himself had executed God's righteous judgment on the line of Ahab and the Baal worship maintained or tolerated by his sons. Jehovah said unto him, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu." The character of his obedience had, at the very beginning of his accession to power, been marred by fleshly zeal, and God is not indifferent to the false representation of Himself by any who may be deputed to carry out His will. Yet this is not made known until, by continuance in sin, his sons had really merited by their own conduct the judgment pronounced.

Illustrations of this most solemn principle of divine government will readily occur to thoughtful minds. Has not the history of European nations of our own time been prosperous or otherwise according to their reception or refusal of the principles of the Reformation? Even the manner of their reception of it has been reflected in their after history, and the outcome of the present appalling struggle in Europe may have been determined by long-past events in the history of the nations involved. Many excellent reformers characterized, like Jehu, by too furious driving, have brought ultimate disaster on their cause by the manner of their initial advocacy

of it. With regard to individuals also many otherwise inexplicable happenings in their lives may be traced to an early sin which exposed certain tendencies involving retribution in after years. Thus Jacob's planning to obtain his father's blessing by means of a slain kid entailed his deception by the same means in his own old age.

But God's ways with us run also on quite a different line. He remembers the brightest time in our lives, and the brightest time is when Christ is best loved. This is shown in the quotation at the head of our paper (Jer. 2.). The prophet was beginning his forty years of ministry to Judah and Jerusalem, and he told them that the Lord had never forgotten the time when they followed Him for His own sake into the wilderness. This period may have lasted only two days, for apparently on the third their murmurings began (Exodus 15. 22, 23); but brief as it was it was

precious to the Lord, who through succeeding centuries ever wrought by His Spirit to recover His people to that "first love," and doubtless a response was always found in a remnant; and at the end of its history Hosea tells us that Israel "shall sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Thus will His purpose for the restoration of His people be accomplished.

It is not otherwise in the case of the church: the address to the angel of the church of Ephesus convicts of sad downfall; but even at that time there were overcomers, and the purpose of the Spirit in recovery is reached when, with Him, the Bride says "Come!" May the heart of every reader appreciate these wonderful ways of God, and learn of Him under His holy government, responding at the same time to His ministry of grace!

The Word of God.

"No book can be written in behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself. Man's defences are man's word; they may help to beat off attacks, they may draw out some portion of its meaning. The Bible is God's Word, and through it God the Holy Ghost who spake it speaks to the soul which closes not itself against it."

God does not disappoint us.

Are you . . . hungering and thirsting after righteousness? . . . Then you cannot be disappointed. God will not allow disappointment to follow such aspirations. He has plainly said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The Lord is not a host who invites more guests than his banqueting table will accommodate. There is no shortness in the Father's house, there is "bread enough and to spare."—*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled* (Matt. 5. 6).

The Devil's Way.

The devil never wins a man by frontal attack. There is always an insidious flank movement upon Man-soul ere Man-soul is captured. There is always heart-backsliding before there is definite and open backsliding. . . . Always first, the subtle, insidious force alluring the soul; always next, definite choice, decision, a volitional yielding to the alluring force; then some day, inexorably, suddenly, Demas has gone, and the world finds out that which God knew long before.—*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world* (2 Tim. 4. 10).

Worldly Religion and Worldly Amusements. (A. J. POLLOCK)

THE observant traveller in Latin Roman Catholic lands is painfully impressed by the fact that gross superstition and utter worldliness go hand in hand.

Sunday morning the churches are crowded with—*women and children*; the remaining part of the day gaming tables, bull rings and theatres are crowded.

And, mark you, what occurs in the earlier part of the day is quite compatible with what is done in the latter. To the superficial observer this may not appear to be so. But in reality, under the surface, in the essence of things, it is so. *Worldly* religion and *worldly* amusements are both *worldly*, and are both integral parts of a *worldly* system.

Whilst this is very patent where ritualism and wickedness—a sensuous religion and a sensual life—go hand in hand, it may not be so apparent where things are not fully developed.

We have much, indeed, to be thankful for under God's good hand in Great Britain. But there is much to be apprehensive about.

True, Scripture prepares us for what is happening all around us. We expect no modern Luther or present-day reformation. The long-prophesied apostasy is coming on with a mighty rush. The air is heavy and thick with elements of evil, which will ere long be precipitated in all their abysmal horrors.

But *individuals* may be helped. There are overcomers even in Thyatira (popery), Sardis (dead orthodoxy) and Laodicea (religious infidelity). We would esteem it a privilege if we could quicken the vision of any believer, and help him or her to take a firm, intelligent stand against what is so dishonouring and nauseous to the Lord.

A true *heart-knowledge* of the fundamentals of the gospel of God would help to this end. For what is the glory of the Lord Jesus? Surely that He has accomplished a work which brings the believer home to God in conscious nearness and intimacy. And this knowledge must deliver from the bondage and futility of worldly religion.

Scripture tells us: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us TO GOD*" (1 Peter 3. 18). Christ has done away with all go-betweens. This is the glory of the gospel. The believer has to do with God *direct*. In virtue of the wonderful work of the Lord Jesus wrought on the cross he is BROUGHT TO GOD.

But if this is so, what of the practice of the invocation of saints? To bring in the saints in heaven as go-betweens, as is done by the Romish church and by some prominent Anglicans, also, is to becloud and belittle the gospel. Not a single line of Scripture is there to support such a horrible idea. It savours of "the depths of Satan." It is the very essence of worldly religion, for it puts God at a distance, and that is what the world has done from the beginning.

The believer on earth is as much brought to God as are the saints in glory. The work of Christ is not more efficacious in heaven than it is on earth. When the Victor cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED," all was done. Wherever this is recognized all Romish errors are swept away.

God is for the believer. He has proved it abundantly by the triumph of the cross. We can trust His hand and heart better than those of any saint on earth or in heaven.

Is it a question of my sins? They were atoned for by my Saviour at the cross. My conscience is purged. I am brought to God.

Is it a question of my infirmity? "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. *Let us therefore come BOLDLY unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4. 15, 16).

Our great High Priest in heaven understands our weakness infinitely more than the most sympathetic, sensitive saint on earth or in heaven. We have more confidence in Him than in all beside.

Scripture tells us to come *BOLDLY*, and boldly we will come. We will come surely with the deepest reverence, yet with the greatest boldness. There is not one line of Scripture to give countenance to the Romish go-betweens. We are on safe ground as we cling to God's Word.

The presence of God must have a sanctifying and satisfying effect upon all who seek it, while every evil thing is possible to those who love to remain at a distance from God.

Our resources are not of this world. We are a heavenly people. How sweeping and emphatic are the words of the Lord Himself? "They [believers] are NOT of the world, even as I am not of the world . . . for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also

might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17. 16, 19).

Dear fellow-believer, we must take our stand. Let us accept the place of *approach* to God, and, its necessary correlative, *reproach* in this world.

If superstition and worldliness go hand in hand, believe me, truth and piety are never divorced. If a Christian really knows the truth in its sanctifying influence he will be unworldly. On the other hand, if he is worldly, he cannot know the power of the truth. Approach and reproach are known equally. They are like the two blades of a pair of scissors—they work together and in harmony. We cannot shirk the cross and gain the crown. The crown is gained by carrying the cross.

Oh! that we may be like Moses, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11. 26); or like Paul, who cried out in the joy of his soul, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3. 8).

There would then be no room in our hearts for a *worldly religion or worldly amusements*. Hear the exhortation: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11.)

The Mercy of God.

Nothing can be more important than that we should have a deep sense of God's sovereign mercy. He has not only presented His grace to us in the gospel, but we are indebted to Him for that distinguishing mercy which brought home to us individually the conviction of our guilt and utter worthlessness. According to the flesh we hated grace and rejected Christ; we preferred the world and our lusts and pleasures to God's favour. He might have left us to take our own course and fit ourselves for destruction, for we had no claim upon Him in any way. In a word, we were under death and judgment, and it is to His sovereign mercy alone that we owe our blessing and salvation. It is in sovereign mercy that He has given effect to His love, and this mercy forms the ground of the Apostle's appeal in Romans 12. 1: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

We look for Christ.

THERE can be no improvement in a world that rejected Christ and continues to refuse Him His rights. Dispelled already are the delusions of those flatterers of humanity who for years have cried, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace; and equally vain are the hopes of those who are comforting themselves with the conjecture that as a result of the present welter of blood the wolf shall lie down with the lamb and the nations learn war no more.

The Bible is the Christian's chart, and no such universal and perpetual quiet by the consent of humanity as these would-be prophets predict is marked upon its infallible page. Such a peace is coming, but it will be when the kingdoms of earth become the kingdoms of Christ, whose right they are, and against that glorious event the whole energy of humanity will be marshalled; for deluded by the devil the world does not know the things that make for its peace. "*Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. The way of peace have they not known it. There is no fear of God before the eyes*" (Rom. 3).

The world's trial is past; its own judgment as to God and His Christ was definitely and finally recorded when they cried, "Away with Him, crucify Him." Sentence has gone out against it, and the wrath of God will presently execute that sentence. But those who have turned to God to serve the living and true God are no longer of the world, and

they await His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who died for us to deliver us from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1).

To some the coming of the Lord to take His saints out of this world may seem long delayed, and a weariness may have crept over the spirit and the freshness of the hope declined, and slumber as regards that great event supervened. May the Lord in these times of trouble awaken His saints from sleep and restore the joy of this hope where it has been lost.

If His coming seems to tarry we must still wait for it, for the just shall live by FAITH. "For yet a very little while He that comes will come, and will not delay" (Heb. 10. 37, N.T.). Meanwhile we know the reason why the "little while" has been and is still extended, for the Bible makes all things plain. It is God's longsuffering with men. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9).

If God is not slack concerning His promise, may we not be slack in looking for the fulfilment of it, and meanwhile, in sympathy with His incomparable grace to men, be diligent in spreading the gospel of His salvation, which saves men from the world and its delusions and the wrath which is most surely coming upon it. (Ed.)

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13. 14).

Our benediction is a "canopy of

love." Central in it is "the love of God"; leading up to it is "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ"; and coming back to earth again with comfort and joy is "the communion of the Holy Ghost."

Great Love.

A Gospel Address given at Workington by Dr. Sa'eed, of Persia.

"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 requires some courage to come from a foreign land to put the gospel before you in England. One thinks that you know all about these things—that you have learnt them on the laps of your mothers. Some of you must have heard the gospel times without number. How strange it seems for a foreigner like me to speak to you who are *so* privileged. And to speak, too, from a verse that the youngest child here ought to know.

God did not send His Son to judge the world. The world deserved divine judgment; but the Son of God came to bring salvation.

Once I was in a desert place, thinking over these wonderful words, which filled and enraptured my soul. I wanted to find out the measure of that "SO LOVED," and I thought—the measure is, "He gave His only Son." You remember Romans 5. 6-8: "When we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

It is possible, though very rare indeed, for one friend to die for another. But to die for one's enemy! If I had two sons I might give up one for some benefit, some good cause. But to give up an "ONLY Son," and that for sinners, for enemies. Oh! what love to me—a rebellious creature who was "without strength," "ungodly," an "enemy," a "sinner," far away from Him.

As I was drinking in a little of this measureless love, in the desert, sitting beside a large tank of water, a little

wasp came and drank out of that tank; perhaps it only got the tenth part of a drop, but it flew away SATISFIED. And I thought to myself, I am that wasp. I cannot understand that "SO" of God's love; it cannot be measured; but, like the little wasp, I can drink to my fill. And there, in that desert, alone with HIM, I drank, and my soul was satisfied.

You remember the description of man in Romans 3. 10-18, "Their throat is an open sepulchre." You don't know much about that in this country, but in the East they often bury a body, and afterwards take it out, put it in a coffin, and carry it away to bury it near some holy shrine, leaving the sepulchre open. How disgusting is the open sepulchre! God says that is what our throat is like, what our heart is like in our unregenerated unsaved state. OUTSIDE you may be beautiful and white, religious, going to services, appearing all right and clean in the sight of man; but what about the state of your heart? INSIDE it is like a sepulchre, "full of dead men's bones." It is from the heart that all uncleanness springs, as the Lord tells us in Mark 7.: evil thoughts, murders, thefts, blasphemies. And yet, think of it, it was for such that God gave His only Son to die. I spoke of myself just now as a wasp, but God says, No, you are worse, you are an asp, full of poison and deceit; "the poison of asps is under their lips." It was for *such* that Jesus died.

Have you judged yourself, and found out that you are as He describes you in this picture (in Romans 3.)? If so, then look up, and you will see a beautiful Saviour. What a change! You will find the whole power of God in your favour; for He wants to freely justify

you through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ (ver. 24).

Saadi—one of our wonderful Persian poets—tells of a little boat at sea which was once overturned. There were in that boat two men who loved one another passionately. A man from a larger boat, seeing their danger, swam out to the rescue. The first man he tried to save called out to him, "Save my friend first, he is dearer to me than life." So his friend was rescued first and placed in the larger boat, and then the rescuer turned back to save the first man, but it was too late, he was drowned. He lost his life for the sake of his friend. The poet enlarges on the wonderful love of these friends. Ah, Saadi (I thought), if you only knew of the far superior love of God, who gave His only Son to die for His ENEMIES. Who has such a heart of stone that does not feel melted by THIS LOVE ?

If you have an object that attracts you, that you deeply love, then it is easy to give up something for the sake of that object. Look at Abraham. He saw a sight that enraptured his heart, so he went out not knowing where he was going to. It is easy to give up things for the Lord if He has captured our hearts. He showed Abraham how He must have the pre-eminence. He must come first. So He tells him to take his only son—his much-loved one, and to go a three days' journey and offer him up for a burnt offering. Did you ever think what a trying time those three days were for that father's heart? Abraham could say, "All my hopes are centred in this my son; but I have seen the God of glory, He is faithful, He has promised; I can sacrifice my son."

Look at Rebekah. It is easy to give up home and relations when our hearts are enraptured. When she is asked, "Wilt thou go with this man?" she answers unhesitatingly, "I will go" (Gen. 24. 58). 'But where are you going, Rebekah?' 'What this man tells me of the excellency of his master has won my heart. My heart is enraptured by

Isaac. I have heard of his greatness, his beauty, his wisdom. Don't detain me; I must go to him.' In Isaac we have a type of our Lord. May we catch a glimpse of HIS glory to attract and draw us more after Himself. "His lovingkindness is better than life."

Look at Jacob. For seven years he laboured night and day, in the heat and in the frost, in the fields of Laban. And why? Because he loved Rachel. Those seven years seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her. How easy to endure without a sense of tiredness if love has won our hearts.

But think of *HIS* love! Love for His enemies—love for you and me. Was ever love like that? What wonderful, wonderful love! And, what is this poor world, this tiny dot in the universe, that He has thought it worth while to come down to win *our* hearts!

People say that we belittle God in imagining that He thinks of any one of us. Why should He take any thought of a tiny creature—a little speck on this tiny earth? When the late King Edward VII went to India as Prince of Wales, every one there was occupied with the splendour of his greatness. The Viceroy of India and all the great nobles came to bid him good-bye as he was about to return to this country. All the glory of India was present at the station, and one and all were occupied with the Prince; all wanted to do homage to him. From private soldier to mighty prince, all had their eyes on him. All at once His Royal Highness noticed a little child on the railway lines. He saw its danger, and without a moment's hesitation ran, stooped down, and picked up the little child and placed it in safety.

Did he belittle himself by stooping so low? What hurrahs were raised when the people saw what the Prince had done! What cheering! Had he not by that stoop raised himself a thousandfold in all their eyes?

A more wonderful sight—*God* stooped down to pick up a poor sinner like me.

In the East it is said that Solomon knew the language of all creatures, for his wisdom was unbounded, and that once he sat beside an ant-heap, and talked to the little creatures.

Something greater by far—God has stooped down to me to speak to me in my language.

There was a young man who thought that God would not and could not belittle Himself and come down and speak to an atom like you and me in language that we could understand, and give to us the Holy Spirit. One day he and a Christian lady were walking together in a park and talking about God. They came to a nest of ants. He said to the lady, "Do you think I could tell these little creatures that there is one who can see three hundred of them at one glance?" The lady replied, "There is only one way of doing that, and that is BY BECOMING ONE OF THEM."

This is the amazing story. The Eternal Word, the only-begotten Son who is over all God, became man, so as to talk to little creatures like you and me, and to tell us all the love of God. That is my story. Is that your story? If not, let your ears be opened to listen to His voice, your eyes be opened to see His beauty, and your stony heart will be broken by His great love.

As the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon with many difficult questions, so I had many difficult questions. I came to Him. He has solved them all for me, and more than that—He has enraptured my heart. The Queen of Sheba, when she saw the greatness of Solomon, had to exclaim that the half had not been told her. And so, the *half* of the Lord's love has not yet been told out. For we could not take it all in. But day by day we find out a little more.

When Lord Roberts went out to take command during the South African War, he made reference to his son who had been killed in the war. He said, "If I had seven sons I would gladly

give them all to die for their country." But think of HIS love, which exceeds all other love—who died for His enemies! And WHOSOEVER believes in Him shall have everlasting life. That "Whosoever" takes every one in. It was, I think, Isaac Newton who said, "I am so glad that it says in that verse 'whosoever,' and not 'Isaac Newton'; for there might be another man of my name."

Dear friend, yield your heart to Him. Let His dying love win you. He will never give you up. My heart throbs and responds to His dying love.

I remember when HE had enraptured my heart in Senneh, my native town. I could not explain it to others—His wonderful love to me. I had to run away from home at the age of seventeen, and with danger of death on every hand. I had to give up home and parents. My heart was won by Jesus; and I could run away and give up all for Him. Afterwards I used to think like this—You are so beautiful, my glorious Saviour, why did you die? I am sure you could have saved me without dying. Like Peter, I did not like to think He could die. I thought He was too glorious to die. Then I came across a hymn which was a great help to me. It told me how *that death* was FOR ME. From that time there was no doubts left in my heart; eternal peace came to me. I will read you the hymn :

"My God, I love Thee; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Are lost eternally.

"Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear
And manifold disgrace.

"And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweat of agony;
Yes, death itself—and all for *me*
Who was Thine enemy.

"Then why, O blessèd Jesu Christ,
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the sake of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell,

“Not from the hope of gaining aught,
Nor seeking a reward;
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord!

“So would I love Thee, blessèd Lord,
And in Thy praise will sing;
Solely because Thou art *my God*,
And my most loving King.”

I found it was my sins nailed Him to the tree. I don't love Him so as to escape hell. As a Mohammedan I did things in the hope of escaping hell. I love Him because He loved me so much as to die for me.

Once a little boy found an ugly scar on his mother's arm. He said to her, “I don't like that ugly arm of yours.” The mother said, “I will tell you about it; when you were a little baby you fell into the fire, and it was in rescuing you that I burnt my arm and got that ugly scar.” That boy's heart was touched, and he kissed his mother's arm and exclaimed, “That arm is the loveliest arm I have ever seen.” So it is with our gracious Saviour. I love to think of His death, of that terrible cross, that suffering endured so patiently. He died for *you*, for *me*.

Are Christians miserable? No. They are the happiest people on the face of

the earth. Ask a Christian what joys he has. They are so many that he can hardly tell you. He has joy *here*, and before him there is unclouded joy, when he will be with and like his Lord for ever.

When I was staying with a friend, a charming English lady asked us to go with her to a theatre. “No,” we said, “we have better joys than that.” After a while she opened out her heart to us, and said she was so miserably unhappy, in spite of the theatre. People often say they are so unhappy. We tell them how to get true and lasting joy, but they won't have it. How strange this is!

One day in Persia my little boy Lemuel was playing with a knife. It was shining beautifully, and he liked it. We wanted to get it from him for fear he should hurt himself with it, but he would not give it up. At last his mother, who is wiser than I, came up and threw him a beautiful red apple. In a moment he left the knife and seized the apple. That is like Christianity. We have something so much better, so much more beautiful, something that *satisfies*; so we don't want the husks that the men of the world feed on.

We want a thousand thousand tongues to express *His love*.

A Great Danger.

There is no greater danger attaching to the life of Christian service than the danger of presumptuous pride. I mean the pride . . . which says, “I can dispense with the Word of God”; which persists in living on a minimum of prayer and communion with God, and in yet going about the

work of God as of old; a pride which, like Uzziah's (2 Chron. 26. 16-18), seeks carnal prominence in spiritual things. For that was his sin. He sought a carnal prominence in service which God had ordained was to be of an entirely spiritual order.

Strength and Guidance.

“He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake” (Ps. 23. 3).

This verse suggests two most comforting thoughts: fresh supplies of strength, of grace and of Christian joy, as the exigencies of the pilgrim may require;

and leading—guidance in right paths; than which no assurances could be more encouraging to the heart of those who are conscious of their own tendency to make mistakes as to the path of discipleship and service, and to run down or wear out under its strain.

Unity.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE discussion of questions generally results in the formation of parties and sects; the ministry of Christ unifies His saints, for it binds their hearts together and makes them glow with a common object. Questions will arise as long as the church is here below, for the devil will not cease his efforts to scatter the one flock, but if these questions are brought to the light of God's all-sufficient Word, which is able to elucidate every one of them, and approached from the standpoint of how they affect the glory and heart of Christ, in dependence upon Him, and not from the standpoint of tradition or precedent, or in self-will, they will be rightly answered and the devil's malicious intentions be frustrated. Yet the work of the servants for Christ is not to occupy the saints with questions, but to minister the truth as to Christ wherever an ear is inclined to hearken to their words. It was so at the beginning, and it has not been changed during the course of the centuries.

While being devoutly thankful to God from all the truth that has been opened out during the last century, let us not be too much occupied with the immediate past, or imagine that in these latter days the divine standard has been given to us, but let us go back to the revelation of the truth as it was given by the Holy Ghost at first in all its force and glory; for only so shall we be able to act rightly; and we may be sure that any revival that may have taken place within the last century has been the result of the servants of the Lord coming under the power of that.

Take that most triumphant passage in Ephesians 4. 8-13:—

"Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

"(Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

"He that descended is the same also

that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.)

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying 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."

Mark well these expressions "for the perfecting of the saints," "for the work of the ministry," "for the edifying of the body of Christ." Are these things not worth labouring in and for? This is the greatest work that is being done beneath the heavens to-day; we say it without fear of contradiction, this is the greatest work that is being done in the universe at this moment. No empire on earth, no matter how great its might or righteous its cause, is prosecuting so glorious a campaign as this—if we may be allowed to adopt military phraseology—of which the great Leader is our victorious Lord in heaven, and of which the power is the Holy Spirit of God on earth. Will the devil remain passive while this is going on? Certainly not. Of old he tried to hinder it by persecutions, but these frontal attacks only served to further the truth,—“the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church”—and the tribulation only made the saints of God value the more the blessed unity into which He had put them. The public persecutions have ceased, but let us not suppose that the enemy has been driven from the field. To do so would be to blind our eyes to his diabolical strategy. He has succeeded in these closing days of much light, in filling the minds of the servants of Christ with questions, so that they, instead of, unitedly and without fetters, carrying on the work of Christ, indicated in this passage, often waste much time in discussions one with

another, sometimes with much heat—alas, that it should have to be said—resulting in estrangement of heart one from another and further division in the flock of God.

