

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

EIGHTH ANNUAL VOLUME
(1916)

“And Jesus answered him, saying, IT IS WRITTEN,
That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every
word of God” (Luke 4. 4).

“These were more noble than those of Thessalonica,
in that they received the word with all readiness of
mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those
things were so” (Acts 17. 11).

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

INDEX

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|---------------|--|------|
| A | | | |
| Able to Save | 123 | Corn of Canaan, The | 14 |
| About Angels. | 146, 216 | Creator with His Creature, The | 247 |
| Abide with Me (Poetry) | 67 | Cry for Peace, A (Poetry) | 1 |
| Anna, A Prophetess | 59 | D | |
| Are the Anglo-Saxons the Lost Ten Tribes | 52 | Deity of Christ, The | 185 |
| Assembly of God, The | 160 | Difficulties of a Missionary | 229 |
| Attractive Power of Christ, The | 34 | Disputation | 143 |
| B | | | |
| Be Careful for Nothing | 173 | Dissension and Dissolution | 69 |
| Before Abraham was, I am | 244 | Do We Realise? | 3 |
| Bonds of Unity | 250 | E | |
| Brethren Dwelling To- gether in Unity | 44 | Edification and Education | 177 |
| Bridal Affection and Bro- therly Love | 68 | Estimative Faculty, The | 179 |
| Buying and Selling. | 93 | Everlasting Father, The | 78 |
| C | | | |
| Call to Prayer | 2 | F | |
| Cause of Discord, A | 80 | Faith or Something Else? The | 81 |
| Cause of Much Murmur- ing, The | 83 | "Father's Bosom, The" | 259 |
| Chiefest among Ten Thou- sand, The | 187 | Father's Glorified, The (Poetry) | 215 |
| Christ, Who is Our Life | 90 | Fellowship, Our | 262 |
| Christ, The | 106, 132, 198 | First Recorded Prayer Meeting in Europe | 114 |
| Christ, In | 285 | "First" and "After" | 116 |
| Christian Ministry, The | 237, 270 | Forgiving One Another | 64 |
| Christian Fellowship | 140 | "For the Sake of the Name" | 308 |
| Comments and Communications (<i>Editor</i>):— | | From the Form of God to the Form of a Servant | 281 |
| The Gospel to the Soldiers | 28 | G | |
| The Unprofitable Prayer Meeting | 29, 60 | God and the Word of His Grace | 188 |
| The Need for Labourers | 87 | God Revealed | 310 |
| What is Idolatry? | 88 | Grace of the Lord, The | 80 |
| Is the Truth or the Effects of it the Standard? | 235, 328 | H | |
| Contradiction of Sin- ners, The" | 191 | Hand of God, The | 166 |
| | | Heavenly Light | 21 |
| | | "He that hath an Ear" | 163 |

Scripture Truth.

| | PAGE | | | PAGE |
|---|--|------------------------|---|------|
| "He Leadeth Me" | 234 | <i>J. J. Anning</i> | O | |
| He made Himself of no Reputation | 276 | <i>J. N. D.</i> | | |
| "He was Numbered with Transgressors" | 240 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| Help in Trouble | 33 | <i>E. Cross</i> | | |
| Higher Criticism in the Mission Field | 36 | <i>H. P. Barker</i> | | |
| "His Desire is Toward Me" | 5 | <i>H. Smith</i> | | |
| How the Worst Sinner was Converted | 167 | <i>J. Davies</i> | | |
| I | | | | |
| Interesting Instance of God's Work, An | 131 | | | |
| Is it Possible to be Without Anxiety? | 161 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| J | | | | |
| "Jesus the Son of God" | 104 | <i>J. W. Smith</i> | | |
| Justified | 77 | | | |
| K | | | | |
| Kingdom that Cannot be Moved, A | 18 | <i>J. W. Smith</i> | | |
| L | | | | |
| Lessons from the Tabernacle | 19, 43, 84, 126, 142, 201, 222, 245, 272, 288, 314 | <i>A. J. Pollock</i> | | |
| Life of Faith, The | 264 | | | |
| Lord the Spirit, The | 61 | <i>J. N. D.</i> | | |
| Lord's Coming, The | 296 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| Lord and the Scriptures, The | 50 | | | |
| M | | | | |
| Man of God, The | 174 | <i>J. Boyd</i> | | |
| Manner of Christ's Service, The | 307 | <i>J. McCulloch</i> | | |
| "Me," "Me" | 75 | <i>Ralph Erskine</i> | | |
| Model Christian Couple, The | 70 | <i>H. P. Barker</i> | | |
| "My Infirmity" — His Wonders | 135 | | | |
| "My Way Hidden" | 178 | <i>J. W. Smith</i> | | |
| My Soul Waiteth upon God | 257 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| My Soul Waiteth upon God (Poetry) | 273 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| N | | | | |
| New Man, The | 50 | | | |
| "No" to the World, "Yes" to God | 114 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Old Men Weeping and the People Shouting for Joy | 317 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| Oneness or Uniformity | 300 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| Order of the Pauline Epistles, The | 141 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| P | | | | |
| Power of the Word, The | 280 | | | |
| Prayers for Spain | 24 | | | |
| Preacher of Righteousness Ensnared, A | 221 | <i>T. Oliver</i> | | |
| Preacher in Search of a Text, The | 246 | | | |
| Preciousness of Christ, The | 35 | <i>A. J. Pidgeon</i> | | |
| Pre-eminence of Jesus, The (Poetry) | 129 | <i>J. Boyd</i> | | |
| Precious Stones of Scripture | 213 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| Press On | 83 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| Prophet, The, Jeremiah | 112, 138, 180, 203, 224, 251, 275, 293 | <i>H. J. Vine</i> | | |
| Profitable Prayer Meeting, The | 96 | | | |
| Psalms, Studies in the | 25, 48, 94, 124, 154, 183, 205, 226, 274, 301, 327 | <i>C. H. E. Warren</i> | | |
| Q | | | | |
| "Quit you like Men" | 65 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| R | | | | |
| Reconciliation | 148 | | | |
| Redemption | 209 | <i>J. Boyd</i> | | |
| Regions Beyond, The | 8 | <i>H. P. Barker</i> | | |
| Reveille (Poetry) | 51 | <i>R. Y. Farrant</i> | | |
| Reminiscences of an Old Soldier | 110 | <i>J. Davies</i> | | |
| Russia's Place in the Near East | 168 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| S | | | | |
| Signs of the Night | 325 | | | |
| Similitudes of the Kingdom | 120, 144, 181, 206, 253, 260, 290, 322 | <i>James Green</i> | | |
| Song of Hope, A (Poetry) | 51 | <i>I. Fleming</i> | | |
| Star of the Morning, The | 109 | <i>A. Stevenson</i> | | |
| Strike Only on the Box | 130 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| T | | | | |
| Talk about Difficulties, The | 42 | <i>J. T. Mawson</i> | | |
| To "All who Love the Lord Jesus" | 2 | | | |