The discussion of questions, either in public, or by pamphlet, or in private intercourse with the saints, or by letter will not result in “the perfecting of the saints,” it is not “the work of the ministry,” it will not “edify the body of Christ.” The saints are perfected as the truth as to Christ is formed in their souls, and by this they grow into the “unity of the faith . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” But questions provoke the flesh, cause emulation and strife, and stunt the growth of the saints, so that they are imperfect—babes, as witness the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2, 3). This is the devil’s work.

The saints of God might well learn a lesson from the British Empire at this time. How speedily all questions were abandoned, and how the greatest extremes became as one when the supreme need of defending her honour and maintaining her integrity arose. Have those who love the Lord no common cause? Or, to put it in a way that should affect all our hearts: Have not those whom He has loved, and for whom He gave Himself, no common cause? It was said in our hearing recently: “Nothing would be so calculated to produce practical unity amongst the saints as an outbreak of persecution.” We did not question this, for we are more than a little selfish, and while on the one hand the sorrows of others might draw out our sympathies, we should be glad to have sympathy in our own. And beyond that, the flying to one common Help in trouble would throw us more together, and perfectly right too. But is there not something higher than this? What of the glory of our Lord and the truth? In these last days, as never before in the church’s history, the enemy has attacked our holy faith. Not the outworks of Christianity merely, but the very citadel

of it—the truth as to Christ’s own person, and His atoning work. Ought not the love that He bears us, and His own glory, which is surely more dear to us than life, have made us, because of these attacks of the enemy, “*Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil. 1. 27)?

Who could imagine, by way of illustration, the British soldiers in the fire-swept trenches forgetting the great conflict and quarrelling with each other, or wasting their time in debating questions, or refusing to succour each other in their need, or withholding words of cheer or of good news which was their common right! And if only the saints of God were alive to the infinite seriousness of the conflict that they are called to wage, and the tremendous issue of it, and their need of one another in it, it would surely result in a solidarity in their ranks that would be for the glory of the Lord; it would make them greatly appreciate that unity which is a divine fact, and which cannot be dissolved.

Every part of the revelation of God in our holy faith has the oneness of the saints in view. Take a few familiar passages of Scripture. (a) “I lay down My life for the sheep. 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 and one Shepherd” (John 10. 15, 16).

(b) “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17. 22, 23).

(c) “For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 4. 13).

(d) “Wherefore He saith, When He ascended on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . till we all come to the unity of the faith.

... speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4. 8-16).

(a) The Lord gave up His holy life, passing down into the darkness of judgment and death that His saints might be one. Was His death in vain? Impossible. The saints of God are one flock.

(b) The glory of sonship has been given to them that they might be one—given to them in a new and inalienable life and title. They are brought into an intelligent relationship with the Father and the Son, and this in a way that baffles all description: the Son of God in them and the Father in Him, that the oneness might be in the power of that unbreakable and eternal love in which the Father and the Son abide. So that as no thought of division between the Father and the Son could possibly be entertained, so also should they be indivisible.

(c) The Holy Ghost has been given to the saints also, that they might be one. He has come upon them baptizing them into one body, and they have all drunk into one Spirit. So that they are no longer feeble and isolated atoms fighting their way against storm and wind and tide to the glory, but they are one body by the power of the Holy Ghost. Being in that body, it might be said that they are in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is in them, so that as you cannot divide the Holy Ghost, for He is one, so neither can you divide that body that He has formed.

(d) And Christ in glory is the Head of His body on earth, and every member of it has been formed in Him, so that each one, in the virtue of the life and grace that it has in Him, may contribute to the self-building up of the one body in love.

These are great truths. Shall those who profess to know them practically falsify them by a sectarian spirit, or by withholding them from those who do not know them, or only know them imperfectly? Or prevent the effectual working of this divine organism by raising needless questions and divisions amongst saints? Nay. If these truths are known they must be obeyed, and ministered wherever a listening ear can be found. And if any who know them act otherwise, they will speedily lose the joy and the power of them.

Contrast with the foregoing scriptures the following: "The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep" (John 10. 12).

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not yet carnal and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3. 3).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, fornication . . . idolatry . . . strifes . . . contentions, disputes, schools of opinion . . . murders"—into what terrible company the sectarian is here put, and mark the declaration of the Holy Ghost—"as to which I tell you beforehand, that they who do such things shall not inherit God's kingdom" (Gal. 5. 19-22, N.T.). It is evidently a fleshly and devilish work to scatter and divide the saints of God. May our souls shrink with horror from having any part in it.

But to return to what we said at the beginning; the practical abiding in this unity can alone be maintained as Christ is before the soul. We have a song, one line of which is—

"All the mind in heaven is one";

but that is because Christ is everything to all. Ministry in the power of the Holy Ghost, according to John 16. 13-15, will perfect the saints in this now, and nothing else will. Questions distract, doctrines, apart from this, harden, but by the ministry of Christ the work of the Holy Ghost proceeds and the body of Christ is edified. May this be our great object now and henceforward.

The Revived Roman Empire.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE study of prophecy cannot be neglected without real loss to the Christian. Nor, on the other hand, should it form the boundary of his whole horizon, or the loss will be equally great.

How true it is that one verse of Scripture is enough to die on, but it needs the whole Word of God to live by. To "rightly divide the word of truth"—to hold truth with an even balance—to take *all* the Word of God in *all* its parts, is necessary for us, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

It must be insisted, too, in studying prophecy, that there be stern determination on the part of the student to curb absolutely all imagination, and to refuse to go a step beyond what is revealed, and what are plainly the indications of Scripture.

And further, *fulfilled* prophecy is one of the strongest proofs of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, giving us complete assurance that *unfulfilled* prophecy will surely be fulfilled in God's good time.

Of course, the greatest prophecy of all concerns the Lord Jesus Christ—His suffering and the glory that shall follow. His sufferings in a marvellous way are *fulfilled* prophecy—the glory that is to be will surely come to pass. Remember all prophecy has for its final goal that glory, not the glory of war (and it has precious little of that when seen at close quarters); not the glory of ambition and power (and what *real* glory in fallen man's hands is there in these?); but the glory of goodness, of mercy, of righteousness, of PEACE—in one word, the glory of God in all its ineffable blessedness.

If prophecy is one of the strongest and sublimest proofs of inspiration, we are not surprised that the Book of Daniel, containing, as it does, more than any book in the Old Testament prophecies as to the course of events in this world, should

excite the special hate of the infidel, particularly the religious sceptic, such as the Higher Critic.

The prophecies are so detailed, and not only detailed, but in measure explained, so that the centuries had only to "wait and see" the unrolling of the prophecies of God. The most of the map of the future, as it was when Daniel wrote, has been unrolled, as twenty-five centuries have passed. There remains, however, the final part of the unrolling. That will be accompanied by the shout of armies, the clash of war, famine, pestilence, revolutions, the upheaval of civilization, a Reign of Terror become European if not universal—in short, by terrific happenings, such as will make the present European war look like child's play beside it. And *then?* And then this world, bowed in travail as God's wrath sweeps over it, will be prepared to receive the Prince of Peace. The Lord Jesus Christ shall come. The King of kings and Lord of lords shall reign. The Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. Earth shall have her sabbath of rest—her jubilee. THE LORD COMETH. Soon it will be, THE LORD REIGNETH.

Daniel will help us to understand all this. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had an extraordinary vision. He was the chosen instrument by whom this prophecy—for such the vision was—should be given to God's people for all time. God effaced the memory of it from Nebuchadnezzar's mind, only that it should come before us in the most striking way of Daniel's narration and explanation.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen in vision a wonderful image—its head was of gold; breast and arms of silver; belly and thighs of brass; legs of iron; feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

In this was unfolded the course of four great world empires.

1. Babylonian = Head of gold.

2. Median and Persian = Breast, etc., of silver.
3. Grecian = Belly, etc., of brass.
4. Roman = Legs of iron and feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

The first was existent when Daniel interpreted the monarch's dream. The kingdom and its king are often interchangeable terms in prophecy. So Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "*Thou art this head of gold.*" His was a marvellous empire, the magnificence of which we have little conception.

The second, third, and fourth kingdoms were still future. They have, however, arisen in complete answer to the prophecy, and gone into history—*fulfilled* history, absolutely irrefutable.

The fourth, indeed, in its *revived* form, is still future, and it is this aspect of it we wish to touch upon lightly in this paper. Of the four great world empires foretold in the king's dream, it is the one of which the most striking and numerous details are given, not only in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's vision, but likewise in relation to Daniel's, God-given, prophetic visions under a later reign.

Now we shall never understand prophecy in general, nor this in particular, if we do not see that the present church history intervenes, that between the day of Pentecost and the Lord's second coming to rapture His church, His bride, God is occupied with calling out a people for His Son, and is not taking up the thread of prophecy in a public way at all, although there may be a general shaping of events that may make things ready to hand when the moment comes.

Prophecy and time have to do with the Jew, the nations, and the earth, and not to do with the church and heaven, save the prophecy of the Lord coming for His church, and then coming *with* His people to enter upon His thousand years' reign, popularly known as the millennium.

What lies between—Jacob's time of trouble and the great tribulation, in-

cluding the frightful battle of Armageddon—will not affect the church, as prior to these terrible times she will have been caught up to glory.

It has been often illustrated thus. The Jewish train is scheduled to run to time. She proceeds on the way all through Old Testament times till the Messiah is presented to the Jewish nation, and rejected. Consequent on His rejection and ascension the Holy Spirit is sent down on the day of Pentecost. Then a *new* thing happens.

The church of God is called into existence. The Jewish train is shunted, as it were, and put into a siding. Not only so, but the clocks of the fulfilment of prophecy are all stopped. The church train—the fast express, if you like—travels to glory. When she reaches her destination, the clocks will be started again, the Jewish train will be replaced on the main metals, and resume her journey according to the scheduled time of prophecy.

This can be proved in many ways. Take one striking instance, in especial connection with the foregoing remarks. Since a few years after the death of Christ the Jews have been dispossessed of their own land. Though more numerous to-day than even in the palmy days of King Solomon, they still remain scattered among the nations—a standing witness to *fulfilled* prophecy.

At the same time the recent return of the Jews in large numbers to the Holy Land seems to foreshadow the fulfilment of Scripture that they will return in unbelief, and forms one of the most significant signs of the times. It indicates a shaping of things that may well interest the student of prophecy.

Take, again, the Roman Empire, which is evidently to be existent as such, when "the stone . . . cut out of the mountain without hands"—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—shall fall on the feet of the image, crush utterly the great world power it represents, and set up His everlasting kingdom.

But where is the Roman Empire to-

day? What a contrast is Italy to-day to the time when the Roman legions carried their victorious eagles from Asia Minor to Spain, and from Carthage to Britain. There is no Roman Empire to-day.

But this is just what we should expect. Such an empire could not be successfully maintained through all the centuries, whilst the church period intervenes.

But for the fulfilment of prophecy we must expect a *revived* Roman Empire. If we turn to the Book of Revelation it is just this that is foretold.

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision the image had ten toes, a symbolic presentation of an empire holding within it ten kingdoms. In the more detailed vision given to Daniel the ten kingdoms are symbolized by ten horns. He was further told one king will arise and subdue three kings, thus leaving seven kings and ten kingdoms.

In Revelation 12. 3 we read of "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head."

In Revelation 13. 1 we read of "a beast [that shall] rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns and upon his horns ten * crowns."

In Revelation 17. 3 we read of "a scarlet coloured beast, . . . having seven heads and ten horns."

In Revelation 17. 9 we are told the seven heads are seven mountains, evidently referring to the imperial city of Rome (the centre of the ancient Roman Empire, as it will be of the *revived*), built upon seven hills.

It is remarkable that pagan Rome, the centre of the Empire, became the centre of Roman Catholicism, and evidently from the chapter we are considering there will be a revival of both the Empire and the papacy as a great world power, the latter only to be overthrown by the former (see Rev. 17. 3-18).

Now this corresponds with the details Daniel gives.

Now whilst the Christian does not look for signs in connection with the Lord's coming *for* His people, yet he is exhorted to observe signs in connection with these happenings on the earth, leading up to the Lord's coming *with* His heavenly saints to reign. And seeing that not many years elapse between the two events, the signs may be read by Christians, who may be on the earth just prior to the rapture.

The rising tide of apostasy in Christendom, as witnessed by Higher Criticism, New Theology, Christian Science, Millennial Darwinism, etc., etc., is one grave and ominous sign.

The undoubted revival of Roman Catholicism foretold in Scripture is another. There are more monasteries and nunneries in England to-day than when they were broken up by Henry VIII, and England has lately been raised (?) from being a missionary land to the status of a Catholic country.

The Roman Empire, as already pointed out, will be revived. Will it cover exactly the same ground as it did in former days? We cannot dogmatize on this point, but one thing seems to be certain, it will not cover a smaller area; and also it will be composed of ten kingdoms.

It is interesting to note that the north littoral of Africa—marked Mauritania, Numidia, Africa, Libya, Egyptus, on the map in the Oxford Bibles, formed part of the old Roman Empire. For long centuries Europe had lost her grasp on these African provinces. But within the last half-century nations which lie within the bounds of the old Empire have gained control over this very strip of land. While Germany, that was outside its bounds, attempted in vain to gain a foothold on the North African coast, at the time of the Aga-dir crisis. It may

* In Rev. 12. 3 there were seven crowns upon his head, evidently taking account of the actual kings. In Rev. 13. 1 there are ten crowns, evidently counting not the wearers but the crowns.

be that the present war will have some result in preparing the way for the appearance of these ten kingdoms ; and it may not be without interest to notice that the territory held by Germany and a large part of Austria-Hungary were not in the Roman Empire, but that the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine were.

Finally, I would draw attention to the fact that the ten toes of the image were partly of iron and partly of clay—an element of power and an element of weakness. This was strikingly illuminated by a remark I saw the other day that Europe was fast becoming a combination of militarism and socialism, the former standing for iron, the latter for clay. And this war will help on both in a wonderful way. Already a flood of militarism has passed over this land, where up to now it had little hold.

The nations see it is their only hope of existence. At the same time the crushing burdens of taxation it entails and the subjection to authority it involves will surely foment discontent and socialism, which will become manifest when the patriotic wave has passed.

As we see these things all around us, telling of the fulfilment of prophecy, what a comfort is ours amid all the gloom and sorrow of this world—Christians, be they German or British, French or Russian, can lift up their heads, for the hour of their redemption draweth nigh. The Lord's coming surely is VERY CLOSE AT HAND.

“ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ! ” “ He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

The Government of God.

IN chapter six of Zechariah we are shown the government of God in the four monarchies (Babylonian, Medio-Persian, Grecian, and Roman), but neither as immediate government on God's part nor merely that of human government. We have seen power committed to man in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, and that he had failed therein. But it was not the will of God immediately to resume the reins of government in the earth, neither to leave the earth to the wickedness and the will of man without any providential bridle, without any government. He controls them, not by acting directly, so as to maintain the testimony of His character and His ways, but by means of instruments whom He employs, the result of whose activity is according to His will. The only wise God can do this, for He knows all things and directs all things to the accomplishment of His purposes. This is the reason that we see all sorts of things morally in disagreement with His ways in government,

which yet succeed: a chaos as to the present, but the issue of which will furnish a clue that will make manifest a wisdom even more profound and admirable than that which was displayed in His own immediate government of Israel, perfect as it was in its place. It is manifest that universal providence, in its results, satisfies the moral exigencies of the nature of God; while in the intermediate course of things free scope is left to the active energies of man's will.

This mediate power, exercised by instruments proceeding from the presence of the Most High God, is employed in connection with His rights over the whole earth. This is the character of God in the prophecy of Zechariah. It is the character also of His government for the time being, that is, during the four empires. When Christ shall reign, the government will again be immediate in His person, and Jerusalem will be its centre.

(J. N. D.)

God's Great Gift.

(JAMES BOYD).

THE greatest gift God has conferred, or can confer, upon His beloved people is that of the Holy Spirit. A vast inheritance is ours, which is beyond the ability of the most powerful mind to grasp, and which baffles the most prodigious imagination, for what mind is able to grasp the vast inheritance of God? And we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But the earnest of that inheritance is the Spirit of God, and the earnest is greater than the inheritance itself.

This great gift was in promise for His people in the past dispensation. And in the day in which God will recover His earthly people from among the heathen, He says that He will sprinkle clean water upon them, so that they shall be cleansed from their idols; a new heart also He will give them, and will put a new spirit within them. But He also says, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezek. 36. 25-27). That will be a wonderful day of blessing for Israel, and bright with the glory of God.

But the Lord also speaks of this great gift on the eve of His departure out of this world, and gives His disciples to understand that they would be better off in the possession of the Spirit than they were in having Him corporeally in their midst. While He was here upon earth, He could only be said to be *with* them, but when He should be glorified and the Spirit here He would be *in* them. He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and *I in you*" (John 14. 20).

He could not be given until Christ was glorified, because the new order of relationships and blessings for man were not brought fully to light until redemption was accomplished and Christ set at the right hand of God. The Spirit was not promised in connection

with Adam, either innocent or guilty, but with the new sphere and order of things which lay in the purpose of God before the world was. He is given in connection with the determination of God to head up everything in Christ, and to set up the poor fallen creature on the ground of redemption, and in His own power before His face, in the light of His love revealed in the person of His beloved Son.

Think only of the intimacy with God into which this wonderful gift brings the recipient of it! I need not ask a saint of God if he thinks anything could *exceed* the holy familiarity with the Father and the Son into which we are brought by this unspeakable power, which has taken possession of our bodies on behalf of the Christ of God, but I would ask if anyone thinks such a favour could be *equalled*. The question is asked by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 2: "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?" There can be only one answer to such a question, and the answer is, No man. Had I the spirit of anyone who is listening to me this evening I should know all about him. I should know him as well as he knows himself. There would be none of his thoughts, feelings, or affections hidden from me. Nothing of that man would remain a secret from me. But we have got the Spirit of *God*. What for? That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Could we not know them without the Spirit? No: for they are things the eye has never seen, nor the ear ever heard, nor the imagination ever pictured. But the Spirit knows them. He searches all things, yea the deep things of God. There is nothing hidden from the Spirit, nor is there anything hidden from the one who has received the Spirit. The very babes in Christ are said to have an unction from the Holy One, and to know all things (1 John 2. 20). The depths of God are known to the Spirit,

and we have received Him that we might know these depths.

By Him we become acquainted with the counsels of the Father. By Him we are enabled to enter into the greatness of the revelation God has made of Himself in Christ. By Him we are in the enjoyment of the love of God that was declared in the cross of His Son, for by Him it has been shed abroad in our hearts. By Him we know that we are children of God. By Him we are enabled to address God as our Father. By Him we are able to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. By His power we are made free from the law of sin which works in our members, and by His power we are enabled to produce righteousness. He is also the power for all worship and service. In fact He is the power of all our relationships with God, for He is the power of the life we have from, and in, the risen Christ. How very thankful we should be for such an unspeakable gift! Were we able to communicate our spirit to another person there is not a soul on earth to whom we would give such a gift, for we do not wish people to know us too intimately. We are too evil to wish to be well known. But God desires us to know Him, that all our delight might be in Him; and the better we know Him the more closely do we draw to Him, and the happier we are; but the better we know men in their natural condition the more we recoil from more than a very limited degree of familiarity with them. With Him who knows us best we are most at home, and that we might find our home in His presence He has bestowed upon us this gift of His Holy Spirit.

But if we contemplate for a moment the greatness of the gift He has given *for* us, we shall not be so much surprised at the gift He has given *to* us. To take our place under the judgment due to us on account of sin, He has given His only begotten Son. This is beyond everything else that He has done on our behalf. Nothing greater could He have

done. It is in this that the whole extent of His love toward us has come to light. It is there we learn it. Surely all His dealings with us spring from the great love of His heart toward us. But it is not in His care for us in our pilgrim pathway, not in the mercies that we daily experience, not in His tender grace to us, meeting our every need, and giving us abundant proof that we are ever in His mind, and that He ever does the best thing possible for us; but it is in that cross, and in that cross alone, that we are to learn the greatness of that love that is just as deep and wide and boundless as is the heart from which it springs. It is to that cross, and to it alone, that we shall look back from an eternity of unspeakable happiness, as the one, solitary, unique place where, from the hitherto pent-up fountain of the heart of God, flowed forth in infinite volume that love that chose such worthless things as we for its objects.

What a day it will be for us when we stand in the Father's house in the likeness of the Son of God; when as we look around on that glorious company nothing but Christ shall meet our eye, for, as regards us, the counsels of the Father will all have been fulfilled, and we shall be just that which He purposed we should be before the world was. But not that which shall meet us in that house, not our circumstances there, not the glory in which we shall find ourselves, not the wealth, magnificence, and splendour of that palace of delights will we gaze upon as the mighty witness of the love of God to us, though every bit of it will be designed by the wisdom, and fashioned by the hand of love; but from that circle and sphere of everlasting pleasures we shall cast our minds backward to that lone and cloud-swathed Golgotha, swept with the tempest of devouring wrath, but radiant with love that, as we sometimes sing, no tongue could teach, nor thought be able to reach, for there alone has it had its perfect expression. From the crown of that lonely mount the living light shall fling its deathless rays

throughout the whole vast universe of blessing, waking up everlasting praises to the Father and the Son.

Can we, as we contemplate that love, wonder that He who gave His Son to die our death and save us from our woe, should give His Holy Spirit to us? Surely not. Seeing He has given up to the judgment of the cross His well-beloved, we need not be surprised at anything He may give us after that, for "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8. 32.) In the light of that cross must all His dealings with us be estimated.

But as the gift of His Son was the only thing that could meet our deep need, as sinners, so was the gift of the Spirit the only thing that could meet our need in view of the position given to us in divine counsel, for it is only by that power we can occupy that place. Therefore was the Spirit promised and therefore does the Lord say here that "if ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

The necessity of this great gift for the people of God is witnessed in the fact that in past dispensations all great deeds done in the service of God were done in the power of the Spirit. Then the Spirit came upon men on special occasions, and was not so much viewed as the power by which they enjoyed relationship with God. But in the day that is coming, when Israel is taken up again, the Spirit will be given in connection with the new covenant. "I will put My Spirit within you." Then the Spirit will be the acknowledged source and power of the life and activities of the saint Godward, and indeed manward also.

In Luke 10. we have set before us the contrast between the old and new covenants. The lawyer asks the Lord what he must do to inherit eternal life, and

the Lord refers him to what was written in the law. The man had no sense of his ruined and helpless condition, and it was necessary that he should have; therefore the Lord turns his attention to his responsibilities. The lawyer quotes the two commandments which sum up the whole duty of man to God and to his neighbour, but knowing little about the true nature of the law, and nothing at all about grace, he seeks to justify himself on the ground that no one has ever been able to prove his claim to this neighbourly regard. He says, "Who is my neighbour?" As much as to say, Let him come and prove his claim upon me, and I will pay him in full.

In what has been called the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Lord sets forth the true character of the grace of God in connection with the new covenant. In the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho we get the course of the sinner in his departure from God. Next we have the company into which he drifts. Then we get his condition, stripped naked, wounded, and half dead. Such is the Jew to-day, such will he be when God takes him up again, and such is every soul in rebellion against his Maker. What could the law do for such a man as that? Curse him, that was all. He was a law-breaker. Therefore the representatives of the old covenant pass him by on the other side. They can do nothing for him.

"But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed." Here we have the introduction of a person who was most objectionable to a Jew. But whoever he may be he is the only one who has either the inclination or the ability to do anything for this poor wanderer. "He came where he was." This is Jesus. They said to Him, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (John 8. 48). But this is just the Samaritan in whom the grace of a Saviour-God is to manifest itself. With him it is no question whether that poor miserable creature weltering in his gore by the wayside can establish a claim upon his compassions or not.

The man is in need, the compassions are there, mercy is manifested, and the part of a neighbour is graciously carried out.

He "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine"; oil to make his face shine, and wine to gladden his heart" (Ps. 104. 15). Here the oil and wine prefigure the Holy Spirit shedding the love of God abroad in the heart: the oil representing the Spirit, and the wine the revelation of God to the soul, so that the heart is filled with a gladness that causes the face to shine.

Next we are told "he set him on his own beast." The power that carried the Samaritan is now to carry the subject of his grace. So we are to be carried through this world in the power of Christ. The power in which He passed through this scene is the power by which we are to pass through it, and that power is that of the Holy Spirit of God. He began with us when we were *without strength* (Rom. 5. 6), but He sets us up in His strength, and His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12. 9), therefore the weaker we are in ourselves the better. We get His strength in lieu of our own.

He also brings him to an inn; that is, makes a stranger of him down here. Then he commits him to the host, pays for his keep until the time of his return. Nothing is expected from the subject of grace, nor does he do anything. He ruined himself. That was the sum total of all that he did. The Samaritan took upon himself the whole responsibility of his salvation, and maintenance in every way. He did everything for the poor ruined creature, right from beginning to end. Just what the Lord will do for Israel when He takes up that nation in grace. *He* will sprinkle water upon them. *He* will give them a new heart. *He* will give them His Spirit. *He* will put His laws into their hearts, and write them in their minds. *He* will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will *He* remember no more. We come in for the spirit of all this before the day comes in which He will work in grace for the

recovery of His earthly people. But *He* is the worker.

Another thing: the Lord tells the lawyer that the Samaritan, in his gracious dealings with this poor, wretched creature whom he found fallen and half dead by the wayside, is to be an example to Him. He says, "Go, and do thou likewise." He is no longer to be an exponent of the law, but of grace. He has learned who his neighbour is, and this knowledge is not to be in his soul like a fruitless and withered weed, but his life is to take character from the gracious ways of one from whom he had hitherto expected nothing good. He is to be an exponent of the grace of a Saviour-God.

But if this effect was to be produced it could only be by keeping the Saviour constantly before the mind and heart. Hence in the attitude taken up by Mary we see the attitude that becomes us. The Samaritan was to become the model for the Jew, and the Samaritan is Christ. He is our example. We are to learn of Him. Hence our place is at His feet. We must hearken to His word. Martha was filled with service. She did not understand that Christ had come to serve and not to be served (Matt. 20. 28). Mary understood this, and her choice has the great Servant's commendation. If we are to be exponents of grace we require to listen to the words of grace that proceed out of His mouth, for we are all naturally hard and exacting.

But while it is true that the Samaritan did everything for the poor unfortunate victim of his own miserable folly, and that all brought before us in that connection was the sovereign operations of grace, unsolicited and unexpected, the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke shows us that there is another aspect of the case to be considered. We are, through the operation of grace in our hearts, led to turn to God as those who expect Him to do something for us. He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11. 6).

But from the fall the lips of man were

sealed against God by the fell destroyer of the human race. Men are afflicted with a dumb devil. Even in their miseries the Lord charges His people with refusing to cry to Him when they howled upon their beds (Hosea 7. 14). But where grace works there is always the turning of the heart to God. Paul was sent to open the eyes of the Gentiles, that they might turn to God and receive forgiveness (Acts 26. 18). The Lord says to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life" (John 5. 40). When He takes up Israel again He will pour out upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication (Zech. 12. 10), and He says they "will come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them" (Jer. 31. 9). This is effected by some ray of light of the knowledge of God which reached the heart. This light breaks the seal that the devil has placed upon the lips. The Lord here cast out the dumb devil. Then the dumb spoke, and the people wondered.

Therefore the Lord, at the request of the disciples, teaches them to address God, and not only so, but encourages them to persevere in their supplications. Let the time be seasonable or unseasonable, make your requests. Do not be denied. Do not be put off. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." You may not get the answer at the moment, though you may be perfectly assured that at all times while you are speaking He will hear (Isa. 65. 24). For three whole weeks Daniel chastened himself, and made his supplication to God, but not until the three weeks were finished did he get the answer. Yet the messenger sent to him by God tells him that *from the first day* he had set his heart to understand, and to chasten himself before God, his words were heard, and the answer was despatched, but for twenty-one days it was delayed by the power of the enemy. We need not, therefore, be astonished if we do not receive the answer at once. We should have the utmost confidence in the words of Christ, who tells us that if we ask we

shall receive; that is, as long as it is something which is right and proper for us to have. He says, "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." What encouragement this gives us always to pray and not to faint!

But if God gives in His infinite grace and love, He gives also according to His boundless wisdom. A father gives to his child that which he knows will be for its good, and does not give it merely according to its notion of its own need. But he will not give it evil things. If a son ask bread, the father does not give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, he does not give him a serpent; neither does he give him a scorpion if he ask an egg. Again the allusion is to the old covenant. The stone was the instrument of death in that dispensation; in the serpent we have the virulence of the flesh aroused by the commandment, which also resulted in death; in the scorpion we have set forth the hidden principle of death, which while speaking of life, killed with all the torment of a condemning conscience.

But in the bread, the fish, and the egg we have Christ according to the grace of God set before us. In Him we have the bread of life; the energy of life, as set forth in the fish which goes against the stream, the evil currents of the world; in the egg the source and principle of life, which is the love of God, the foundation of all His activities toward us. But all this is made good to us by the indwelling Spirit of God. Therefore He says that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. He is the One who is able and willing to make all the grace that is in Christ good to our souls.

As I have already said, a greater gift God could not bestow upon us. He dwells in the bodies of His saints. By Him we are sealed until the day of redemption (Eph. 4. 30). He will never leave us. Let us be careful not to grieve Him, but rather let us seek to be always in some measure under His gracious influence.

The Confounding of the Critics.

(J. T. MAWSON)

THE Scripture says that Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in his words and his deeds (Acts 7.). But the "higher critics" discovered 1800 years after that testimony was borne to the learning of Moses that he did not know even how to read or write. They arrived at this conclusion from their own discovery that writing was not invented until long after his day. How they made that discovery we are not told, but it was necessary to their theories to discover it, and so they did. It would have been almost fatal to their theories to have admitted that Moses could write, for had he been able to do so there was a possibility that after all he might have written the books of the Bible that the Bible itself says he did, and the next question of importance that would naturally have presented itself would have been, May not what he wrote have been true? And if true, man must be after all what the New Testament says he is—a fallen creature, a rebel against his Creator, having brought death and judgment upon himself by his own act, and needing, if he is ever to be delivered from his terrible condition and doom, an Almighty Saviour, which Saviour is Jesus.

But the higher critics do not admit any of these things; they believe, or profess to believe, that man is developing from a state of barbarity and ignorance, that he is leaving behind him the weaknesses and errors of the days of his childhood and hasting with rapid steps to the goal of his desire—a creature of full growth and of godlike intelligence and dignity. And as their opinions are almost, if not altogether, infallible in their view, Genesis must go, for it strikes at the very root of this conceit of theirs. The unveracity of his five books must be established, their utter unreliability must be demonstrated, and the easiest, quickest, and most daring way in which this could be done was to prove that Moses did not write them. How could he have done so, for was he

not an ignoramus? In spite of all the wisdom of Egypt, he could neither read nor write.

In the year 1887 some wandering Arabs found a number of tablets at Tel el Amarna, on the banks of the Nile, 180 miles south of Cairo. And this find of theirs has proved to be a most valuable one, and, incidentally, a most disconcerting one to the higher critics. Kyle says of these tablets, which number 320: "The widest diffusion of letters is indicated. All sorts of people are found writing letters: governors and court officials, petty officers, private citizens, ladies and servants . . . and preceding, as they do, the conquest of Caanan by Joshua, show the wonderful literary culture of the period. They were found in a crumbling wooden box, and relate to a time 1400 B.C. After being buried in the sand 3000 years, they were found 27 years ago. They relate to a period previous to the victory over the Canaanites by Joshua; and perhaps more correctly to a time midway between Abraham and Moses."

Colonel Conder says: "These letters are the most important historical records ever found in connection with the Bible."

So that the wisdom of the Egyptians in which Moses was learned included writing after all, for even the servants of that day could write. And the discovery of those wandering Arabs discomfited the critics and gave confirmation to the words of the Lord Jesus, if those words needed confirmation. They do not, for He who spoke them is "The Truth." He said, and because He said it we believe it, even if no tablets had been found to prove its possibility. "If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for HE WROTE of Me. Yes OF ME" (John 5.). How gladly would the devil obliterate all testimony to Jesus, and what easy dupes and ready tools of his were the higher critics who discovered that Moses could not write.

“The Person of the Christ.”—No. 2.

(G. J. STEVART).

The Man Christ Jesus.

“For God is One, and the Mediator between God and man One, (the) Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.”—(1 Timothy 2. 5-6, N.T.)

GOD is One, that is how it reads. A wonderfully blessed truth. The Jew was called out in order to maintain this truth. And the Lord gave emphasis to it when He quoted from Deuteronomy 6. 4: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12. 29). This was for Israel, but to us also “there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him.” That then is the eternal truth which is to be maintained everywhere, and at all times.

But there is something else: *the Mediator between God and men is one.*

Only one Mediator between God and men, One who can arrange matters between God and men. Then by inference He who can do this is both God and Man; for He must be God to know what God’s claims are, to plumb the profound depths of the divine nature, and to measure the greatness of His justice. He could have nothing to say to God unless He were God. No creature dare raise his head and stand up before God in such a matter as this. The One who fulfils this mission is God the Son. Men of the twentieth century are crying out for another Christ, as they did of old, and they will get one. But not God’s Christ. The christ that they will welcome and follow is the antichrist, whose doom they shall share.

The Mediator between God and men must be Man also if He is going to mediate for men. He must be equal with man as with God, not in the condition into which man had fallen, or He would need a mediator on His own behalf, but He must be true Man. The Mediator is not the Messiah of the Jews only, for not the Jews alone are in question now, but the Gentiles also, for when the one God is fully revealed, He is shown to be a Saviour-God, willing that

all should come to the knowledge of the truth. *It is God and men*, and this Mediator must be God on the one hand, and Man on the other. The Mediator is *the Man Christ Jesus*. He is the Son in the Godhead, seated upon the throne of God, and no creature ever sat there. But what joy to us who believe to know that He is Man as truly as He is God. One who came down to taste of death in full judgment, not to insist upon the terrors of the law being driven home to man and man cast into hell, but who came in love to bear his iniquities and be delivered for his offences in order to deliver him from hell. He spent a life of lowliness here in order to instruct men in what God was; invested even here with all the faithful mercies of David. This was seen in that merciful holiness which recognized the claim that the creature had upon a God of love. The leper said, “Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.” He said, Thou hast a claim upon Me, “I will, be thou clean.” And the Syrophenician, when she cried unto Him, was not refused. He recognized the claim of the fallen creature upon a God of infinite love. This was the Man Christ Jesus. But something more was necessary before He could be the Mediator between God and men. What is that? He must be Surety too. You get that worked out in Hebrews. He is not only the Mediator but the Surety of the new Covenant. The Surety is the One upon whom all pains and penalties fall, and so here, “The Man Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all.” As Surety, He paid the full penalty. He gave Himself a ransom. He redeemed us from the power of death. He went down into death and rose again from the dead, the ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Then, are all men saved? No, but the testimony goes out to all men,

and Paul was teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. The Son without diminishing the glory of His person, has taken up true Manhood into indissoluble unity with Himself.

Just another scripture: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood (and here the term is really blood and flesh) He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2. 14). Who was it that took part in blood and flesh? It was the Person described in the previous chapter: *the eternal Logos, the Son of God*. Because the children *inherited* blood and flesh, He also Himself *took part* in it. He did not inherit it. He was born of a woman, but He was that *holy* thing that was born of a woman, and although what He took was blood and flesh and all that it involves, yet it was not in the condition in which we inherit it. Flesh and blood may be in one of three conditions. It may be innocent, sinful, or holy. Adam was created innocent; as fallen he begat a son in his own likeness, sinful. It is this condition that we have all inherited, but the condition in which Christ took blood and flesh upon Him was holy. As the Angel announced to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1. 35, N.T.). Hebrews 2. 17 tells us, "Therefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." When Jesus took upon Him blood and flesh, He took upon Him spirit, soul, and body. Without them He is not perfect Man. But more than that, it was He who was from eternity who did this, for He said, "Lo, I come, a body hast Thou prepared Me," and He took that body. His perfection as Man was an absolute necessity for the accomplishment of God's purpose.

Another expression in chapter 4. 17 is this: "He was tempted in all things like unto His brethren, sin apart." There was no sin in His temptations, but there were temptations for every

part of the man—temptations for the spirit, soul, and body, otherwise He was not tempted in all things as we are. It may be that the term "blood and flesh" is in order to show the reality of His Manhood, to put emphasis upon the fact that by His blood He redeemed His people. In Leviticus 17. 11 it says: "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The *soul* is the seat of responsibility and personality. Isaiah 53. 10-12 also says, "when Thou shalt make His *soul* an offering for sin . . . He shall see of the travail of His *soul*"; and "He . . . poured out His *soul* unto death."

Now *beware of denials!* All truth is denied by the great enemy of God and man; but nothing has been so minutely dissected, and point by point denied, as the doctrine of the Christ. If you deny His Godhead, you have no Christ. The Arians did that. Nor have you any Christ if you deny His Sonship. Nor if you deny His eternal Being as the Logos. Neither if you deny that He had a real body, as the Gnostics did. They said He could not have taken upon Him a material body, because matter is evil; it was only an apparition. The Monophysites said that He had not a true human soul, that the Deity superseded the human soul; He was a man with body and spirit, but the Godhead formed the soul. But it is reserved for our day for some to deny that the Lord Jesus Christ had a true human spirit, saying in effect that the Deity superseded His human spirit. But all these are attacks upon the glory of the Person of Christ, the truth as to whom we must hold inviolate and in its entirety. If you deny His true human body, soul, or spirit, or the impeccability of His human nature, you have no Christ. See how necessary it is to accept and hold to all the truth about the Person of the Christ, not as mere dogma, but as that upon which all our blessing and the glory of God depends.

The doctrine of the Christ is not a simple thing to flesh and blood, though simple to those who have faith. Jesus Christ has come in flesh, the Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, the One divine Person in whom is Godhead and Manhood. One or two scriptures will serve to illustrate. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." Let us not say, "Oh, He was 'not there before.'" That Person was there. "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." The incompre-

hensible mystery of His Person is here. Again, "The bread of God is He which came down from heaven to give life to the world." "Great is the mystery of godliness." The man who wants, by his human intelligence, to discover the how of the matter, is not a man of faith at all. What you learn by intelligence, you don't know by faith; but, "By faith we understand!"

May God grant that our hearts may bow and adore before the glory of the blessed Person of the Christ of God.

The Heart's Desire.

(R. C. W.).

SAVIOUR, the thought of Thy great love to me
Fills my poor heart with songs of joy and praise ;
The thought that Thou, O Lord, didst die for me
Doth make me long to serve Thee all my days.

Yet, Lord, I'm weak, no strength do I possess
Apart from that which Thou canst e'er supply ;
O keep me conscious of my feebleness,
And that on Thee for strength I must rely.

Let all my boast, blest Saviour, be in Thee,
Not in myself—no goodness there doth dwell—
Hold me, O Lord, that I may ever be
Near Thy dear self, then all things must be well.

The world rejects that Name so dear to me,
Yea, Lord, despises all Thy love and grace,
But help me so Thy beauty now to see
That nought in my poor heart may take *Thy* place.

And sweet indeed the thought, O Lord, to me,
That soon I'll leave this scene of toil and strife,
But sweeter far the thought that 'TIS TO THEE
I'LL GO—my Saviour ; Thou my Hope and Life.

Till then, O Saviour, guide my erring feet,
Let Thy blest words alone the pilgrim cheer ;
My hope in Thee, O Lord, let nought defeat,
Lord, I rejoice—Thy Coming draweth near.

Then—not till then—when I am with Thee, Lord,
My grateful praises shall unhindered flow ;
Then, blessèd Jesus—Name e'en now adored—
I'll praise Thy Name as I ne'er can below.

Lord, haste the Day! this ne'er can be my home,
Thou art in Heaven, and, Lord, I would be there ;
Soon Thou wilt take me, then no more to roam,
I'll dwell with Thee, Thine endless glory share.

The Lord's Sovereignty over Death.

HIS sovereignty over death was manifested three times, as well as in His own resurrection. He raised Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus. These three times, so far as we know, were the only occasions in which He ever came in contact with death. Jairus' daughter was just dead, the widow's son was being carried to his grave a few hours after death, Lazarus was dead four days. But these differences were nothing. With equal ease they were all called forth and restored to their old life. Their restoration was in each case out of sympathy for those who bewailed their loss.

Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, rushed out from the house where his little daughter lay at the point of death. He made his appeal and the Master went with him like a servant. Their journey to the house was broken by the woman who touched the hem of His garment and was made whole. And when they reached the house, Jairus' daughter was gone. But He said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." And with tender words He called her from her short slumber. When he saw the widowed mother weeping for her only son, He had compassion on her, and

touched the bier, and said, "Young man, I say to thee, Arise." When He came to the grave of Lazarus, His friend, and saw the two sisters whom He loved deep in grief, and the company of the Jews weeping with them, His heart was moved with trouble at the victory of sin, and in pure sympathy with their tears He wept, and cried, "Lazarus, come forth." His cheeks were wet with the tears of sympathy, while His word was shot into the darkness of the tomb and into the dull, cold ear of death, and he who had been dead came forth in his grave-clothes with shrouded face. As Augustine says remarkably, "He calls him by name, lest He should bring forth all the dead." In each of these cases He completes the miracle. He is not agitated by His triumph. When the young girl is raised, with delicate consideration He commands that something shall be given her to eat. As soon as the dead man sits up and begins to speak, He delivers him to his mother. When He sees the bound feet, and face, and hands of Lazarus, He reminds those who stand by petrified with astonishment, to loose him and let him go. He does all things beautifully well.

O haste the day when Thou
Shalt have Thy rightful place;
When diadems shall deck Thy brow
As King of every race;

When righteousness shall rule,
And plough supplant the sword;
And all men join Thy praise to swell.
"Thy kingdom come, O Lord"!

(E. Whyte).

The Principle of Law and of Grace.

The whole principle of the Law is the will of God presented as CLAIM. But it is impossible that any satisfaction can arise from a claim unless the person liable has power to answer to it. If I make a claim upon a debtor, and he cannot pay, the claim yields no satisfaction either to him or to me. But if I am

disposed to bestow a gift so that the debtor may be able to pay his debts, and have a portion to live on besides, and my debtor is willing to receive it, there is satisfaction on both sides. So the whole principle of GRACE in one word is GIFT.

Studies in the Psalms.—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 73, 74.

THE third book of Psalms has considerable analogy, as already noticed with the third book of the Mosaic Pentateuch. It shows us the very practical blessing of sanctuary instruction, a blessing which the soul gains who seeks God, knowing that He delights to lead those who seek Him into the secrets of His own counsel. The knowledge thus obtained enables the saint to live by faith whereby character and stability are supplied to the walk. We shall see this as we proceed in our study, but the keynote of this instruction is found in the first of our Psalms, verse 17: "I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I."

Asaph, the author of Psalm 50, is the writer, according to the titles of the first eleven Psalms, of Book III. Questions have been raised on this point on account of the difficulty of finding any occasion in the history of David and Solomon, with whom Asaph was contemporary, for such Psalms as 74, 79, 80, 83. It must suffice to say here that they may either have been given prophetically or written by one of his sons (2 Chron. 29. 13; Ezra 3. 10) under his name. Asaph is specially called "the Seer" (2 Chron. 29. 30), so that there should be no difficulty in adopting the former solution, which is moreover confirmed by a similarity in the Asaphic Psalms, which points to a single writer. Regarded thus prophetically a believing remnant from the nation, not merely from Judah, is found, viewed as in the land according to Ezekiel 20. 42-44, Jeremiah 31. 8, etc., and the Spirit through these Psalms and other scriptures is dealing with them in respect of their long history of departure from God.

Psalm 73 begins with the testimony of the Spirit, of which the writer learns the truth in the sanctuary subsequently. "Surely God is good to Israel—to the

pure of heart," for the nation as such is under wrath, while the pure in heart, though chastened, are subjects of grace and know the goodness of God. Following the thesis thus stated we find in verses 2-16 the experience of a believer oppressed by what he sees and knowing neither himself nor God's end (James 5. 11). "It seemed inexplicable to the Jew that the world of life should not reflect perfectly as in a mirror the righteousness of God" (Perowne), and the apparent inconsistency of God's ordering in the world is freely stated. The wicked prosper in this life and have no pangs in their death, consequently their pride is unchecked and God is blasphemed. "They set their mouth in the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth" (verse 9). More trying still, the people of God are deceived and have to drink the cup of God's chastisement (this seems the probable meaning of verse 10). Contemplating this scene in which there appears no witness for God, the writer says: "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped," and again, "In vain have I cleansed my heart and washed my hands in innocence," for the wicked appear better off than himself. The same difficulty is taken up in Psalm 37, and the solution professed is in verse 34: "Wait on Jehovah and keep His way," etc. So in the Book of Job, his friends look for a direct government of God upon earth in a manifest way. Job knows this is not so (21. 7, etc), but cannot explain the anomaly, but says enough to silence his friends, and himself reaps the fruit of his suffering in reaching a true self-judgment. In our Psalm the troubled believer is led into the sanctuary where God is known and His purposes revealed, he sees the end of the wicked and learns that his previous difficulties were from lack of the wisdom he now acquires.

"I was brutish and knew nothing." But there was much more than this to be learned; God was the Preserver and Guide of the righteous who would receive them *subsequently* to the manifestation of Messiah in glory. For this is acknowledged to be the literal rendering of verse 24, though Delitzsch, F. W. Grant, and others give an adverbial rendering—"afterward Thou wilt receive me with glory." A reference to Isaiah 66. 19, 20 and Zechariah 2. 8 give the circumstances in which the saints prophetically referred to in Book III are found. The next verse gives the true and highest lesson of the holy place where God becomes the exclusive object of desire both in heaven and on earth; frail humanity may perish, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion *forever*. All else falls into its proper insignificance. What higher portion can the believer have than the knowledge of the living and true God in His own sphere of life? (Ps. 27. 4; Heb. 10. 19-22). The last two verses contrast the lot of the wicked and the righteous, so the lesson is learned that God is surely good to the pure in heart, and those who thus know Him declare His works.