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|---|------|---|------|
| Truth or its Effects? The | 40 | Esau's Birth right | 159 |
| Two Pentateuchs, The | 170 | Exodus 12. 8, 9, and John 6. 53 | 128 |
| Twofold Exodus, A | 193 | Fate of Those who Die Impenitent, The | 157 |
| U | | | |
| Ups and Downs of Life, The | 22 | Fulfilling all Righteous- ness | 32 |
| W | | | |
| Waiting to be Called Up | 176 | "Gathered in, or unto the Name of the Lord" | 128 |
| Way Home, The | 302 | "Greater Love hath no Man than This" | 255 |
| Way of the Lord, The | 265 | Lord's Supper and Wor- ship, The | 279 |
| Way of Deliverance, The | 242 | Matthew 18. 19. 20. | 277 |
| What is the Cross? | 228 | May the Lord come at any moment? | 32 |
| When He Cometh Home | 305 | Meetings for Prayer | 277 |
| "Where Two or Three" | 118 | Prayers of the Saints | 156 |
| Who is He? | 99 | Reconciliation of All Things, The | 207 |
| Why? | 233 | References to the Sword in the Gospels | 30 |
| Why Believers Suffer | 266 | Restitution of All Things The | 208 |
| "Woman, Why Weepst Thou?" | 97 | Separation from Evil and Service | 32 |
| Years that the Locust has Eaten, The | 11 | Spirits in Prison, The | 158 |
| ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS (<i>Editor</i>):— | | | |
| Assembly and Fellow- ship, The | 277 | "Some to Everlasting Life, and Some to Shame," etc. | 256 |
| Baptized for the Dead | 207 | Subjection to the Higher Powers | 184 |
| Christ Made Sin for Us | 254 | Saviour of All Men, The | 206 |
| Christian and the Social Welfare of Men, The | 31 | 2 Thessalonians 2. 10-12 | 159 |
| Church and the Tribula- tion, The | 63 | Time of the Dead that they should be Judged, The | 208 |
| Communion of Saints | 156 | War with the Saints | 63 |
| Death | 159 | Work Completed until the Day of Jesus Christ | 157 |
| Do the Scriptures hold out any hope of Salva- tion in another age for those who have re- jected Christ in this? | 256 | | |

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

A Cry for Peace.

ONCE more, upon its fiery centre hung,
Has this great world its trackless orbit traced,
And still Thine offspring, God, are being flung
By cursed war, like compost on the waste—
Look on the killed, and those compelled to kill,
And peace create, Lord, if it be Thy will.

The silver moon that rules the grisly nights
Has registered but sighs and griefs and groans ;
The stars have witnessed soul-distressing sights,
And of the dying heaven has heard the moans—
Behold, O God, the souls that slaughtered lie :
To Thee, the Lord of Peace, for peace we cry !

The dew upon the fields of France is red,
And Belgium, battered, bruised, and bleeding lies ;
Trembles the earth beneath the martial tread
Of myriads, who shall fall no more to rise—
Bring to an end, O Lord, this brutal strife,
And grant Thy people poor, a tranquil life.