Psalm 74 shows the desolation of Israel's material sanctuary (ver. 3, etc.), and the question arises, Can the lesson of the previous Psalm be learned when the outward and visible link of the people with God is lost? Surely, for faith never rests on the material but rises to the spiritual behind it. Christendom has in so many ways substituted the natural for the spiritual that God's dispensation which is in *faith* (1 Tim. 1. 4, R.V.) is little realized, and a full and true Christianity, which is a revelation to faith, has lacked a living and united expression. This Psalm thus helps us in the right direction, and applies specially to days when the opposition to the testimony on earth seems triumphant. In verse 9 the state to which the people of God are reduced is described, "We see not *our* sign."

On the contrary, the enemies "have set up their ensigns for signs" (ver. 4), which some have thought to refer to the abomination of desolation in Daniel 12. and Matthew 24., but that sacrilege is connected with the power of the little horn of Daniel 7., while the adversary to which this prophecy refers is almost certainly the little horn of Daniel 8. (see esp. 9-11), who is the leader in a later persecution. Then "there is no more any prophet, neither is there any among us that knoweth how long," none, that is, to so count on God's faithfulness that while intercession flows towards Him He answers in mercy. But this state of ignorance is the immediate occasion of the Spirit's inspiring the question in verse 10, "How long shall the adversary reproach?" and leading the faith of the saints in their hour of distress to count on God in view of what He had proved Himself to be as Israel's "King of old." Faith reasons from what He had then been to what He would be. Thus boldness of petition is acquired, and in verse 18 the covenant Name Jehovah is used, and He is entreated to remember that in persecuting the people and desolating the sanctuary the enemy was blaspheming *His Name*. Hence it is not only a question of conflict between the Jew and the Gentile, but between Jehovah and *His* enemies, the result of which cannot be doubtful. Faith thus rises to the conclusion, a true lesson of the sanctuary, that despite all outward evidences to the contrary, the afflicted saints were "the turtle dove" of Jehovah. Would He leave her to be the prey of the Gentile wild beast? Further, the name Jehovah suggests the pleading before Him of His covenant, not the one with Moses at Sinai, but that referred to in Leviticus 26. 42 with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which comes into effect on the repentance of the people, a repentance evidenced in these very Psalms, the prayers and desires in which we shall find answered in the Psalms which follow (see 75. 2, R.V.).

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 27.

(H. J. VINE).

The Man Child.

A SHORT verse in the last chapter shows how the salvation and the glory of which Isaiah has spoken so eloquently is secured. In verse 7. we read of the "*Man Child*." This must not be confounded with the end of the next verse, which refers to the "*nation*," Zion's "*children*." They are brought forth naturally, at the proper time. In the case of the "*Man Child*" it is extraordinary; it is exceptional, and remarkable. All the hopes of a nation, especially of Israel, according to the promises of God, centre in a Man Child. Israel will be brought as low as it can well be; how then shall God's promises in connection with them be secured? This remarkable "*Man Child*," who comes upon the scene at the very time of Israel's distress, is the answer. Amidst the scenes which shift so swiftly and so suddenly He is seen, in these final verses, as the Centre of all. The mockers and the enemies are overthrown. The small remnant becomes the favoured nation. The Sign of God is set up. All nations and tongues gather to see His glory. All flesh come to Jerusalem to worship before the Lord. A permanent monument of His judgment upon the wicked is witnessed. But the "*Man Child*," the Seed Royal, the Seed of David, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of the Woman, is the Sign of God, and the divine explanation of it all. He is there. And the tiny remnant will be able to say in the language of chapter 8., in the face of all their enemies, "EMMANUEL!" "GOD IS WITH US!"

This "*Man Child*" is spoken of in John 16., in Revelation 12., and in Isaiah 66. That our Lord Jesus Christ is meant is perfectly plain. Speaking "in allegories" to His disciples in John 16. 16-29, of "the little while," He used the illustration of the birth of a Man Child and the consequent joy, to

set forth their joy at *seeing Him in resurrection*, after the time of suffering. In Revelation 12. the Man Child brought forth by the woman (Israel) is to rule all nations; but He is "*caught up*" to God and to His throne. In Isaiah 66. He is seen *back again*, with the remnant of Israel. In these three scriptures we have the three outstanding events, of vast importance, in connection with the One of whom it is said in Isaiah 9. 6, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and *the government shall be upon His shoulder*." First, *His resurrection* after His atoning sufferings on the cross. Second, *His exaltation* to wait at the right hand of God. Third, *His return*, to take up the government of Israel, and of all nations. It is no wonder that Isaiah 9. 6 goes on to say, "And His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace." This is the Man Child, the Strong One who steps suddenly on the scene to secure Israel's exaltation.

He finds the temple, the house, profaned by hypocrites, but He who made the heavens His throne, and the earth His footstool, looks to the afflicted and contrite remnant, who tremble at His word (vers. 1-2); He finds the sacrifices hypocritical and abominable; and He brings calamities upon those who are casting out the real; and to these suffering ones He appears, to their joy (vers. 4-5). When this remnant are in the throes of dire distress, there suddenly sounds "A voice of noise from the city! a voice from the temple! a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to His enemies!" (ver. 6). The Man Child is seen standing in the city; the Messiah of Israel is there; and this involves the birth of a new nation, a nation to be exalted in Him above all nations. It is small indeed at the moment; made up of the faithful,

God-fearing remnant, *the servants* of the Lord at that time; but "a little one shall become a thousand, and the smallest a strong nation" (62. 22); indeed, in their prayer they say to God in all confidence that they, the suffering servants of the Lord, "are *the tribes* of thine inheritance" (63. 17). This is very wonderful, but Scripture shows it to be correct; and the Lord Jesus promised those other servants, who were with Him during the days of His sore trial, when He was here on earth before, that they should "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22. 30).

Some may marvel at such things. Scripture anticipates this. "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?" It is asked, "*Shall a nation be born at once?*" The cry to-day among the nations is, "Wanted a man!" But when the cry of distress rises from the faithful remnant of Israel, *the Man* is there at once! And He is such a Man! In resurrection life He stands with them! Before His ascension He was seen and handled by the disciples. He then said to them, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." He is indeed a real Man. They thought, in their astonishment, they had seen a spirit. But in

flesh and bones He stood before them, His blood having been poured out to secure their redemption. He is Israel's (as well as our) Redeemer, Saviour, and Lord.

It is because of Him, their blessing and that of Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, will be like a new creation. "Rejoice," therefore we read, "rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her!" Peace is extended to her like a full-flowing river, and the glory of the nations is like an overflowing stream. Her children are comforted and abundantly blessed (vers. 8-18). This explains that verse, "all Israel shall be saved." Remembering that "not all are Israel which are of Israel" (Rom. 9. 6), we see here the unreal cut off, but not one of the true seed, the true children, are allowed to perish; they are all saved; and this is the time when it takes place. They are truly Israelites; the national adoption-sonship, the glory, the covenants, the law-giving, the service, and the promises, are all theirs. What an honoured nation, lifted up above all nations; no other nation is so near to God; no other nation is so great and so glorious; but it is in Christ they are exalted; and of them, of Israel, "as according to flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4. 30).

SOME time ago I was taken through a large factory where there were hundreds of looms at work in the spinning of very fine linen thread. . . . The manager of the mill said to me, "So delicate is this machinery that if a single thread out of the whole thirty thousand which at this moment are weaving should break, all of these looms would stop instantly." . . . He stepped up to one of the machines and broke a single thread, and instantly every loom stopped, and remained stationary until the thread

was rejoined, then they went on automatically.

That mechanical wonder can be used as an illustration of "that which is spiritual." It is through one sin, one disobedience, one departure from the clearly seen pathway of the will and the fear of God that I lose the ministry of the Spirit, and not until that thread is rejoined, is it that—automatically, if I dare use the term—the ministry of the Spirit in His illumination, in His satisfying of my heart and mind, by the ministry of Christ is continued.

A Diabolical War. John in Patmos.—XIII.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”—(Rev. 13. 1-3).

An unseen but powerful foe has waged a malignant war for six thousand years. By craft and subtilty, corruption and violence, he has sought to centre upon himself the worship which is due to God alone. His aim was unmasked when he asked Christ to fall down and worship him, in exchange for the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Behind stocks of wood and stone in heathen lands demons are worshipped, but Revelation 13. unravels for us Satan's supreme effort to secure universal worship. This he will accomplish through two “beasts.” The first will be a Gentile world-power with a blasphemous head; the second a Jewish personator of Christ as their Messiah.

John, standing on the sand of the shore, sees with prophetic vision, rising out of the chaotic state of nations, symbolized by the sea, a world-power in which is concentrated all the evil traits of Daniel's four Monarchies (Dan. 2.). Voracious and terror-striking as a lion, gripping its foe with the death hug of a bear, springing upon its prey like a leopard (Rev. 17. 9).

It is none other than the Empire of ancient imperial Rome revived. Portions of this world-power have never ceased to exist as separate kingdoms, but the Empire itself received its death blow when the diadem fell from the head of Romulus in the fourth century. Here it appears in a new form, composed of ten confederate kings, united in a powerful association under an imperial head. Preserving their nationality intact, these kings will govern within their territorial limits, but will act in concert under the guidance and control of a supreme director. The first three verses of Revelation 13. describe the dragon-like

ferocity of the resuscitated empire, whilst verses 4 to 8 narrate the doings of its last imperial head.

To understand the chapter we must keep the empire, and its head, distinct. The empire itself will exist in its new form before the events commence, which are recorded in verses 4 to 8, and which are wholly connected with Daniel's last half-week. From Daniel 7. we learn that it will exist for a time as a ten-kingdom empire. Emerging phoenix-like out of the throes of anarchy and revolution, it will be revived just as it originally came into existence 753 B.C. in a similar state of things. After a time its ten-kingdom form will be displaced by an autocrat, called the “Little horn,” who, by force or fraud, roots out and plucks up three of the ten kingdoms, and is installed as supreme head of the remaining seven confederate powers.

Apparently this is coincident with the expulsion of Satan from heaven. He finds in this “little horn” a fitting tool to carry out his long-cherished design to secure universal homage. It is from this point the beast is characterized by its Satanic origin as “ascending out of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 11. 7). One of his earliest acts will be to make war with God's witnesses, and break the covenant made with the mass of Jews who three and a half years previously had returned to their land in unbelief (Dan. 9. 27).

Let us now trace the steps which lead to the rise of the beast, and its last head. A crisis (similar to that we are now passing through) will result in the setting aside of old dynasties and the unexpected rise of new kingdoms, which will change

the entire map of Europe. This will be accomplished by widespread anarchy among nations galled by the iron rule of military despots. Vast confederacies of men, who are now being permeated with revolutionary ideas by socialistic and democratic leaders, will league themselves together in coalitions and combinations to resist monarchs and rulers. To counteract this, and possibly to preserve the balance of power, some imperial ruler, such as the royal rider of the white horse (Rev. 6. 2), will form a coalition of kings—a United States of Europe. Grasping the reins, at a time of universal unrest, the imperial head of this royal combine will go forth “conquering and to conquer,” and uniting in his person the courage of a warrior with the wisdom of a diplomatist, he will be welcomed as a great deliverer.

From Daniel 7. 24 we learn that the ten kingdoms will be reduced to seven. Apparently this takes place under the fourth trumpet when the “third part” of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened so that “the day shone forth for a third part of it, and the night likewise” (Rev. 8. 12). That which men had looked up to for light and guidance will fail them, and this will be an auspicious moment for the coming into prominence of some ambitious ruler like the “Little horn” (Dan. 7. 8). Having possessed himself of the territory of three kings and gained supreme power over the others, the “beast” or Roman Empire will have a sort of second resurrection in this new head. Men will be dazzled by the unexpected rise of a ruler, whose imposing and powerful armies will carry out his despotic will, and who will put down all antagonistic rivalries, whether commercial, national, or political. By striking universal terror he will compel universal homage. Presumably this occurs at the beginning of Daniel’s last half-week and synchronizes with the fall of Satan from heaven. Henceforth the empire is distinctly Satanic in character. He well knows how power appeals to men, and how their imagination is inflamed by the sudden rise of a

mighty conqueror ; so, in this last head Satan finds a fit instrument to gain universal homage. He will be the dragon’s counterfeit of Christ as “King of kings and Lord of lords.” The world will bow at his feet crying, “Who is like unto the beast?” “Who can make war with him?” He will be a Gentile apostate from Christianity, proclaiming his virulent hatred of God; His name, His tabernacle and His heavenly saints, in his blasphemous utterances. This is all he can do against these heavenly saints. They are out of the reach of his murderous sword. Not so the poor, persecuted, godly remnant of earthly saints. This will be the time of the great tribulation. Enoch-like, the church will be caught away ere this, but Noah-like, there will then be a company of Jews and Gentiles who will pass through the water-floods, feel the weight of his hatred, and endure untold horror at his persecuting hand. Verses 9 and 10 are addressed to them. Their Lord and Master had refused to do homage to the usurper, and had suffered accordingly. These are called to follow in His steps and pursue their sorrowful pathway, even to death itself. Had *He* not met death uncomplainingly at the hands of this very “Beast”? Led as a Lamb to the slaughter He drew not the sword in self-defence. Called to travel the same journey His sympathy would be theirs. Many of the Psalms remind us how fully He has entered into their sorrows. His succour they shall know also providing they do not unsheath the sword in self-defence. If they attempt to avenge themselves the governmental hand of God will be on them. “He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword.” This is their day of sorrow, a sorrow too deep for words. But they are encouraged to hold on in the patience of faith, assured that bitter as their trial will be, it is limited in duration. Forty-two months and their oppressor’s power would be over, and over for ever. What a comfort to them to know that from the world’s foundation their names had been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Had not the

slain Lamb pledged their salvation in His "Blood," and their security in His "Book"! The beast cannot eradicate the name of God's earthly saints from the book of life, any more than the accuser can succeed in getting our names blotted out from the registry of heavenly saints (Heb. 12. 23).

Any attempt to definitely fix the present condition of things as the immediate precursor of the rise of the "beast" may end in disappointment—as such predictions did in Napoleon's day—when a similar condition to the present existed. It is not for us to fix times and seasons. Wars and rumours of wars are not to disquiet us. God holds the reins, and until the time comes the power of Satan is restrained. It is only by permission of God to bring the sin of man to its climax, and as the instrument of God's governmental dealings with the Jewish nation for the crucifixion of Christ, that the "beast" will be allowed to act when the time comes. None of these things in Revelation 13. can actually take place until every Christian is caught up to be with the Lord, and the Holy Ghost has gone with them.

There is still one week unfulfilled of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9. 24-27). The

events of which our chapter speaks occur in the last half-week. These immediately concern the sorrows of a remnant from among the Jews, whom God has pledged Himself to eventually bless under Christ, their true Messiah. We, Christians, shall be deeply interested spectators then; but now, like Abraham, the friend of God, we are the privileged recipients of prophetic communications which do not immediately concern us.

We shall learn more about this "Beast out of the Sea" in chapter 17. Also of the condign punishment meted out to its last head at the personal advent of Christ, when he will be cast *alive* into "a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19. 20). The entire system of which he is head will then come to an end and all of his deluded followers will be slain. They will learn, too late, that Christ the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whom they had impiously dared to meet in armed rebellion, is Almighty in power.

We shall see in the "beast out of the earth" the second person of the Satanic trinity of evil. The one in whom the measure of man's sin is filled up, and Satan's aim accomplished to secure Jewish as well as Gentile worship.

Love's Retreat.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

HERE would I ever be,
Close to His side,
Who in His love for me
Willingly died.

Here would I ever lie,
Down on His breast,
Proving so tenderly
Heaven's own rest.

Here would I ever fall,
Down at His feet,
Gladly to share with all
Love's fond retreat.

Thus shall my spirit have
Calmer repose,

When on life's stormy wave,
Or amid foes.

Till my glad lip shall wake
Heavenly song,
And the bright morn shall break
Cloudless and long.

Then, Lord, my theme shall be
Only Thy love,
And in Thy Father's house,
Heaven above,

I shall Thy beauty trace,
Vision sublime,
There see Thy wealth of grace,
Glory divine.

The Meaning of "In Christ."

(JAMES GREEN).

THE preposition "in" as used by the Apostle Paul generally speaking conveys the thought of a position conferred; while the Apostle John uses the same word to set forth a communion suited to that position; and the Apostles Peter and Jude imply by it the character of life produced by these things. The words "In Christ" speak of the state or position in which the Christian is seen before God, which position he is supposed to be enjoying and his manner of life corresponding thereto. It is the opposite of his former standing "In Adam." In 2 Corinthians 12. Paul says he will boast of what he was as "a man in Christ," but of himself such as he was as a man here, the Paul that men saw day by day, he would not glory. It was apart from his natural condition of flesh and blood. But in saying this let it not be thought that that of which he boasted existed only in his imagination, and had no foundation in actual fact, but that it was of a character which the natural senses could take no cognisance of. It could not be seen, touched or demonstrated, but nevertheless was a reality in the sight of God, made known by the Spirit, received by faith, and rested upon the unchangeable fact that Christ is a man in the glory of God;—yet ever abiding God over all.

Let us consider first, then, what is conveyed by the words "In Adam" that the dark background of this may throw into relief the wondrous light of the expression "In Christ." We are told in 1 Corinthians 15. 22 that in Adam all die; death and after this the judgment is the common lot of all his race, a portion which is amply justified by the fact that all have sinned, and that in every way in which God has dealt with man on the ground of his responsibility failure has resulted. In the innocence of Paradise, he was disobedient. Left to himself before the flood, every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. As soon as the law was given he was a breaker of

it, taking advantage of the mercy of God to give effect to his own will; and to crown all, rejecting the grace of God in the person of His Son. This was the final proof that men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. To have to say to God on the ground of such a standing can have the only consequence of banishment from His presence for ever. Therefore if God is to carry out His purposes of blessing for man, He must bring to pass a new standing for him, for it is quite impossible for God to view with favour a race which had borne such fruit and shown itself irreclaimable by crucifying the Lord of glory. This closed the last hope, and the Lord's own lips pronounced the sentence, "Now is the judgment of this world."

But now begins God's gracious work; Christ offers Himself a sacrifice for sin, and lays down His life in so doing, thereby ending the standing of man in flesh before God. God has no more to say to man on that ground. One dies for all, and in consequence all are dead. Then the operation of God comes in, and Christ is raised from the dead, in a life which has nothing to say to sin, or to the responsibility of man in flesh, but is an altogether new condition of living. In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, and in that risen life becomes the head of a new race after His own order. Before Christ died and rose again there could be no such thing as being "In Christ"; but now He has taken His place in resurrection as the last Adam, and those who by faith and the Spirit are associated with Him derive all that belongs to Him in the position He occupies as a risen man before God. They have eternal life in Him, because He lives, they live also; for them there is now no condemnation, for there is none for Him; Christ is their acceptance, in the favour that belongs to Him, the Beloved; holy and without blame are they before God in love, as He is; they

have in Him the adoption of sons, and a place in those eternal counsels that concern Himself; and when He who is their life shall appear they also shall appear with Him in glory.

The words "In Christ" convey more than the truth of association with Christ or that He is the representative of His people as their High Priest; they involve indeed the fact of union with Him. The believer treads the wilderness path conscious of weakness and failure, but with the inestimable privilege of knowing that apart from all he is in the body, he is a man in Christ. For him there is a new creation; the old things that once occupied him, as he thought of his old standing as a man in flesh, are passed away, the new things connected with Christ in glory fill his soul with wonder and praise. The most

intimate earthly relationships and distinctions, even those which belonged to Christ after the flesh, have no place in that order, which is entirely new. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision give position there, but Christ is everything; and apart from the first creation and all the powers of dissolution inherent in it, the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord abides, and nothing can separate from it.

Let it not be thought that these things are only visionary and that the man who enjoys them will henceforth be unpractical in daily life, or unmindful of the relationships which belong to the bodily condition he has not yet laid down. On the contrary, where the heart is thus engaged the most powerful motive will be produced for true holiness of walk in every relationship which is of God here.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Ten Kingdoms.

H.C.—We believe that to attempt to define the geographical bounds of the ten kingdoms of the to-be-revived Roman Empire is mere speculation, as also is the attempt to say which these kingdoms will be. The widespread revolution and anarchy which will break out with unrestrained fury after the translation of the church to heaven will have little regard for geographical boundaries; and it will be out of this confusion that the ten kingdoms will emerge; the heads of them "which have received no kingdom as yet, receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev. 17. 12). It seems unlikely from that statement that any of them will be heads of present-reigning dynasties.

It must be remembered that the things recorded in the Word are there for our spiritual profit, and no spiritual profit, as far as we can see, could come from being able correctly to define these kingdoms. We must look for the moral significance of them, discern the spiritual forces that are behind them, and gain our profit along that line.

The number ten is significant, it sets forth, we believe, the powers of men fully developed and brought into exercise. There were ten Commandments given—all the powers of men were to be under the control of the will of God. This was man's responsibility. The ten-stringed instruments of praise are often spoken of in the Psalms; they symbolize man praising God with all his powers—every finger engaged.

Here we have a mighty Empire of ten kingdoms, and in it will be seen all the powers of sinful men brought into activity under the inspiration of Satan, united for the accomplishment of their own will. In that Empire men will consummate their schemes, and bring to its climax their wisdom for the administration of the world for their own glory and the exclusion of God. But when that mighty Empire shall have reached the zenith of its power, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2. 4); and it shall be utterly destroyed in "the wine-press

of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"; and so make way for that kingdom, not formed by the hands of men, for so Daniel 2. 45 describes it, over which THE KING shall rule in righteousness.

Now the wisdom and powers of men are already working out their end—"the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. 2. 7). Every world-movement from militarism at the one extreme to socialism at the other is advancing towards this common goal. And it is, as we see what the end of it all will be—

The Beast and the Antichrist.

H.C.—We do not believe that any person who is prominent in the present war is either the Beast or Antichrist, for these two will not be revealed until after the coming of the Lord to take His church to Himself in heaven. It is quite possible that those who are to play these sinister parts are alive to-day, for the coming of the Lord cannot, we believe, be long delayed, but to attempt to identify them would be sheer folly.

These two personages will be the heads of two systems of evil energized by Satan in his dual character as prince and god of this world, and with Satan—the dragon, they will form a trinity of evil that will be absolutely anti-God. Woe to all who belong to their kingdom!

The Beast will not be the head of one of the great powers of Europe, as we now know them, nor the head of one of the ten kingdoms as they shall then be, for he is spoken of as a *little* horn, in Daniel 7. 8, coming up after the ten horns are already there. We do not believe that he will be a prince of any of the reigning dynasties, for the mighty system he that will rule by the power of Satan is represented as coming up out of the sea (Rev. 13.), i.e. out of a state of confusion and strife—a continent-wide revolution, after the fashion of the French, which threw up Napoleon, who in a limited way seems

how it will all come under the unsparing judgment of God, that we shall be careful to be separate in heart and hopes from what emanates from the will of man, and identify ourselves practically in the faith of our souls with that kingdom which cannot be moved, to which kingdom we belong. We do not desire to link our fortunes and waste our time upon that which is to be irretrievably destroyed, but with that which shall abide for ever. To help us in this the Revelation has been given to us.

to have been a foreshadowing of this Beast.

The Antichrist, who is the second Beast of Revelation 13. and the false prophet of chapters 16. and 19., evidently appears after the first beast has risen to power, and forced his will upon the ten kings, three of whom he will destroy, and changed the state of anarchy into an ordered government. He is spoken of as coming up out of the earth—that which has a measure of stability—terra-firma, in contrast to the sea.

He comes up in appearance as a lamb, that, we take it, means that he will make people believe that he is Christ, and this must refer specially to the Jews gathered in Judea; but he speaks like a dragon, his power and decrees are Satanic. He will be a Jew who has utterly abandoned the God of his fathers, and will have the seat of his power in Judea, for it is probable that the end of Daniel 11. refers to him.

These two men and their systems have so much in common that it is not always easy to know to which to apply the Scriptures that speak of them; the great thing for us is to discern the evil principles that will govern them, which principles are already at work (2 Thess.), and shun them in holy separation to the Lord.

When will Satan be Cast out of Heaven ?

H.D.—To understand the Revelation it is necessary to see that it divides at the beginning of chapters 4. Chapter 2. and 3. give us "the things that are," from chapter 4. onwards "the things which shall be hereafter," or "after these things" (Chap. 1. 19). The things that are have reference to the history of the assemblies on earth which has not yet been closed. It will be closed when the church is caught up

to heaven at the Lord's coming for her, according to His promise (Chap. 3. 10, 11). Then will commence the things that shall be after these things, and to see these John was caught up in spirit, and he saw things from heaven, where the church will then be. This being so, it is evident that the devil is cast out of heaven (Chap. 12.) after the church has been taken out of the earth.

Is War ever Justifiable ?

N.T. and E.A.H.—It is needless to say that no Christian can rejoice in or willingly take part in warfare, for it is entirely contrary to the spirit of Christianity. The Christian who acts according to the spirit of his calling is more inclined to suffer himself to be defrauded than to enforce his rights (Cor. 6.); he loves his enemies, and prays for those who spitefully use him. But nations cannot be governed on this line, for government means not grace, but justice for all, and punishment for those who offend, and in the present state of men and nations justice can only be enforced by power.

The magistrate is spoken of in the Word in this connection as a minister of God for the good of men. We read "he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13. 4). The thief must be punished, and the murderer hanged. It is a question of simple justice between man and man, and God's ordering in the world in His mercy towards men. In like manner nations must maintain just dealings one with another; and if treaties are made they must be respected, and the nation that violates them, and for its own aggrandisement makes war, is nothing more than a thief and murderer in a terribly exaggerated sense, and it becomes necessary for the peace of the nations to punish and restrain the aggressor. To unsheath the sword is the only way in which this can be done, when moral suasion has

failed. And since the governments of the world have always to consider such a contingency as this, armies are an unhappy necessity.

Righteousness exalteth a nation, and the Christian who pays taxes for the upkeep of an army should pray that it might never be used in any unrighteous cause. But this righteousness can only be as between man and man; as to how a nation, or the individuals who compose it, stands in relation to God is another question.

As to whether a Christian should voluntarily take up arms, each must for himself turn to the Word for direction as to his path, and be, not only a hearer of it, but a doer.

He has to remember that he is not of this world; that his citizenship is in heaven, and that he is left here as an ambassador for Christ, to further His interests and maintain the honour of His Name. In every sphere in which he can do this let him be diligent. The Lord went about doing good. He fed the hungry, and comforted the sorrowing, and laboured for the blessing of all, and the disciple must follow his Master. Everywhere there are needs, and the needs of the soul are more acute and pressing, to those who see things aright, than the needs of the body and this life. The latter must not be neglected, the Christian should be the first to think of them, but the former are of paramount importance, and the gospel of God concerning Christ, risen from the dead, alone can meet the needs of the soul.

The Shadow of His Wings.

An Address given at Workington by Dr. Sa'eed, of Persia.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him."—(Deut. 32. 11-12).

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—(Matt. 23. 37-39).

HERE are two pictures from nature: the eagle, and the hen and her chickens. They are given as examples by God to show His care for His people. We have a hymn which says: "Can a mother's tender care cease toward the child she bare?" Isaiah tells us that this *is* possible, but God will never forget His people. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever." (Ps. 125. 2). "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem" (Isa. 31.). There are, I am sure, many mothers here—they know a mother's feelings towards her little one, and a mother's love is the strongest and most devoted thing in nature. Mothers, it is possible for you to forget, but the Lord tells us that He cannot. How wonderful and everlasting is His love!

In Deuteronomy 32. 15 it says: "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked"—the people of God often get like that; times are easy, and they settle down and get too lazy to go about and work for the Lord. Then God acts towards them as the mother eagle does to her young, when she thinks they ought to be learning to fly. The little ones are resting there on a soft nest, but it is time they left the ease of the nest and rose up on eagle's wings, and she comes and takes away the feathers so as to make the nest uncomfortable, and then they will not like to stay in it. So God did for Israel, so he does for His people now. Then, if the little ones still stick in their nest, the mother goes to a rock and calls them to come to her. The little ones come to the edge of the rock, there is a precipice; they are frightened, but they have feathers and wings, and

the mother wants them to fly. How often we make nests here, but the Lord says: "This is not your rest, it is polluted." Still we cling to the nest, forgetting the high calling of our Lord Jesus. The Son of God has gone on high, and in energy of soul we should reach out after Him where He has gone, and not settle down in this earth, especially when we know that He was despised and rejected here, that He had nowhere to lay His head.

Then the mother eagle gets some thorns and puts them into the nest, so as to make it painful for the little ones. Who has not felt the prick of the thorns that God sends when we begin to think more of the earth than of our heavenly home, and when we do not wish to do His will? He puts thorns in our nest, He sends us days of trouble, for He will not allow us to be satisfied with this world, nor to be too comfortable down here. If we make our rest here, if we cling to our nest, then be sure the Lord is too faithful to leave us alone. He has something better for us; for as the eagle wants its young ones to soar away into the glorious sunshine, so God wants us to rise up out of the narrow and misty environment of earthly things into the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

A young Christian once said to me, "How tiresome is my life. Would to God I knew what is the object of keeping me here. I would like to finish the job and go Home." But God *has* an object in leaving each one of us here. And it is well when we find out what that object is.

We are like a piece of marble rock; the hammer falls upon it, blow upon

blow, and breaks off a piece here and a piece there, but under the hand of the sculptor there is soon produced a beautiful work of art.

It is painful work, I know, but it will be well worth while. Let us realize His purpose, and all will be well and our hearts at rest.

Why are you here? Be sure it is for some reason and some purpose. Do not slumber. Why waste the little time—the precious days and hours? Every service that is not of Christ is useless. Do we *use* rightly the time He has given us? How often we waste and abuse the time the Holy Spirit has put at our disposal. Indeed, we need not wonder that He puts thorns in our way sometimes.

The mother eagle at last, when other means have failed, throws her strong wings against the little ones, and knocks them out of the nest. Will she let them fall? No, not she: “she stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.” She flies under them, and catches them on her wings. Have *you* not felt the strong wings to bear you up? “*Underneath* are the everlasting arms.” God has anticipated the danger and has made full provision for it.

As soon as they have learnt to fly, she teaches them to catch prey for themselves; and so we must not only eat what is provided for us, but we must hunt for food for ourselves, and be no longer fledglings dependent upon others.

Our blessed Lord wept over Jerusalem. He desired to help that poor rebellious people—to gather them as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not go to Him.

These are times of danger; and He calls us to be near Him. Do we respond? Do we run for shelter under the shadow of His wings? Can we say, “My soul trusteth in Thee; yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my *refuge*”? (Ps. 57. 1). It is a sweet retreat. Over

and over again have I proved it for myself—what grace and goodness have I found there! What a shelter in the storm! What safety in time of trouble! I wish you too could prove it for yourself. In danger, the mother bird calls her little ones; but sometimes they are occupied with other things and will not heed. Then the bird of prey swoops down and snatches one of them away. How often “the shadow of His wings” is mentioned in the Psalms. May we get under those wings and hide there. If only we would try Him, what joy, happiness, sweetness, and rest we should find. “In the shadow of Thy wings will I *rejoice*.”

Twenty-five years ago it was quite a unique thing for a Mohammedan to become a Christian. I was converted to Christ then, and I settled in my mind that, being a Christian myself, I could *only* marry a Christian. I felt it was the right step. Next day the whole town was in a turmoil—the shops were shut, the bazaars closed. Placards were put up saying I was guilty of death, not only because I was an apostate myself, but because I had married a Christian. On the day of my marriage I had my wedding-cake from the Lord. If you look at Psalm 91. 1-4 you will see what it was: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.” When I read that verse and hid myself under His wings I was at rest. *There* I did not feel the trouble. How happy it is to trust in God.

You remember the beautiful story of Ruth in the Old Testament, who cast in her lot with poor old Naomi, who trusted in God. She chose Naomi’s God for hers, though she saw nothing but a path of poverty and hardship as a result. Ruth’s faith was bright, and she was too sensible and sensitive to choose the wrong path—she chose to go with that poor old woman who walked with God. Her confidence was in the Lord—under whose wings she came to trust (Ruth 2. 12). What a

place of rest and blessing she found there! Read the book and see. The most dignified place in Moab would be poor in comparison. But there are some who profess to follow the Lord who love to go on with the world that hates Him; they like to go to beautiful concerts and to worldly parties and amusements; but this is the wrong path for the Christian; it is not honourable to Christ for Christians to do so. If, on the contrary, we seek to do what would be pleasing to Christ, we are rewarded by His gracious saying: "Him that honoureth me, I will honour."

Give up your parties and concerts and pleasures, and take a lesson from Ruth and her choice. Give them all up for Christ's sake, and, I can tell you, you will be at no loss. Who ever gave up anything for God, and He remained debtor to such an one?

In Psalm 36. 5 it says: "Thy *mercy*, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy *faithfulness* reacheth unto the clouds." Ah! how dear are His mercy and faithfulness to my heart! Then follows that exquisite passage, which has brought untold comfort to me, and many another: "How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings." The shadow of those wings has been the retreat of His people for generations.

Now turn to Psalm 63. and read verses 1-7: "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." In the first verse it says: "My flesh *longeth* for Thee." The Hebrew word for "*longeth*" means "to grow pale"—with anxious longing.

There is a fabulous bird in the East, and the belief is that if the shadow of its wings comes over anyone, the king will honour that person. I told you in a former address (see October issue) about the shepherd whom the king greatly honoured by making him prime minister. The king was out riding one day with a train of all his courtiers, when suddenly the fabulous bird was seen to fly past at a short distance. All the nobles ran to

try and get into its shadow except one, and that one was the shepherd-minister. The king asked him, "Why do you not go with the others?" The shepherd replied, "Why should I leave the shadow of the king to follow a fabulous bird?" If we only knew what joy and refreshment there is under the shadow of Christ's wings we should never want to leave it. Never mind what others around us are running after—"What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Don't leave Christ, whatever happens—always cleave to Him. All else are shams and fables; they are vanity, and the pursuit of them yields only vexation of spirit.

Here is another story about that same shepherd. The king was on a journey, and had many camels with him, bearing burdens. On the way the path lay between two rocks standing very close to each other; consequently the camel with its burden could not get through, and the burden was crushed and smashed, and out fell a quantity of jewels. The king said that any one who picked them up might keep them. All the nobles rushed to get what they could of the treasures, except Ayaz, the ex-shepherd. The king expressed astonishment at his not going with the rest, and asked him why. He replied, "I do not like giving up service for jewels. I care nothing for them so long as I can be with you and serve you."

Oh! do let us be faithful to *our King*—our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ—let us be content with His smile and His approval. If we have the King, we have everything. If we have the King, what do we want with the jewels or with anything else that the world offers? And if we have no king, what is the good of jewels? No, we don't want the jewels—we want Him. He calls us. Let us go to Him for rest and food, let us seek the shadow of His wings at all times—so shall we be safe when danger comes. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders."

“Watchman, what of the Night?”

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE MORNING COMETH! Yes, those whose trust is in God and whose hope is Christ may lift up their heads and rejoice, for as surely as the Word has spoken of the morning, so surely shall it come, **IT COMETH.** The music of its advancing feet already vibrates in the hearts of the watchers, and the furious clamour of the darkness, preparing for one desperate, one last, supreme resistance, is only added evidence to those who believe that it must yield up its almost impregnable fortress in this earth, and fly before the victorious march of the coming day.

This is a hope that maketh not ashamed, though those who live in the power of it do not walk by sight but by faith. And it is this hope, made true to the heart by faith, that will alone keep the Christian from despondency; it will be his sure and steadfast anchor in the storm, and make him sing in the present gloom.

But this hope does not rest in anything that men can achieve. The Spirit-taught Christian knows that nothing but evil, and that continually, can come forth from men; he also knows that behind poor blinded man the powers of darkness are at work in the endeavour to accomplish their foul schemes. It is not to the success of the Allies that he looks for the dawning of the day and perpetual peace; even though an Archbishop declares that, by the triumph of their arms, the forces of righteousness will be advanced in the earth and the Lord's kingdom come. Whether they are triumphant or beaten, whether the conflict comes to a speedy end or is indefinitely prolonged, will make no difference to this one great declaration of God: the Morning cometh. It is not by the military prowess of one nation, or the peace proposals of another, nor by the triumph of this philosophy or that philanthropy, that the morning shall be ushered in, but **BY THE UPRISING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—**

THE PERSONAL RETURN TO EARTH OF THE ONCE-REJECTED AND CRUCIFIED LORD JESUS CHRIST. “He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds; as tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” “The Lord will make bare His arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

Before this can come to pass the Lord must first come into the air to catch away to Himself His church, His heavenly bride, and all those who have died in faith since the fall in Eden, as is plainly told in 1 Thessalonians 4. 15-18. But this glorious event may take place at any moment, it is the immediate hope of the church—the dawning of the morning for them which shall open out into the reign of righteousness on earth, and finally into the day of God's rest in a new heaven and earth.

“Our hearts beat high,
The dawn is nigh,
That ends our pilgrim story,
In His appointed glory.”

THE DARKNESS DEEPENS. It must do so, for the darkest hour is always that which precedes the dawn. One of the greatest living statesmen has said, “We live in times when the whole world is either standing in arms, or is standing in expectation of what next is to come to the human race in the way of some great calamity.” That expectation of which he spoke might well deepen into the gravest apprehension, for the signs are many that those hitherto unknown calamities that the Exile in Patmos saw in Apocalyptic Vision are hastening to overwhelm this rebel world.

GREAT CHANGES MUST COME. The entrance of the Turk into the conflict is portentous, for if we rightly read the Prophetic Word, that once proud and

vicious empire must fall, and the northern portion at least of its dominion must come under the rule of the King of the North (Russia), and this would seem to be the probable result of its present folly. It must cease to hold the Holy Land also, for this must come into the hands of the Jews. They will take possession of it in unbelief, and there pass through such a furnace of persecution as has not been witnessed since the world began.

The armies of the kings of the whole habitable world will be attracted to that land as by a mighty magnet, driven there also, by the spirits of demons (Rev. 16.), in high rebellion against God, and there shall they perish in the great ARMAGEDDON; for there shall the King of kings tread "the wine press of the fierceness of Almighty God," until the blood flows even to the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, or two hundred miles, the entire length of the land (Rev. 14. 20).

The absence of a great military genius in the present war will tend to its prolongation, which will weaken all the nations engaged in it, and especially the Governments of them, and so make the way easy for that terrible anarchy that shall prevail over Europe and beyond its bounds, in comparison with which the French Revolution will appear like a nursery game. It will be through a terrible travail of that kind, that highly favoured, but then apostate, Christendom will bring to birth the Beast, to whom Satan will delegate his power (Rev. 13.).

But those birth throes will be but the beginning of sorrows, overwhelming woes shall follow them: the death pangs of all the hopes that man will place in the Beast and his false prophet—those two devil-inspired monsters of iniquity—the perfect supermen, who will attempt to blot the name of God from the earth and exalt themselves to His throne, and marshal their hosts of fighting men to keep the Lamb out of His inheritance. Unspeakably solemn for the

men of Christendom are the words of 2 Thessalonians 2. 8-12 in this connection.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Truly the night cometh, the devastating blackness of which shall be unrelieved by a single star for those who "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We do not assert that these terrible happenings will immediately follow upon this war, but that the way for them is being prepared by it, and if a breathing space is given, it will only be a time of preparation for the final cataclysm.

But before that night of unparalleled wrath sweeps over a grace-rejecting world, the believer will be in the glory of his Lord, for he has "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, whom He raised from the dead, our Deliverer from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 9-10). To Him the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and in answer to their cry He will come; and He may come at any moment, first to claim His own, and then to establish righteousness in the earth, and

"Bid the whole creation smile
And hush its groan."

Thank God, the morning cometh!

In considering the present condition of things in the world and their outcome, men and their achievements are apt to loom too large in our eyes, for

we are men, and far too little place be given to the spirit forces that work behind the scenes.

The fact is that everything that men do that is eternally good and enduring is done under the constraint and the power of God the Holy Ghost, and everything that is done in disobedience to God is provoked and energized by the powers of evil. Nothing can be clearer than this in Scripture. Take such a passage as Ephesians 2. 1, 2: "You were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Satan is the prince of the power of the air, and he is behind man's disobedience to God; he is the subtle schemer and they are but his puppets; and men are willing to carry out his schemes, for their hearts are at enmity against God.

Now Satan has legions of spirit beings at his command: Ephesians 6. 12 speaks of them: "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, wicked spirits in the heavenly places" (margin). These find an outlet for their diabolical energies, and express their evil character in the great movements of the world—political, social, economical, military, and religious; they are very plausible but most deceptive, and their real object is the forcing of God out of the world and the final destruction of men. And men are carried on the tide of these movements, believing, the while, that they have originated them, and that the outcome of them will be the final glory of man.

When we come to the Revelation these spirit forces come into clearer manifestation, for there is unfolded for us the great final struggle between good and evil, God and the devil; this earth and mankind being the battlefield. In the chapters that refer to this present time we find "Satan's seat," "Satan's dwelling" (2. 13), "Satan's

depths" (2. 24), "Satan's synagogue" (3. 9). He has a form of government by which he controls men, "the power of darkness" (Col. 1.), designed in imitation of God's, and as perfect and strong as his wisdom and power can make it.

As the book unfolds, his activities come more into evidence, but there is not a work of mercy among them, all are utterly evil; he is a deceiver and a murderer from the beginning—"the dragon, that old serpent, the devil, and Satan" (Rev. 20. 2)—and his angels, from the most exalted prince to the meanest demon, are all like him. The awful world-wide misery and devastation, and the terrible torments inflicted upon men, that the Revelation predicts, prior to the revelation of the wrath of God against them, is the devil's work and not God's; much of it may be perpetrated by men upon each other, but his is the plan and the energy behind it all. He is the great destroyer, and but for the restraining power of Almighty God in His long-suffering with men, he would long ago have brought about universal physical, as well as moral, chaos. When the day of grace is over and the church has gone from earth, God will remove the restraint, and the devil will be permitted to do his will, that it may be demonstrated to the universe how terrible a choice man made when he turned from God and His goodness; in which choice, alas, he has persisted, refusing to be reconciled to Him.

These powers of darkness under the devil's control are not idle now; they are growing bolder as the churches' pilgrimage on earth is drawing to its close. In every direction their work is evident; it is seen in the growing apostasy, the boldness with which men are denying the truth of God and casting aside the Bible, for *they hate God* and would rob men of His truth; it is seen in the awful carnage on the battlefield, for *they do not love men* and would destroy them utterly.

How the devil must have laughed of late, as many who stood in the place of ministers of God, and ought to have known better, exulted in the progress of civilization, and the spread of culture, and the march of science and of universal brotherhood, and the solidarity of the race; and who saw visions, and prophesied of the kingdom of the Lord along that attractive road! What now? Their visions were a baseless fabric; and their gorgeous hopes are blasted, and as completely destroyed as any Belgian fort battered and broken by German shells. The whole resources of the civilization in which they hoped, and the latest devices of science in which they boasted, are being eagerly used for the destruction of men by each other; and the most progressive nations on earth, who, according to them, were to carry the kingdom of God, mainly through Higher Criticism, to races less favoured, are pouring forth their hatred of each other from the cannon's mouth. And if the bewildering wickedness of it all is relieved by any kindness, manifested in the way of care for the souls and the bodies of men, it is because true Christianity is still in the world. How awful will things be when this is gone!

Different degrees of guilt in this matter there undoubtedly are, and we are sure that some, at least, of the belligerents had no desire for the fight, and bear no great enmity against those they are fighting. Nevertheless, proof enough is given in earth, and air, and sea, that the kingdoms of this world are not yet His who came to save men's lives, but that the Word is true which says, "the whole world lieth in wickedness (or, the wicked one)" (1 John 5. 19). The devil is its "prince" (John 12. 31), and its "god" (2 Cor. 4. 4).

OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN (Phil. 3. 20). And we are not of this world (John 17. 16). These are truths which are often stated, but how little understood by those of whom they are stated; and how few there are who take them up wholly in the simplicity of faith

and live according to them. Yet they lie at the very basis of all Christian testimony in the world, and no Christian is an intelligent and true witness for Christ who is not, in some measure at least, acting upon them. The instincts that belong to the new life within the child of God answers to these great truths, and he shrinks from the world and its evil, and longs to breathe more fully the air of his home-land,—unless beguiled by that cunning craftiness of the devil's teaching, so largely adopted by Christendom, that Christianity is only one of the world-forces set in motion for the progress of humanity. The fact is that identification with the world's ambitious schemes, as well as complicity in its evil, is a practical denial of the Christian position. "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" How a thousand difficulties disappear in the presence of such words, spoken by the One who has set Himself apart in heaven for our sakes! And how clear and straight a path through this world shines before us in them!

"We are but strangers here,
Within a foreign land,
Our home is far away
Upon a golden strand.
Ambassadors are we
For Christ beyond the sea.

We're here on business for THE KING."

"Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3. 20, 21.)

The Christian's place is that of an intercessor before God for those in sorrow and for all men, and the more truly his "not of the world" character and heavenly calling is understood by him, the better he will be able to intercede. We must not be disinterested, much less indifferent spectators of what is going on in the world; its woes and wickedness should cause us grief of heart, and deeply exercise us before God and drive us to Him in prayer that strife

may cease and the gospel of peace prosper. But if we become absorbed with our surroundings, or carried away by national feeling, or by human passions, we are so far unfitted to fill our high and holy place before God on behalf of men.

The following lines seem to rightly express the course in which our feelings and prayers with regard to present events should flow, and so we give our readers the benefit of them.

Father, infinite, eternal,
Without whom no sparrow falls,
Where the roar of war infernal
Shakes creation, roof and walls,

Look upon Thy children's sorrows,
Succour when to Thee they cry ;
And amid the battle horrors
Be to them a fortress high.

Captain of our great salvation,
Overshadow all Thine own ;
In their toil and tribulation,
Leave, O, leave them not alone.

Stop the march of the aggressor,
Check the ruthless foe's career,
Break the power of the oppressor,
Keep the tyrant far from here.

We have sinned—with desperate daring,
Thy most holy Word profaned ;
Unbelief, with boastful bearing,
Has on faith confusion rained.

We have heard Thy people crying
Unto us for food and light ;
We have seen the sinner dying
In the darkness of the night.

At the sceptic's vain caprices
We have heard Thy truth denied ;
We have seen it torn in picces,
Him blasphemed who for us died.

Yet have we not rent our clothing,
Yet have we not humbled been ;
Yet have we not turned with loathing
From those blasphemies unclean.

Therefore has Thy rod been lifted,
Therefore has this chastening come ;
And to see where we have drifted
Strikes us with amazement dumb.

But Thy clemency is boundless,
And Thy heart compassionate,
Thy deep love is shoreless, soundless,
Thy forgiveness, Saviour, great.

Hence to Thee we venture, owning
In Thy sight our sin and shame—
Hear our penitential groaning,
For our Saviour's sake and name.

Bring to war a termination ;
Let the issue be for peace
To Thy people and creation,
To Thy Gospel great increase.

(*J. Boyd*).

The Patience of God.

'**T**HE believer longs for rest from all that now offends, but God leaves him here to learn many lessons. The world, constituted as it is at present, is a means by which God teaches us what we could not learn in a world of glory.

"It is here the believer is instructed in the long-suffering patience of God. His wants, his weakness, his barrenness, his deadness—display most touchingly the wonderful patience of God.

"Here, too, he learns the astonishing

proof of God's love in Christ, giving Him for such sinners, that they may be pardoned, and freed; learning what God is in the person of Jesus Christ His Son—through the circumstances in which they are placed.

"Notwithstanding all our weakness, shortcomings and misdeeds, there is no feeling of hostility in God's mind towards us. Not even an impatient word, or look. ALL IS LOVE."

J. N. D.

Light would be invisible only for the medium it shines through; thus the particles of dust in a sunbeam make it visible. Thus God has sought in the church a medium in which He may display Himself. (*J. B. S.*)

“Jesus Wept.”

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THERE was sorrow in Bethany, death had entered one of its houses—the only one, in all probability, where the Lord found a welcome—and had removed a dearly-loved brother. Hearts were crushed and broken. A very tender tie had been snapped and mourning had taken the place of joy.

“Why this blow?” might have been the unspoken language of the two bereaved and desolate sisters. Had the Lord only been there, they felt sure that their brother would not have died. He, who loved all three, would have spared them the sorrow through which they had passed. His healing power had been so often shown that, had He only come in time, this disaster might have been prevented.

Now, however, it was too late. The Lord had allowed, for some inexplicable reason, known to Himself alone, the precious days to slip away; and when, in an apparently tardy response to their message, He had come at last, not only had death done its work, but the dead one was buried. Surely the Master had failed, on this occasion, in the display of the sympathy which was one of His most lovely traits.

How little did the sisters know the deep meaning of that delay. It was not occasioned by lack of love, or care, or consideration, but by a vastly superior motive, viz. “the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby”—the glory of God and of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the supreme object in the universe. Everything must subserve the glory of God—Father, Son and Spirit; and, to this undivided glory, the proud or fearful, or self-seeking heart of man must bow, and, in bowing, find rest and peace and assurance.

He who walked in the light of day knew exactly when to take His journey back into Judea, and to Bethany and its broken hearts.

He who said: “I am the resurrection and the life” was quite as able to raise

one from a four days’ state of death as He was to prevent him from dying. He who had just given eyesight to a man who had been born blind could certainly have caused that even Lazarus should not have died.

But there was to accrue to the Son of God a greater glory than that. He was to be seen as the giver of life, not now to the gentle child of Jairus, who had just expired; nor to the only son of Nain’s widow, who was being carried to his grave, but to one whose body was already yielding to corruption and had become putrescent. The glory of God is all-various in its working, but it has the welfare of His creatures as one of its objects.

The glory of the Son of God was seen in His absolute obedience to the Father’s will; but, while expressing itself in the raising of the dead and the bestowing of life, and life eternal too, it proved itself in the exhibition of the fullest, tenderest human sympathy.

Did He not suffer in order that He might fill the place of High Priest, and, as such, minister timely help and strength and comfort to His needy dependent, sorrowing people here? Most assuredly!

See, then, when He had found His way to the grave, and had witnessed the dire effects of death on the bleeding hearts around, we read . . . and, let the words of this, the shortest and, perhaps, the most profoundly significant, verse in our Bible, sink deeply into our memories: “JESUS WEPT!”

He wept who was “the resurrection and the life”! He wept who possessed all the power of God and the warmest sympathy of man. Yes, “Jesus wept.” He who was ever in the form of God is seen here in that of a servant. His service was one of love.

On that sympathy we can always count, for He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

“Jesus wept! those tears of sorrow
 Are a legacy of love;
 Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
 He the same doth ever prove:
 Thou art all in all to me,
 Weeping One of Bethany.”

And to-day hearts innumerable are torn, crushed and bleeding. Loved ones have fallen on fields of battle. Desolation covers the face of the earth. Each country sheds its tears; on all hands there are widows, orphans, sisters, parents, brothers and friends who must mourn and weep. But, behind the inscrutable wisdom that has allowed a convulsion so awful, there is, at the same time, a gracious and sympathetic support richly ministered by the ascended Lord who gives the assurance that, if the one He loved may not be restored, as was Lazarus, yet He says: “Thy brother shall rise again,” for in the fullest sense “whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” That is, there is no death, as such, for the Christian. He is “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” Death is annulled for such; while on the other hand, “he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” for “life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the gospel.”

Here we may find our richest consolation.

Can you picture a more lovely sight than the sacred Weeper of Bethany? There He stands, at the grave-side in moral touch with its mourners, not in a spirit of cold superiority as might have become death's victor, nor even in the aloofness of Him by whom all things were made, but in the full pathos of one who, while creator and sustainer of all, cherished a heart of tender human pity.

We repeat the words: “Jesus wept.” May I ask the afflicted and sorrowing if they can find no comfort in those tears, no solace in that sympathy, no Friend that sticketh closer than a brother in this best of all Friends, no compensation in His love, no pillow for the heavy head, no resting-place on His puissant arm, no one to occupy the empty chambers of the stricken heart—One better than the best and dearer than the dearest? What a triumph for faith when HE is thus known and loved!

It gives glory to the Son of God when the bereaved and broken heart finds all its satisfaction in Him. He will be everything to us in our bright eternity, and this He may be in our present but brief period of sorrow and loss.

How to Show Mercy.

GIVE not your alms to the poor as you would throw a bone to a dog. Mark with what grace Jesus bends over the poor man—a blind beggar of the wayside—and asks, as if He were his servant, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” Far from taking the place of manifest superiority, and causing the poor man to feel as if in some distant place, He gave him to know and feel that He was dealing with him in love and grace, and drew the heart of the helpless one entirely to Himself. The Christian must not only be merciful—most merciful, always merciful—but he must learn to show mercy after the manner of his Lord and Master. The way of the world is to patronize and to

be esteemed as benefactors; and many will give for the sake of this honour. But not so those on whom the Lord lays His hand and pronounces blessed. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

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

The Grace of Our Lord Jesus.

(JAMES BOYD).

“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).

IT has often been said that the Holy Scriptures are but the history of two men—the first man, and the second; Adam and Christ; the first Adam, and the last; one out of earth, made of dust; the other out of heaven; one utterly false to his Maker, the other faithful in everything committed to Him; one a daily grief to the heart of God, the other His continual delight; one brought into death on account of his disobedience, the other brought there by His obedience: and this saying is indeed true; the Scriptures set before us the history of these two men.

But as Adam was, and is, continued in his descendants, so is Christ continued in the generation that derives from Him: “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy—fallen, sinful, ruined, lost, death-doomed, haters of God.” And “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly”—lovers of God, obedient children, holy, righteous, overcomers of the world, the antichrists, and the devil (1 Cor. 47. 48).

The characteristics of fallen Adam come to light in his generation, and they are all evil, and obnoxious to the judgment of God. The evil tree has produced after its kind, and all the race are without exception evil trees, and nothing but evil fruit is produced by any of them (Matt. 7. 11, 17). No moral trait has yet come to light in any of the descendants of Adam that had not its origin in that fallen head; neither has any moral characteristic, in which God could take pleasure, been found in the heavenly generation that had not its origin in the heavenly Man. The generation of Adam is all evil; the generation of Christ is all good. Therefore we need not wonder that, in order to be in right relationship and eternal favour with God, a man must be born again.

But as long as we are upon earth in these mortal bodies, we still have within us the old Adam nature, for in the first instance we were all in him and of his generation; and the possession of a new, undefiled, and undefilable nature does not do away with the old. It is only on the ground of redemption by the blood of Christ, and as born of God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that we can be said to be of Christ's generation (John 3. 3; Eph. 1. 7, 13; Rom. 8. 9). Therefore as long as we are in this mortal body we have two natures within us; as born after the flesh, one altogether evil; and as born after the Spirit, or of God, one altogether good, for it is the nature of God Himself.

Now in the cross of Christ this old evil nature has received its judgment: “Our old man is crucified with Him” (Rom. 6. 6). It has indeed come under the unsparing condemnation of God. It is not only that our sins have been dealt with in the judgment of the cross, but the evil tree that produced the evil fruit has also received its judgment. Thus has *root* and *fruit* been brought judicially to an end by that judgment.

But inasmuch as that judgment took place in our spotless Substitute, and not in ourselves (for had it been condemned in ourselves, we should have been under condemnation for ever), no alteration of *state* is by it alone produced in us, for it was done outside of us, and before we who live at the present moment were born; but it gives us, who are born of God and have life in Christ, the unspeakable privilege of reckoning ourselves as forever freed from the old standing we had in the flesh, and of taking account of ourselves as in Christ, dead to the whole order of things which relate to our original position in the flesh before God: dead to sin, dead to the elements of the world, not alive in the world, risen with Christ, and our

life at the present moment hid with Him in God (Rom. 6. 2, 11; Col. 2. 20; 3. 1-3). And what an unspeakable privilege this is for all who have been wearied and worn out seeking to gain for themselves, *as men in the flesh*, a righteousness by law-keeping, and consequent acceptance with God!

It is our privilege to take account of ourselves in relation to the last Adam, as in Him, having an unalterable standing in Him before God, and as severed from the fallen head by the cross; and in the denial of our old Adam standing, and of the responsibilities that belong to that standing, to bring the death of Christ, which has effected that deliverance for us, to bear upon all the activities of that evil nature inherited from Adam, and to put on in the power of the Spirit the beautiful characteristics of our heavenly Head. It is our privilege, by the Spirit, to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8. 13), to put to death our members which are on the earth (Col. 3. 5), to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifest in our body (2 Cor. 4. 10).

And it is just in this way the Spirit of God directs us in the Holy Scriptures. It is there we learn Him who is our life. It is there that heavenly life is portrayed before our renewed minds and hearts; and it is there we are assured that that life is our own. It is seen in perfection in Him, unadulterated by the intrusion of sinful flesh, for in Him there was no taint of evil; but whatever it may be mingled with in our practical ways, by our forgetfulness to keep the judgment of the cross upon our rebellious wills, it is ours by the quickening operation of God, and we have, in God's account, no other life. And all the exhortations, injunctions, and commandments are to give direction to that life, in order that in its own spotless purity it may be reproduced by us in this evil world.

And it is just the transcendent qualities of this life that the Apostle labours to bring to light in these Corinthians, to

whom he writes this epistle. He would have them think of the poor Jewish saints away in Jerusalem, and not only to think of them, but to send them a thankoffering, seeing the Gospel had come out from them to the nations of the earth. And to stimulate that which was of God in them Christ is brought forward as their great example. "For ye know," he says, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

This was not some new doctrine he was bringing under their notice, which they had never before heard of. It was not a thing they did not know, for he tells them they did know it. But though they had heard of it when the Gospel had been first proclaimed in their ears, they required to be reminded of it. We are, alas, too much like Pharaoh's chief butler, who forgot the service rendered to him by Joseph, and left him languishing in the prison, while he enjoyed the favour of his royal master.

We need to be constantly on the watch lest we forget the One who has so greatly befriended us. We know His grace. We heard of it first in the Glad Tidings, of which He is the subject; and it was that grace that attracted us to Him at the first. And how often since then we have told Him:

"We know the grace that brought Thee down,
Down from that bliss on high,
To meet our ruined souls in need,
On Calvary's cross to die."

Yes, we know it, but let us not forget it. And may it have all its own wondrous power over our poor forgetful minds and hearts!

"Though He was rich." Think of those riches. Men imagine themselves wealthy when they have grasped a little more than others of the perishable treasures of earth, the possession of which is often their ruin bodily and spiritually. But who could rightly estimate the wealth of the Creator

Himself? And all things owe their existence to Jesus. What wealth of glory, dominion, power, and blessing was His! What dignity, majesty, greatness, grandeur, magnificence! What unspeakable happiness, immaculate affections, goodly fellowship, in light unto which no man can approach! There, in the serene, secure, unassailable unparagoned, and ineffable sweetness of the Father's love, He had His eternal abiding-place! That home of infinite and unparalleled delight, where love eternal is met by love eternal, in the infoldment, reciprocity, and intransmutability of its own infinite and deathless nature! A scene into which no creature curiosity could penetrate, nor imagination call into existence, but best described in the words addressed by the Son to the Father: "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was"; and, "Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 5, 24). And yet for our sakes He became poor!

And into what depths of poverty did His grace cause Him to descend! At His birth He was laid in a manger, while the great people of the earth, who were but the work of His hands, and in addition to that rebels against God, poured noisily and haughtily into the comforts of the inn, where there was no room for Him; an early indication that the heart of this great world would be found securely locked against the entrance of this heavenly stranger.

Later on He could say that the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had roosting-places, but that He had nowhere to lay His head. There was to be no brightening of His circumstances. From a human standpoint the way before Him seemed to darken into impenetrable gloom. The barrenness of desert places, the loneliness of Olivet, the silence of Gethsemane: these all were privileged witnesses of the Man of Sorrows. Bethany alone sought to make up for the carelessness and base ingratitude of a thankless and hypocritical nation; but the very solitariness

and extreme isolation of that sweet and hallowed spot became, on this account, the greatest witness of all to the utter poverty of Jesus, for it was all He had down here. And it was all *for our sakes!*

But the terrible and unparalleled nature of that poverty must draw its grim, terrific folds still more closely around this lonely Man. The arid waste of man's indifference to the precious dew of heavenly grace, shed with such lavish hand in word and work upon a crushed and degraded people, must to its utmost boundary be trodden by those weary feet, whose every movement preached to deaf and disdainful ears the Gospel of peace.

For love, sown with prodigal extravagance, He must reap hatred. The desertion of many of His professed followers He must with sorrow of heart witness. The treachery of one of His most intimate followers, who with hypocritical kiss betrays Him to His enemies, He must bear in silence. Another, who professed the greatest devotion to Him, He must hear denying Him with oaths and curses. The plight of the rest of His poor disciples, like sheep in the presence of the wolf, beats in upon His breaking heart with merciless severity. He gives His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and He hides not His face from shame and spitting. And it was *all for our sakes!*

But the depths of poverty that were yet to be explored by this Divine and blameless victim open up before His soul with a terror that infinitely excels all that the imagination of man has ever pictured. A horror beyond all human thought appalling confronts this lonely Sufferer. Nailed to a gibbet, numbered with transgressors, surrounded by the rude Roman soldiery, His cross girt about by a mocking, insulting, blaspheming, howling rabble, He looks for some to take compassion, and finding none, He turns to God, and by Him He is abandoned. Horror heaps itself upon horror;

but this, the greatest horror of all, overtakes Him in the midst of His deep distress and anguish of soul. This is the climax of that poverty which began in the manger at Bethlehem. Here the lowest rung in this fearful ladder of humiliation is reached. Here the bottomless is bottomed. Poverty reaches its limit, a limit without a limit. Betrayal, desertion, denial, ingratitude, reproach, spend their utmost and most merciless fury against the Son of God. In the barren, weary, wintry waste of a God-hating world, impaled upon a gibbet, without a disciple, without a sympathizer, without a friend; in the unutterable loneliness of abandonment by earth and heaven and with a heart broken by reproach, the storm of divine wrath against sin beats with infinite power upon His defenceless and thorn-crowned head. **AND IT WAS ALL FOR OUR SAKES !**

O, the darkness and the light of it! O, the sorrow and the joy of it! O, the grief and the gladness of it! O, the hate and the love of it! O, the judgment and the mercy of it! O, the law and the grace of it! O, the dishonour and the glory of it! O, the hell and the heaven of it! O, the loss and the gain of it! Ponder it well, my soul! for it was for thy sake: *He "loved me, and gave Himself for me."*

"That ye through His poverty might be rich." This was the cause of His wondrous journey from Bethlehem to Golgotha; from the manger to the gibbet. The grace of his heart was the fount from which flowed forth all this down-stooping; this self-forgetfulness; this self-abnegation; this renunciation of uncountable riches; this self-abasement; this uncomplaining acceptance of the servant's pathway, with all that was involved in it; this submission to the cross, the wrath, the judgment due to sin. It was all undertaken, and patiently borne, that we through His poverty might be rich.

And O, what infinite wealth has come to us through His great poverty!

We have been enriched in righteousness, in eternal life, in holiness, in the gift of the Holy Spirit, in sonship, in the possession of all things, in union with Christ, in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and in the hour of His coming again to find our eternal home with Him in the Father's house, where we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him, to the eternal satisfaction and delight, not only of our hearts, but of the heart of the Father and the Son.

But in Philippians this grace of the Lord Jesus is presented in another way. It is not what He has done for our sakes, but for the Godhead glory, but with a similar object in view is it brought to our notice, that is, as our great example. "Let this mind be in you." What mind? The mind that was in Christ Jesus. The grace that came to light in Him down here is to be a mighty power in our souls, reproducing Him in this world out of which He has been rejected. He was full of grace and truth, and of His fullness all believers have received. Hence that grace is to give character to our lives down here. It is to be operative in our souls.

How has it come to light in Him as presented here? This is most beautifully brought under our notice. "Who being in the form of God." Here, first of all, we are privileged to contemplate Him in the outward position and semblance of God; the embodiment of might, authority, majesty, supremacy, and everything else that belongs to God. Yet not counting this a position to maintain at all costs, but necessity having arisen for the intervention of One mighty enough to undertake a work for the glory of the Godhead, He divests Himself of this outward form, and takes the form of a servant.

Here He stands in opposition to the first and fallen head of the human race, who, though created by God and placed as His servant in a very exalted position, grasped at Divinity, and fell headlong under the power of death. Jesus when

in the form of God empties Himself, taking a bondsman's form, taking His place in the likeness of men. And this is the mind that is to take possession of us.

Then, having been found in fashion as a man, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and that, too, the death of the cross. When He took the form of a servant there was no unreality about it. When He was in the form of man He was just as truly a servant, as when in the form of God He was truly Master. And as obedience—unquestioning, uncomplaining obedience—is what is due from every servant, so was He obedient to God in all relations of life. He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6. 38). And this He did perfectly without any respect for the consequences to Himself. He uttered no word but that which was given Him from the Father. He did no work but that which the Father gave Him to do. He went nowhere but at the express command of the Father (John 3. 34; 12. 49; 10. 32; 6. 57).

In Him I learn man's true place as set in intelligent relationship with God. Humility of mind, and unqualified obedience to God, regardless of where the path, marked out by God for my feet to tread, may lead to. The will of God is to be done irrespective of the consequences. There must be no murmuring, no complaining. We are not to reason why we are led in certain directions, nor why we have been plunged into circumstances that are both difficult and painful. All we require to be assured of is, that these things are God's will for us. The issues are entirely His concern. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

In Corinthians what He did is said

to have all been *for our sakes*. Here in Philippians it is all for the sake of the Godhead. But, as I have already intimated, we learn in both cases the effect God would have this grace produce in us, which came so perfectly to light in Him. I learn in Philippians that I am to place myself at the disposal of God, and to tread the path He has marked out for my feet, regardless of where it may lead; and in Corinthians the saints are, under God, to be everything to me, and for them I am to lay down my life. But for all this we must draw from the inexhaustible supply of grace that is found in Himself.

In the answer of God to this self-sacrificing life of Jesus we learn His infinite appreciation of it. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here we have His estimate of the devoted, faithful, self-sacrificing spirit in which that work was undertaken, and carried through to the finish, without the slightest semblance of regret that it had been undertaken, or of failure in the accomplishment of it. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22).

What an example for us the Son of God is! May we keep our eye steadily fixed upon Him, and may we be ready at all times to pass unsparing judgment upon the slightest departure from the path marked out for us, whether that path be with reference to obedience to God, or love to His people. These are difficult days, and to be here for His pleasure we require to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Know when your work is ended, or you will do something besides your work, and miss that which will fit you for the next work that is to come.

The Salvation of the Canteen Sergeant. (J. T. MAWSON).

CANTEEN Sergeant B—— of a famous Yorks. regiment had come through several fights in the Boer War without a scratch, but he did not feel like congratulating himself on this; he sometimes wished that the fate of many of his gallant comrades whose blood had been drunk by the rough country in the Tugela district had been his, for he had lost all joy in life. Drink and worse things had diseased and shattered his strong frame; he was notoriously wicked and as wretched as a man could be.

One day in camp, as the war came near its close, he seemed to reach the very depth of misery; but instead of blaming himself and his sins he cursed God with a flood of curses as though He were the cause of it all. And almost instantly God, who is not far from any one of us, gave an answer to his curses.

The day will never be forgotten by him, for each incident of it left an indelible stamp upon his memory. With the oaths hot upon his lips, and red rage against God flaming up in his heart, he went into a tent. Lying upon a table in it was a small leaflet; he did not know what it was or who had put it there, but he took it up and read it. A blow between his eyes, delivered by an unseen hand, could not have startled him more than what he read in that leaflet did; it was God's answer to his rage, an answer so strange and unexpected that the sergeant's glib tongue could find no words with which to express his astonishment. These were the words: "You may be a great sinner, but God loves you, for God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). B—— had never thought of God in that way before, and as the meaning of the words entered his very soul he broke down and wept where he stood.

Outside the tent was a group of his comrades; they would have laughed at his tears had they seen him, and he did not

feel like meeting them then; he wanted to be alone in order to think this matter over, and so he crept under the canvas at the back side of the tent, and away into the gathering night.

What an astounding thing this was; God loved him, a drunken, immoral, dishonest, blaspheming canteen sergeant! It seemed impossible, and yet it was true, and the truth of it folded him in its warm embrace; like the light of the morning it shone in his heart, and as he thought about it he sobbed like a child. Then he came face to face with the one man in his company that he had disliked, a Christian soldier, who also that evening wished to escape the company of his comrades. It was a dramatic meeting. "What's the matter?" asked the Christian. Through his sobs B—— told him what had happened, and how he had read that God loved him. And they wept together, those two men, and knelt beneath the open sky, and there the great sinner realized the pardoning grace of God and the peace that follows the realization of it. Those comrades in arms, brothers in Christ now, for they were saved by the same Saviour, talked and prayed and praised God together for a while. They talked of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us in order to prove that God loves the sinner, who shed His precious blood that the worst of sins might be washed from our souls for ever, and who died and rose again that we might have eternal redemption in Him.

They praised God for the grace that had pardoned their sins, and prayed that He would help them to confess the name of the Saviour boldly and at once.

To confess Christ before godless companions does not seem an easy thing to do. Many a man who would have no fear were a hundred Germans charging down upon him with bayonets fixed has become the worst of cowards when he

has thought of the jeers of his comrades in the camp. But the converted sergeant had believed in a great Saviour, who had died for him and risen again, who had delivered him from the power of the devil and sin, and of that Saviour he would not be ashamed. Straight to the canteen tent he went; there were many men there, some of the worst, and they all knew the sergeant. It mattered not to him what they knew or thought; he was now a forgiven man, and he was full of the fact that God loved him, and

plainly and bluntly he told them the truth, and owned before them that Christ was now his Saviour.

It was no passing emotion that swept over him that night out in distant South Africa. The Saviour he found then has proved well worth knowing, and one year ago when I met him, twelve years after his conversion, Sergeant-Major B—— was a happy, healthy Christian, zealously serving the Lord amongst the men of his company.

“Manifold.”

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

“To the intent that now . . . might be known . . . the MANIFOLD wisdom of God.”—(Eph. 3. 10).

“Good stewards of the MANIFOLD grace of God.”—(1 Peter 4. 10).

MANIFOLD wisdom, manifold grace. Such is the wisdom, and such the grace, of our God.

But what does “manifold” mean? It conveys the idea of infinite variety, wisdom, and grace, which have many aspects and are to be known in a thousand different ways.

My wish, however, is not to speak of wisdom and grace, but of Him in whom they are so wonderfully set forth. Surely the word “manifold” may be used, with added intensity, when we refer to the many ways and characters in which *He* is to be known.

Do you catch the thought, reader? Let me make clear what I mean.

I am introduced to a gentleman who is one of the leading merchants of the town. He began life as a humble clerk in the business house of which he is now the head, and by sheer ability he has raised himself to his present position. He invites me to call upon him at his house, and one evening I do so. I find my friend seated at the piano, from which he rises to greet me. I beg him to continue his playing, and I make the discovery that the successful business man is a most accomplished musician. I thus make his acquaintance in quite another character.

The next day I hear something further about him. I find there are several poor families in the town whom he succours, from week to week, with a liberal hand. My friend stands revealed as a philanthropist.

“What further discovery shall I make?” is my mental question. I know Mr. —— as a successful merchant, a skilful musician, a warm-hearted benefactor of the poor. But there is a limit to the ways in which even such a man as he may show his versatility.

But when we speak of *Christ*, there is no such limit. We may make discoveries without end as to Him. And it is God’s will that we *should* make these discoveries. His word is the means whereby we may do so, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

It is with great thankfulness, therefore, that I learn of the Editor’s purpose to give us in the issue of “Scripture Truth” for January, 1915, a series of papers by different writers, on the *manifold* glories and excellencies of Christ. May God guide the pen of each contributor, and may each reader find food for his soul as he is led to contemplate afresh some of the deep perfections of Him whom he already knows as His Saviour, his Shepherd, his Lord, his Friend.

The Unity of the Trinity.

(E. Cross).

"We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."—(1 Cor. 8. 4).

IN the pagan world there are gods many, and lords many. Their religion is polytheistic. The testimony of Israel was to the unity of the godhead; that there is one true God, and only one. In reply to the question of the scribe, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first commandment of all is, Hear, Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." And now mark what flows from that,—undivided, absolute allegiance: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12. 28-30). The unity of the Godhead demands absolute, undivided fealty.

Moreover, it is plain that in the universe there can be but one God, however diversified may be His operations; there can be but one Lord, however distinct may be His services; there can be but one Spirit, however separate may be His gifts: "It is the same God, who operates all things in all" (1 Cor. 12. 4-6). Day and night differ from each other, as do numberless other things, to all appearance equally antagonistic, but they all subserve, nevertheless, one will; they equally own one ruling power. The dualistic Zoroastrianism of Persia, referred to in Isaiah 45. 7, is an attempt to explain the apparent conflict between the forces, physical and moral, that govern the world, by attributing them to two eternal principles, light and darkness, supposed to be in perpetual conflict. But Scripture asserts definitely, that whatever the phenomena that pass across the stage, there is but one Hand that moves the scenes. The guardianship of this all-important truth had been solemnly and emphatically committed to Israel, as they were about to take their responsible place for God, in the

midst of the idolatrous world around (Deut. 6.-12.). The prophet's plaint against them is the subject-matter of Isaiah 40.-48. Again, Paul takes up the same subject vigorously with the Corinthians, as they were just inducted from paganism into Christianity (1 Cor. 8.); and John closes his epistle with these meaningful words: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5. 21).

Idolatry is inherent in the fallen heart of man. He loves to deify the emanations of his own mind. We see in the heathen world the degrading, soul-ruining consequences of this idolatry. The danger takes another form for the Christian. It may not be so gross and material, but it equally diverts the mind from the knowledge of God. The evil is no less evil because it assumes another form: on the contrary, it is more so, as it attacks man, not materially, but spiritually. This view of it is especially connected with the ministry of the Apostle John.

But now the question arises, seeing that the subject of the Scriptures is God, how far do they make known to us the relationship of the persons in the Godhead? Plainly, of such a subject we know absolutely nothing of ourselves; nor are we capable of knowing anything. To presume on such ground of our own initiative would be pure presumption, and only evil. "Who by searching can find out God; who can know the Almighty to perfection?" We are therefore in this matter dependent absolutely on His Word, the revelation He has been pleased to make to us of Himself. We can go so far, and no farther.

In the life of Toplady mention is made of a minister, who announced to his congregation his intention of giving a course of lectures, in which he was to

clear up sundry outstanding questions regarding the persons of the Godhead, the true deity and humanity of Christ, and such-like matters. In the congregation was a man who was regarded as a half-wit. The day following the minister saw this man by the seashore, baling out the water with a teacup, and throwing it on the land. The minister asked him what he was doing. The man replied, "Baling out the sea." "You'll be a long time at it," said the minister. "I'll be done before you," said the other. This story may be but a parable, but it expresses the thing exactly. The Supreme "God dwells in light unapproachable, that no man hath seen, or can see." But in so far as He has been pleased to enlighten us, in so far "we have seen Him and known Him" (John 14. 9).

The Athanasian Creed says that, "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; yet are there not three gods, but one God." That is, as we speak of it, "the Trinity in unity." Such is God Himself, the great "Elohim," the Creator of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1. 1). The "Former" of the universe, "Jehovah of hosts is His name" (Jer. 10. 16). "Elohim" is the plural of "Eloah" (which is a further development of "El," strong, mighty); that means, it is the multiplied spring of "force" in action. Now, in that composite name, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And there is no power, no force, apart from Him; there is no power, no force that will not be subject to Him: for, plainly, as God was before all, so must He be finally "All in All," however, for the time being, He, in His wisdom, may allow the foolishness of creature pride to rise against Him.

"Father" is the name of grace; the Source and Sustenance of His people in all their need, the ground of their highest hopes. Israel will say to Him by and by: "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not:

Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting" (Isa. 63. 16; 64, 8). Jesus taught His disciples to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven"; and we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby, in a still more intimate way, and with higher hopes, we cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. v. 6).

"Son" is the offspring, the expression, the revealer of all the Father is. Hence His Beloved. But as "the Son of the Father" (2 John 1. 3; John 1. 18) He is necessarily a divine eternal Person: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Analogous relationships are found in our human life below, but we cannot reason from the finite to the infinite, from the creature to the Creator. When we speak of a son we speak of one who in existence succeeded his father; but when we speak of these divine eternal subjects, we must first *hear*, and then speak, as we are told. If Scripture told us that the Son was successional to the Father, we would believe it; but seeing that Scripture distinctly affirms the opposite, it is plain that any such human deduction is false. It is true, blessedly true, thanks be to God, eternal thanks for it, that Jesus was born, Son of God, of a woman; that He lived, and died, and rose again; but Scripture abounds with the testimony to His eternal deity.

Psalm 102. 27 says of Him in contrast to creation that passes away, "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Heb. 1. 10-12). "The same," or, "He who is," is a name of God (*cf.* Deut. 32. 39; Nehemiah 9. 7; Isa. 41. 4), a divine title.

In contrast to angels, Psalm 45. says: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (*cf.* Heb. 1. 8). Paul says (Rom. 9. 5): "... of whom, as according to the flesh is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever"; and 1 Timothy 3. 16, "God has been manifested in flesh"—the reading here is

questioned, but the sense remains the same. Again, He says of Himself, times over, in different ways, "I and My Father are one"; and such was the effect of His words on those who heard Him that they sought to kill Him, because He said that God was His own Father (*πατέρα ἰδίον*, His own proper father, not merely in a figurative sense), "making Himself equal with God" (John 5. 18). The Apostle John begins by saying "the Word was God," and ends his first epistle, "He is the true God, and the life eternal." In a single page of Scripture (Rev. 1.) we see Him, the first begotten of the dead; the Λ and the Ω ; the one who IS, independent of time, and yet embracing all time past and to come; the Almighty ruler of all; the Son of Man; the One who lives, and who became dead, and lo! He is the living one for evermore. Jehovah God has "sworn by Himself that every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Isa. 45. 23; Rom. 14. 11); but that scripture will be fulfilled in Jesus (Phil. 2. 10, 11), "for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14. 9). As to this theme, you might indeed in time, perhaps, pump the ocean dry, but this never.

Then as to the Spirit, we know, again, no more than what is told us in Scripture. We may find a difficulty in believing that "Jesus is God," for Jesus died, and how could it be thought that "God died," or that "Mary was the mother of God," But Scripture does not say that "Mary was the Mother of God," or that "God died"; but it does say that HE who was born of Mary, and who died, is God. A great mystery, and unfathomable: we must leave it there. But it is the essential truth of Christianity.

And the same as to the Spirit. We may find it difficult to accept the fact, intelligently, that the Spirit can be

regarded as a divine person at all. Yet Scripture speaks of it in that way; and it is intended plainly that we should so receive it. It is easier to think of the influence of the Spirit. But it is not merely an influence, though we are assuredly influenced by it; it is something that we cannot better describe than by the word "Person." So we read, He is sent, another Comforter; He undertakes; He operates; He testifies; He dwells in us; He energizes; He is the Spirit of God, so that God acts directly by Him—and so on. Accordingly we find that in the Gospel of John mention is made repeatedly of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Take as examples John 1. 18, 32, and 3. 34, 35 among others. Then, on the fact of the Spirit's dwelling in the believer, besides the fact of the new birth, depends the whole character of Christian life, its liberty and joy; for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." If, then, He is a Person, He must be a divine Person; and so Scripture regards it. To lie to the Spirit was to lie to God (Acts 5. 3, 4). It is said of Israel "they rebelled and vexed His holy Spirit" (Isa. 63. 10). And we are told not to grieve "the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4. 30). Again, as the Spirit is sent, so also is He the sender: "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and His Spirit, hath sent Me" (Isa. 48. 16). And in this connection 2 Corinthians 3. 18 is an interesting and instructive scripture: "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image, from glory to glory, even as by Jehovah the Spirit."* Thus we have in the unity of the God-head three persons, each divine and distinct—one God—Father, Son, and Spirit; to whom be glory, equal and eternal. Amen.

* See revised preface to Second Edition, New Translation (J.N.D.).

Divine Assurance.

(HENRY J. VINE).

IT is the way of the word of God to impart divine assurance to the hearts of those who believe on God's beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of the Father has been relegated by some to those who are considered very advanced in the truth; and eternal life has been put away by them also, to a dim and doubtful distance.

This, however, thanks be to God, is not the way of the Spirit of Truth. He labours to bring home to the hearts of the youngest, even, the assurance of these very things. It is to the babes in Christ He saith, "*Ye have known the Father.*" And again, "*Let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He has promised us, life eternal*" (1 John 2. 13, 24, 25, N.T.).

THE FATHER'S FAMILY.

Those who form that family of God are distinguished as babes, young men, and fathers in Christ. The youngest belongs to it as much as the oldest; and the oldest no more belongs to it than the youngest, though he has matured in the blessedness which belongs to it, just as the babe in Christ will do when rightly nourished.

Now although all are begotten of God, and consequently have a nature which does not sin, nevertheless it is said to them all, "*Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake*" (1 John 2. 12). We are set in an unchanging and eternal relationship with the Father; and we are to behold what love He has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; nevertheless we are set in that favoured family, as having our many sins forgiven, for the precious Name's sake of Him who glorified the Father upon the cross, where He put those very sins away for ever. It is

upon this high ground, "*for His Names' sake,*" the assurance of eternal forgiveness is given to the whole family of faith—babes, young men, and fathers.

The knowledge of Jesus—of Him that is from the beginning—marks the fathers. Strength and the word of God marks the young men; but they need a word of warning as to the world. The knowledge of the Father marks the babes. They need to be put on their guard as to anti-christs, and as to those who lead souls astray; but along with this it is most striking and instructive to notice the language the Holy Spirit uses to give divine assurance to these babes in Christ, in verses 18-27 of 1 John 2. He speaks of the Unction they have received—the Holy Spirit; consequently they "*know all things*"; they "*know the truth*"; and "*need not that any man teach them.*" This is said exclusively to the babes, so that they may be stable when others *go out* (19), who thus manifest that they are not truly of this favoured family. "*They are not all of us*" should read, "*none are of us.*" Such are apostate from the faith.

To be assured in a divine way, in the presence of such evil doings and apostacy of many, imparts cheer and comfort to the real. It produces praise and thanksgiving in their hearts, and holiness in their lives. This is not so with mere professors, nor with those who boast of development and advanced light, such as are indicated in 1 and 2 John. They do not welcome divine assurance, for they lack the nature which appreciates it. The young in the faith have that nature, but they are sensitive, and need the strength and stability which the truth gives. We are therefore to keep in the way of the Spirit, and not to turn aside from that way. The religious reasoner says, such expressions as are quoted above will flatter and puff up the young believer; but pride belongs to the old nature, and the Holy Spirit who thus speaks knows

that such is not the result produced, but the very opposite where the divine nature is. All the Father's family have that nature, and pride is painful to it, whereas praise is pleasant and it glorifies Him whose love we know.

THEIR VITAL POSSESSIONS.

We have already said that the sins of all in the Father's family are all forgiven for the precious Name's sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; also that they know the Father.

The vital possessions of true believers are many, but these are enjoyed because of the Unction, twice referred to in these verses (20 and 27), as received by them from our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One, who is altogether apart from the sin of the world.

They are conscious, nevertheless, that sin is still in them, that in the flesh good does not dwell; but they are not occupied with that, for the known love of the Father is their present portion. Not that there may not be failure. I speak of what is normal. In the power of the Unction the love of the Father, known through the Son, is all the more wonderful to them, because it is theirs in spite of that sin—that sin which divine love put away at the cross, so that they might be righteously set in relationship with the Father, and enjoying the love and life and intimacies of that unchanging relationship. Thus they "continue in the Son and in the Father," realizing that wonderful possession of eternal life, as it is at once said (ver. 25), "*This is the promise which He has promised us, life eternal.*"

Antichrists may deny the possession of this, for "he is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son" (22): they may still appear to make much of one Father of all, but "whoever denies the Son has not the Father either" (23): they may go out, *i.e.* give up the truth, but they only manifest that they are not of the true family of God: the babe, then, is encouraged and exhorted to abide where divine love has set him, to abide in the Father and the Son. The

Uction, the Holy Spirit, the vital possession received from the Holy One, teaches and assures the heart to abide "in Him." It is because of this Unction it can be said to the babes, "Ye know all things." It is not that their apprehension and understanding of divine things is yet fully developed. They still need to be renewed into full knowledge; but by the Unction received from Christ *all things* are known. They possess Him, and thus it is added, Ye know the truth. All this is vital because of the Spirit received.

It would be well if we kept this in view in ministering the word; we should then be preserved from the error of those who "speak as of the world" (1 John 4. 5, N.T.). Those who are of the truth hear the truth when it is ministered with unction. Those who go out, those who do not confess the Son, are to be left alone. They have not the Father. "He that confesses the Son has the Father also" (23): he knows the Father: he has the Father: he has eternal life: and all this because he "has the Son" (5. 12). These vital possessions are abiding, enduring, and eternal. We are assured divinely concerning them, and having the Unction from Christ we can enjoy them, and thus be preserved from that which would lead astray.

It is said, "ye need not that any man teach you" (27). "The same Anointing teacheth you of all things." This, again, shows that the mere knowledge of the natural man without the Spirit is quite unnecessary in that of which we speak. We have the Unction, and He teaches the family of faith. He never fails. May we not grieve Him. The illumination for the sanctuary inside was provided by the oil from the beaten olive, not by the natural luminary. That has its place. The Spirit is all-sufficient for that spoken of here. Twice they are divinely assured of this in these verses.

At the very beginning they had heard of Christ the Son; they had received Him, and the Spirit had sealed them. They were to let that abide in them

which they had heard from the beginning, and not be carried away with boastings about new light; they should then abide in the Son and in the Father. This is eternal life. In having the Son they had life eternal, as we have said; they also had the Father, for the Father is known in the Son. Here, then, their hearts could rejoice and be glad. The Father is known to them in the Son, and He is "the true God and eternal life" (5. 20). It is Himself who is known and loved because He first loved them. The high privileges of eternal life have been opened to them; the exalted intimacies of it, too, for "this is the eternal life, that they should know Thee [the Father], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3).

VITAL PROSPERITY.

As we abide in the Son and in the Father there will be progress and prosperity with us in those things that are vital and eternal.

It should be pointed out that this began when we appropriated the death of Christ. Unless the soul has felt its need, "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.). That abides true, no matter what profession of religion there may be. There can be no progress in what is vital unless there has been this start. If the death of Christ is the food of our faith; if that death whereby He left a dead sinful world behind Him, and expressed also His love to us in that death, if that is appropriated by us, then we read, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood *dwelleth in Me and I in Him*" (56). It is here we realize vital prosperity.

The heart deepens in intimacy with the One who is Himself eternal life. It asks not now so much, *What is eternal life?* for it knows Him *who is eternal life*. It wastes not its precious moments in vainly *seeking for it*; for the faith of the believer *dwells in Him* who is the expression of it—the Word

of life. The wonderful manifestation of that life is known in Him, and is to be our study and delight; whilst we may know also that "we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." It is evident that the Father would have us to be happy in the highest company: to be feeding on the finest fare: and to be enjoying the privileges of eternal life now in His presence.

Mephibosheth, who spake of himself as "*a dead dog*," was graciously set in the privileges and intimacies of the life of the royal court: from Lodebar he was brought to the palace life; and there in the company of King David he ate at the same table as one of the King's sons. The nations around, and the people of Israel too, greatly benefited by the good administration of the kingdom under David: his servants and ministers and courtiers prospered in the enjoyment of greater nearness still to the kind-hearted king: but *Mephibosheth* was honoured by a position nearer to David than them all. As one of the royal family, as one of the king's sons, he enjoyed the company of David and the princely life of the royal court in the closest favour. The nations will benefit presently by the reign of the true David, our Lord Jesus Christ; His servants will share in His glorious administration; but like *Mephibosheth*, the family of which we have spoken will dwell in the Father's house, with the Son, as His brethren for ever. Israel will have eternal life on earth, as we are twice told in the Old Testament, even as the favoured ministers at David's court would enjoy court life there; but with *Mephibosheth*, though it was the same court life, yet he knew it in a deeper sense than they, because he was there as one of the royal family, as one of the king's sons. It is just so with ourselves now. We were brought to realize that we were "*dead*" sinners; but the voice of the Son of God reached us, and made us "*live*." We passed out of death into life. It is ours now to dwell in the love and life

into which we are brought, and prosper spiritually.

Our prosperity will evidence itself in lowliness, obedience, and love. We shall dwell in the love of God and keep His commandments. These commandments are not grievous to those who are begotten of Him. We shall avoid all occasion of stumbling others. Practical love shows the life which is ours: there is love to God and love one to another. His commandment is, "that he that loves God love his brother also" (4. 21). "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (3. 14). Instead of independency, or mere religious officialism, there will be spiritual growth and the manifestation of divine love and life. Whilst the assembly as such is not mentioned in 1 John, yet the love and life which belong to it are; and dwelling there, our hearts will know and value the highest privileges of the assembly. Nothing is lost, but everything enhanced rather, because enjoyed in vital energy instead of cold formality.

The final word in the first epistle of John is most significant: "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*" This is said just after that wonderful verse which tells us that the Son is the true God and Eternal Life, and which also says that He has given us even now a capability to know Him. He is to be the all-absorbing object of our hearts, the subject of our meditations, and the theme of our song.

"Be Thou the Object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart;
Our hope to meet Thee in the air,
And nevermore from Thee to part."

The Holy Spirit strengthens us in the inward man that Christ might dwell in our hearts through faith. It is always the way of divine love, having given divine assurance to our hearts, to lead us on in the knowledge of the beloved Son of God, in whom divine love has been made known; and thus, being

rooted *vitally* ourselves in that love, and founded in it, too, as to our *character*, we may prosper in what is vital, abiding and eternal, for the glory of God.

The young tree evidences its sapling life and energy, with its spring and freshness, in a different way to the older tree, with its stability, strength, and abundance; but both prosper in the same rich soil, under the same heavenly and atmospheric influences. It is thus with the healthy babe in Christ and the father in the faith; both evidence the same life, but in different degrees. All vital prosperity is in divine love and in the knowledge of the blessed Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ. Let this be understood, then the closing exhortation will be greatly valued.

"KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS."

If we are set by grace in the love and life which are ours in Him; if our hearts are divinely assured as to this; if we understand that our possessions, our progress, and our prosperity are there, then we may truly say with another, "All that is outside this is an idol." This is a day of ideals and ambitions. They dispute in the mind and heart the place which belongs to the Son of God. There are moral, material, social, and religious idols or ideals. For many the last, in the form of an ideal assembly, is the most dangerous. The assembly of Christ is being builded by Him, vitally, upon the Father's revelation of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, not upon the revelation of the assembly. The abiding and prevailing constitution and being of His assembly are of Himself and not herself. The bride eyes the features of her Beloved. He fills her thoughts. He is the Spring and Fountain of assembly life and love. The Spirit glorifies Him.

"In His blest face all glories shine,
And there we gaze on love divine."

Studies in the Psalms.—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

PSALMS 75., 76. are the divinely given answer to the exercises of soul in the two preceding Psalms, and with them form the introduction to Book 3. These exercises, as we have seen, arise from seeking, without a true knowledge of God, a solution of the riddle of His providential government (Ps. 73.), and then from viewing the too successful hostilities of the enemies of God and His people (Ps. 74.). To every anxious thought in the mind of the believer God provides an answer in some presentation of Christ to the soul. In Psalm 75. the Spirit presents Him as about to assume the office of Judge in a public way: "When I shall find the set time I will judge uprightly. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I have set up the pillars of it" (vers. 2, 3, R.V.). Who but the Son of God could so speak? One, moreover, who, true to the servant's place in obedience, does not decide the time, but waits on God for it (Mark 13. 32). The delay in execution of the judgment gives opportunity for warning, but the cup of wrath is in the hand of Jehovah, and the wine is matured for the set time. On Him therefore the true saints must wait. Others, called here the arrogant, who seek to avert the calamity that threatens from the north, by looking for help from all other points of the compass, are reminded that God is Judge, who has power for putting down or lifting up. Verse 6 thus becomes a witness that the enemy in these Psalms is the little horn of Daniel 8. His attack in verse 19 of that chapter is called "the latter time of the indignation, for it belongeth to the appointed time of the end" (R.V.). How this suits our Psalm is obvious. This overflowing scourge, successful at first, is in due time met by the personal presence and power of Messiah (see Micah 5. 5; Zech. 14. 2, 3; Dan. 2. 45). The indignation, a term often used for the period of God's chastisement of Israel, is said to terminate in the destruction of this enemy (Isaiah 10. 25). Evidently, therefore, we must look

beyond Sennacherib or Antiochus Epiphanes for the ultimate fulfilment of these prophecies. In view of this fulfilment, the Spirit of Christ in verse 9 is heard praising the God of *Jacob*, a relation which speaks of grace to Israel, which is not brought into effect apart from the exercise of the discriminating judgment of God, as verse 10 informs us. The first verse, as so often in the Psalms, is the review of what follows here expressed in the praise of the delivered remnant.

Psalm 76. is the appropriate sequel to the preceding one. They are also connected by the title "a song," and agree in character with the earlier series of triumphant compositions (Ps. 65.-68.) grouped under the same title. The one now under consideration is divided into four sections, each of three verses. The first of these shows us the end for which God works and which He reaches in the day of the future kingdom. He desires (let us take it to heart) to have a people among whom He is known, and from whom testimony may go forth to others. This will come to pass: God will be known in Judah and His name will be great in Israel; but the connection becomes more intimate in verse 2: "In Salem is His tabernacle (or pavilion), and His dwelling-place is Zion." This dwelling of God with His people is always on the ground of redemption, and comes to light first in Exodus (see chap. 15. 13, 17, 25. 8, and 29. 46). Now that the antitype has been accomplished God dwells by His Spirit among His saints, who thus constitute the house of God, "the pillar and base of the truth," as we are told in 1 Timothy 3. This epistle gives us the church in its place of testimony among men. Two other aspects are presented in the New Testament: one in 1 Peter 2. in relation to God, to offer spiritual sacrifices to Him; another in Ephesians 2. 22, where Jew and Gentile lose their respective nationalities and are builded *together* in Christ. The importance of this is marked by its becoming the first point taken up in the hortatory portion of the epistle in

chapter 4. 1-3. It is the place of testimony towards the world which our Psalm attributes to Israel in the coming kingdom. We learn also here, as in many other scriptures, that the kingdom will only be reached by the exercise of judgment on enemies who will be found arrayed against God and His people in the vicinity of Jerusalem—*there* brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.

The next section (vers. 4-6) begins with addressing God: "Glorious art Thou and excellent, greater than the mountains of prey"—an allusion to the great Gentile powers in their defeat (*cf.* Zech. 4. 7, where the great mountain stands for the Persian empire, then near the zenith of its power). All this prostration of human greatness is at the rebuke of the God of *Jacob*, who signalizes that title by taking up its character again on behalf of the feeble and fickle remnant of Israel, who will, like Jacob, witness to the efficacy of God's ways with them in a transformation of character.

In section 3 God is again addressed, from the knowledge of Him which His dealings have produced, and it is to heaven these dealings are referred, to save for their inheritance the meek of the earth. *We* know God not by the judgment executed (Ps. 9.), but by the gift of His Son "in whom we have obtained inheritance."

The last section gives the assurance of God's supremacy and how He can turn all man's rebellion to His own end. He can make the wrath of man to praise Him, and the residue He girds on Himself to effect thereby His own purposes. To Him should vows be paid and presents brought.

Psalm 77. is of much interest, illustrating the exercises of one passing from acute distress, accentuated by doubt of God's goodness, to confidence and joy in Him. The Psalm begins with the important lesson that however dark the path and terrible Satan's fiery darts, God is our true resource: "I will cry unto God with my voice"; and this is repeated to show the good of rising from

mere meditation on troubles to direct and audible address to God. Moreover, constancy and urgency marked the petition: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, and my hand (not my sore) was stretched out in the night." Strangely enough, comfort does not follow; indeed, the distress increases: "I remembered God and was troubled." Why is this? We shall see that later he remembers God and is encouraged; but now it seems that the very fact of turning to God awakens the conscience more fully to that in the sufferer which had given occasion to the chastening; even the forgetfulness of sleep is impossible, and "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." Further, the heart had known other and brighter seasons, and these are recalled with fresh distress, which finds expression in six questions of utter unbelief, culminating in verse 9 in the thought that God is short both in temper and memory. This desperate suggestion being mentioned, it becomes evident that the fault is in the complainer and not in God: "This is *my* infirmity—the years of the right hand of the Most High, the deeds of Jah will I remember, for I will remember Thy wonders of old." Directly self-judgment is reached and God given His right place the remembrance of Him and His deeds of old bring comfort and encouragement, for the Spirit gives the consciousness that God, because He is God, is the unchanging One. What He was to His saints He ever will be (though this may be manifested in various ways at different times), but this is sanctuary knowledge, and *there* God's way is truly learned "according to the nature and ways of God Himself so far as He is revealed," as another has said; so here it is God Himself who stands before the soul; "Who is a great God like unto God?" In this stronghold of faith the rehearsal of God's ways with His people of old supplies courage; and while as regards outward evidence His way is in the sea and His path in the great waters and His footsteps unknown, yet this was just the way the Shepherd of Israel led His flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Christ in Isaiah.—Conclusion.

(HENRY J. VINE).

The Sign of God.

IT will be in the midst of Israel—the new-born nation blessed so richly in their Messiah—that the Sign of God will be set. God says, “I will set a Sign among them” (ver. 19). The Sign will stand in supreme sovereignty and divinely displayed excellence, attracting by its grace those who come with worshipping hearts to behold His glory. The tidings will be carried over the world by the escaped of Israel; for having come out of all nations, they will be well fitted in word and wisdom to carry the news to all (as He says) “that have not heard *My fame*, neither have seen *My glory*; and they shall declare *My glory* among the Gentiles” (ver. 19); “and they shall come and see *My glory*.” What a day that will be! The Sun of righteousness will shine in supreme splendour! The Salvation of God and the Sign of God will be seen and known by all!

He was seen and known as the Sign by just and pious Simeon, one of the remnant of Israel, who said, when he held the infant Jesus in His arms, “Now lettest Thou *Thy servant* depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen *Thy Salvation*,” and “This child . . . is for a *Sign* which shall be spoken against.” Millions have since his day found salvation in Christ through faith; but the day of his public showing to Israel and the world, in might, in majesty, and in glory, has not yet come. He is still the Sign spoken against.

That the book of Isaiah should close by showing us the Sign of God once more is what the believer in the unity of its authorship would expect. It is like a connecting cord passing through all the sections, binding them together: a cord of the Holy Spirit’s workmanship; sometimes it is seen, sometimes it is not; but it is always there, throughout the book. It is formed (symbolically

speaking) of the finest and fairest flax, intertwined with gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, telling us of the humanity, the deity, the royalty, and the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see it plainly in the first section, in chapter 7.; it appears unbroken in the central historical section (chapters 36.–39.); and here in our last chapter it is again prominent in the same *remnant associations* as before. First, we see Isaiah (*the salvation of the Lord*) with Shear-jashub (“*the remnant shall return*”), standing to speak of salvation, “at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, etc.” The Sign of this salvation is, “A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name IMMANUEL.” In the centre, it is the enemy who stands “at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, etc.” He threatens destruction; and they say in the city “the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.” God, however, promises salvation, and connects the Sign with *the remnant*. “This shall be a Sign unto thee . . . the remnant that is escaped . . . shall again take root.” The blaspheming enemies are destroyed; “and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.” Finally, the last chapter shows us the remnant again, the Shear-jashubs; and the Personal “Salvation of the Lord with them”; the Sign of God is “set among them”; the children are brought forth; and God’s glory is seen in Jerusalem; but outside we read, “They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have rebelled against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring of all flesh” (66. 24). Again, the blaspheming enemies are destroyed; but this time they become a permanent public witness of the just judgment of a holy God.

Inside the city, now exalted to royal eminence as the city of the Great King, to holy elevation as the city of the Lord, we see His glory displayed, and the Sign is set among them; He says, "I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory" (ver. 18). Yea, they shall bring the children of Israel to "My holy mountain Jerusalem," saith the Lord, as "an offering"; and of them shall be taken "for priests and for Levites" (ver. 20). And "ALL FLESH SHALL COME TO WORSHIP BEFORE ME, SAITH THE LORD" (ver. 23).

The choicest words seem to be too poor to adequately express the brightness and blessedness, the beauty and abundance and glory of that day, when the sure mercies of David shall abound; when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of David, raised from among the dead, shall reign right royally; when His people shall flourish, and be an eternal excellency as blessed in Him, an "everlasting sign" for God's glory; when Jerusalem shall have her Lord as her everlasting Light, and her God as her Glory; when the nations of the earth shall walk in Her Light, and kings by

the brightness of her rising; when righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all the nations; when everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord; when this now groaning earth shall shout and sing for gladness, because of Christ Jesus.

"Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing."

That day shall surely come. But what shall we say of the present privileges and the incomparable possessions of those who believe on Him now, whilst He is the Sign spoken against? Not only is eternal forgiveness, eternal salvation, eternal redemption, and eternal life theirs in Him, along with an eternal inheritance; but as belonging to the assembly, they are espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin; to be true to Himself *now*, whilst awaiting His coming; *then* in heavenly scenes of supernal splendour He will present the assembly to Himself, His fair and well-loved bride. The highest earthly glory does not reach to this, great as it is. To God in the assembly in Christ Jesus shall be glory for ever and ever.

Songs in the Night.

As a song bird is shut up in a dark place to learn a new song which it could not have learned in the light, so in our withdrawal into the shadow we are taught some new sweet song in the night which we may sing ever after in the ears of our God for His glory, and in the ears of sad and weary ones for their blessing. And no price is too great to pay for the privilege of learning to sing even a single note which will delight the heart of God and bless the broken-hearted. No sorrow is too great to endure if it reveals to us some new beauty in Christ, or brings out in us some new feature of Christlikeness.

Prayer and Thanksgiving.

Why is "thanksgiving" so frequently associated with "prayer"? There must be some reason for it. If we look at St. Paul's epistles we very seldom find the one mentioned without the other. It is probably intended to suggest the attitude of appropriation as well as of supplication. "Prayer" is asking; "thanksgiving" is testifying that we have received. It is just here that we fail: we ask, but we do not accept and appropriate. Faith in Scripture is twofold in meaning: there is the faith that *asks* and the faith that *accepts*. The faith that asks is expressed in "prayer"; the faith that accepts is expressed in "thanksgiving." We are continually asking, but have we the faith that appropriates?

Antichrist.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.—No. 14.

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”—(Rev. 13. 11-18).

IN John's day there were many antichrists; to-day there is a numerous host of them. The man who denies the Deity of Christ is a deceiver and an antichrist; but, bad as they are, a more awful exhibition of the opposition of man and Satan to Christ will be seen in this second beast “coming up out of the earth.” The seat of government of the second beast, who will be the antichrist, will be Jerusalem. The Holy Land at that time will be in a settled state, for “the earth” out of which he is said to rise signifies ordered government in contrast to the sea-confusion; the Jews will rank among the world-powers as a nation. To effect this is the great aim of the “Zionist” movement. Its supreme object is not merely to colonize but to nationalize. There is an active propaganda going on by its agents in different countries to get wealth poured into its coffers. Possessing neither armies nor fleets, its only hope is in a “golden key.” We gather from Isaiah 18. that the repatriation of the Jews will be brought about—instrumentally—through a maritime power. Should Greece obtain possession of Turkey in Europe it may possibly be through her; or England. We know that it will be a country beyond Ethiopia, consequently a western nation.

The more strict and orthodox Jews hold aloof from Zionism because of its distinctly secular object, but it gains ground through the love of fatherland which so permeates every Jew. If he

cannot live in Palestine, he contrives to save enough to die there. It is this desire for a revived nationality which will eventually carry the nation back in unbelief.

The revived Roman Empire will appear on the stage and will make a compact for seven years with the Jewish people. Under its powerful protection the nation will deem itself safe (Dan. 9. 27). They will set up a temple, renew its services and sacrifices, keep its sabbaths and celebrate its annual feasts on the spot where the Mosque of Omar now stands. This is not Ezekiel's Temple. That will be erected later by the “Man whose name is the Branch” (Zech. 6. 12). This one will probably be swept away when all nations gather against Jerusalem, sack the City, and carry off half its inhabitants (Zech. 14.).

It is asserted that the constituent parts of a temple already exist, and only await the auspicious moment when the nation is re-gathered for its erection. We can understand a temple being set up whilst the Jew is in unbelief, because it is a national gathering point, and an expression of tribal unity, as well as the centre of worship. When the nation is re-gathered, God will raise up teachers who shall instruct the people. They are the “wise” of Daniel 12. 3, who will shine amid the unbelieving nation, as stars in the firmament, turning many to righteousness.

For forty-two months, before the second woe-trumpet sounds, the witnesses spoken of in Revelation 11. will uninterruptedly carry on a powerful testimony. During that time the Jews apparently will not be molested either nationally or religiously, but at the end of that time all will be changed. Persecution will burst out furiously when the Roman beast breaks the covenant he made with the nation for seven years. What are treaties or covenants but "bits of paper" to be torn up at his will! The immediate cause of this savage attack is the revival of worship of Jehovah on the part of all men and of the Jews carried on in the temple and upheld by the testimony of the "two witnesses."

The last head of the revived Roman Empire, exercising autocratic power, and wielding universal dominion over the countries of ancient pagan Rome, energized by the dragon will blot out every trace of Christianity. Even the "mother of harlots"—whom he has probably used as a means of reaching his exalted position—will not be tolerated. Everything that, even outwardly, has any semblance of worship to any other god but himself, will be completely obliterated in the Gentile world. This accomplished, his attention will be turned to the Holy Land. Judaism as well as Christianity must be blotted out. How can he tolerate a temple devoted to the worship of any other than himself? So long as the Mosaic ritual, services, and sacrifices, are perpetuated, Satan's effort to secure universal worship is defeated.

Satan is a liar as well as a murderer. He corrupts where he cannot coerce. He accomplishes by subtlety what he fails to do by force. The mailed fist will prostrate the Gentile world at his feet, but the Jew must be deceived religiously. Their ancient Scriptures had taught them to look for a Messiah, who should be a prophet like Moses; and a king like Solomon; uniting in his person the regal state of a monarch with the holy

functions of a Prophet-Priest (Zech. 6. 13; Deut. 18. 18).

The two-horned lamb of Revelation 13. is Satan's counterfeit of the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke. Outwardly a lamb, inwardly a dragon. A lamb is a synonym for all that is meek, lowly and unresisting, whilst a dragon is the very opposite. "It is a voracious creature, fearlessly attacking man and beast, frightful to behold, with a scaly body and bearded jaw." What an awful parody of the Second Person of the Trinity! This is Satan's blasphemous imitation of Christ. He will assume to be *more* than king, priest, or prophet. Antiochus Epiphanes was his prototype. 168 B.C. he desecrated the temple, cast out the priests, polluted the sanctuary, caused the daily sacrifice to cease, offered forbidden sacrifices on the altar, decreed the Jews should forsake their religion, and erected an image to Julius Olympas—the god of war—and thus set up "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 11. 31). But he did not sit in the temple claiming to be God, nor did he demand for himself exclusive worship as this two-horned lamb will do.

Our Lord's words clearly indicate that there is to be a future fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy (Matt. 24. 15). This second beast fulfils it to the letter. He will come upon the scene personating Christ as a prophet, but a prophet who will not call upon men to repent; as a king, but not one who rules in righteousness; as a priest, but not one bringing a pure offering. More than this, he will claim to be God and display indubitable proofs of miraculous power to accredit his blasphemous assumptions, and prove his divine mission. "Miracles, wonders and signs" were the credentials of Jesus (Acts 2. 22). He also will, by similar proofs, pretend to show that he possesses divine power, working signs and wonders in the sight of all.

Aaron, the priest (Lev. 9. 24); Solomon, the potentate (2 Chron. 7. 1); and Elijah, the prophet (1 Kings 18. 38) had all witnessed the display of almighty

power when fire descended from heaven and consumed their sacrifice. This second beast will assert his claim to be the true God by bringing fire from heaven.

For a time his claim to godhead will be nullified. God's witnesses can also call down fire, and close the heavens that it rain not, and smite the earth with plagues. They must be got rid of. To effect this an alliance will be formed with the "god of Forces," an "agreement with hell" will be entered into with the first beast "out of the bottomless pit." His all-conquering sword will make war upon the witnesses, overcome and kill them. Henceforth the two beasts will divide the land for gain. The Jewish head will honour the Gentile autocrat with gold, silver and precious stones, in return for his powerful armed support (Dan. 11. 38). He will also increase the first beast's glory by causing an image to be made to the head of the revived Roman Empire, "the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image in the plain of Dura. Its object was by self-deification to unify the religions of his vast empire. The image was his representative; by falling down before it, they did homage to the one whom it set forth. The second beast decrees that the first beast must have an image. It shall be no dumb piece of metal, but a breathing, speaking thing, commanding the wonder and worship of all who behold it. Woe betide those who refuse to bow. A furnace seven times heated awaits them. They must bend the knee in worship, or be pitilessly persecuted and ruthlessly slain. All must bow, from the palace to the poorhouse, from the mansion to the cottage, rich and poor, free and bond alike. How is this universal homage to be secured? God had sealed His worshippers. Satan will seal his. Openly on the forehead or more secretly in the hand all must be branded with the mark, name, or number of the beast. These outward signs and tokens will indicate that they belong

to Satan's religious confederation, his ecclesiastical combine, his antichristian "union." Its object will be to secure for Satan the homage he has so persistently been seeking. It is his supreme, blasphemous attempt to rob God of that worship which essentially and exclusively belongs to Him. A violent death, and a relentless boycott, await all *not* bearing the mark, name, or number of this satanic combine. None shall sell *to* them or buy *from* them.

Antichrist is opposed to the Father and the Son. He will sit in the temple and proclaim himself to be the true and only God (2 Thess. 2. 4). Could blasphemy exceed this? A devil-inspired man claiming to be deified humanity and incarnate deity! When this takes place God's true worshippers will know, that the "abomination that maketh desolate" is set up, and this will be the signal for them to flee from Jerusalem as foretold by Matthew, just as Jerusalem being surrounded by armies was the signal in Luke. The last has been fulfilled. Matthew is future. According to Luke Israel has been scattered. According to Matthew Israel will be gathered again (see Luke 21. 20-24, and Matt. 24. 15-30). This man has many appellations. He is called "the bloody and deceitful man," the "lawless king," the "Idol shepherd," the "false prophet," the "son of perdition," the "man of sin." In him is headed up every evil. He is the second person of the satanic trinity. By seeking worshippers for the beast he imitates Christ as the seeker of worshippers for the Father; while Satan himself will impersonate the Holy Ghost. He is the unseen, spiritual power who energizes both beasts. The career of these two men will be short. It is numbered by days. Herod was smitten with worms, Nebuchadnezzar made to eat grass like an ox, when they claimed divine honours. The beast and the false prophet after 1260 days shall be cast *alive* into the lake of fire and suffer the eternal wrath of God whose Christ they dare so blasphemously to counterfeit.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Eternal Sonship of Christ.

A. C.—It seems strange that any company of Christians should deny the eternal sonship of Christ, even while they admit His deity as the Word, seeing that the Scriptures are so definite as to it. But it is an old heresy. The eternal Sonship of Christ is a great truth; it formed a most important part of the Apostles' testimony. John said, "We have seen and do testify that **THE FATHER SENT THE SON** to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14). But if the Lord were not the Son before He came into the world, there would have been neither Son to send nor Father to send Him. The Lord said to His disciples, "Ye have . . . believed that I came from God." So far their faith had reached, but He had something to tell them which was deeper and more blessed. "I came forth from **THE FATHER**" (John 16.

27, 28). But if He came forth from the Father He must have been the Son of the Father. To take away this is to rob Christianity of the fullness of its joy, for that fullness of joy consists in the revelation in Jesus Christ to us of those divine and eternal affections that existed in the Father and the Son in which we are called to participate. "That eternal life which was with the Father" could yield no joy to us apart from the love that was proper to it.

It is true that the Lord is called the Son of God as born into this world, and this title is often used in respect to His manhood, but not exclusively so; in 1 John 5. it is used interchangeably with "Son." In Colossians and Hebrews it is the Son who is the Creator, and creation preceded incarnation. We think that this is all we need to say as to this.

"If we Deny Him."

A. H. S.—The passage "If we deny Him, He also will deny us" (2 Tim. 2. 12) has in view apostasy from the Lord, the complete renunciation of allegiance of heart to Him. The Epistle looks on (chap. 3.) to the time when such denial of the Lord will be widespread. This will continue until finally, after the true believers have been caught away at the coming of the Lord, there will be nothing left in Christendom but a spurious profession still bear-

ing the name of Christ, but utterly repudiating His authority and falsifying His character. He will deny that, for He will spue it out of His mouth (Rev. 3. 16).

The case of a true Christian failing through unbelief, or in a moment of weakness being afraid to confess the Lord is not in question at all; that would come rather under the next clause: "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

Other "Answers to Correspondents" unavoidably held over.

Faith and Unbelief.

"Faith judges justly of all. Unbelief judges the circumstances correctly, and the consequences of things visible; it forgets but one thing, God, who comes in and upsets all these combinations, be they ever so wise. Faith pierces even to God across all circumstances and all difficulties. It does not stop to consider, it does not reason on the possibility of things because it only stops at God, and when man despairs, faith is perfectly calm and happy. Faith has no need either of human reasoning or of human prudence. . . . The wisdom of faith is looking to God, doing His will, and troubling about nothing. When Christ comes, one then sees that the fear of God is wisdom and treasure."