The welkin shakes with bursting shot and shell,
Uprooted hills are to the heavens hurled,
And from the fierce infernal regions hell
Has let her legions loose upon the world—
Look, Lord, upon Thy people's sorrows sore,
And in Thy mercy early peace restore.

What comes to-morrow none of us can tell :
Shall New Year bells the Saviour's advent ring ?
Or shall this hell a still more horrid hell
With all its woes upon Thy creatures bring ?
O Lord, rebuke the foe ! For Thee we wait,
For Thou alone canst lasting peace create.

(JAMES BOYD).

A Call to Prayer.

THE following brief but fervent appeal to the children of God everywhere has been sent to us, and in publishing it we are sure that a ready response will be produced in those to whom it is made.

The three things mentioned in the appeal do not exhaust the need, though they are very pressing at the moment. There is one other that we would add to the list that lies very heavily on the hearts of those who love the truth. Christ's assembly—the church for which He gave Himself—is nearing the end of her earthly pilgrimage, and, judging by what our eyes can see, the heavenly Bridegroom that she goes to meet does

not hold the supreme place in her affections. Satan and the world have corrupted her from the simplicity that is in Christ, and the carnality of those who compose her has caused unseemly strife and division within her borders. And, alas, oneness of mind in the Lord and the unity of the Spirit seem matters of indifference to the many. Let us make earnest petitions for a quickening of affection to the Lord on the part of the assembly; that the unity of the Spirit may be more truly kept; and that there may be truer separation of heart from the world, and with all our prayers let the cry go up from heart and lip, "AMEN, EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

To "All who Love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity."

IN the present dark and distressing times through which we are passing, may we, in the fear of God, humbly and earnestly APPEAL to you, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, "fellow-citizens of the household of God" (Eph. 2. 19), to make the following matters the daily, continual burden of your souls at the throne of grace. One cannot contemplate the present heart-rending scene without feeling the dire necessity for much real prayer, and our God has graciously invited us to "come boldly" (Heb. 4. 16), and assured us that "if two agree" in earnest believing prayer, He WILL hear and answer. We are firmly convinced that Elijah's God still lives, His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear; then be it ours to pray, plead, yea, intercede before Him. These lands have heard the trumpet sound the "Call to Arms," and in response millions of the nation's manhood have surrendered home, friends, earthly comforts, all that this life holds dear, yea, even life itself when necessary, to serve their King and country. Shall Christians be less heedful of the "Call to Prayer"?

Shall not all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth and would seek to maintain the honour and dignity of His Word stir themselves up at this time? Christian reader, we strongly appeal to YOU, pray and pray unceasingly, and we are assured God WILL hear and He WILL answer.

1. That God would keep and safeguard His own people and maintain them in the liberty and freedom wherewith THE SON makes free by His grace and the power of His glorious right arm.

2. That He would especially own and bless the gospel of the glory of His beloved Son in this fearful day of strife and sorrow, and grant that the "old, old story of Jesus and His love" may in Holy Ghost power appeal to hearts otherwise sad, hopeless and desolate, and lead them into the joys that belong to those who know Him.

3. That God would in His great mercy and love speedily accomplish His purposes and bring the awful crisis of nations to a speedy close, giving to the troubled nations of the earth peace and to his people a little reviving in answer to their prayers.

Do we Realize ?

(W. BRAMWELL DICK).

DO WE REALIZE sufficiently the gravity of the present crisis in the world's history? Never did we enter upon a year with such a pall of sorrow overshadowing the land, and with a greater feeling of uncertainty as to what may lie immediately ahead. The greater part of the so-called civilized world is in the throes of a war the like of which has never been known. It has been stated that the casualties—including killed, maimed for life and less severely wounded—may be computed at the rate of several millions annually, and these comprise the best of the world's manhood; while in this land the call continues to go out for "Men, more men and still more men to fight for King and country." And this is not the failure of Christianity as some assert, but the fearful fruit of the rule of Satan, the prince and god of this world.

DO WE REALIZE that we, who have been saved by grace, are a heavenly people? We are doubtless familiar with this truth as contained in the Holy Scriptures, as presented in the written and oral ministry of the servants of the Lord, and as something commonly believed by many of the people of God. Never, however, have we, of this generation, been tested, as we are being tested at the present time, as to how far we have this great truth in divine power in our souls.

By calling and by birth we are heavenly. In the past vista of eternity we were chosen to be a heavenly people, to be "partakers of the heavenly calling," to be endowed with "heavenly blessings"; and as we pursue our course to a heavenly home it is ours to shed around us the fragrance of a heavenly atmosphere, as well as manifest the characteristics of a heavenly company.

There was a time when we belonged to this world, and were absorbed by its politics, its pursuits and its pleasures; but when grace met us, and we who had been the children of the world became

"the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," the cross of Christ, which was the means of securing our blessing, became also the line of demarcation that separated us from this world ever after.

This we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians, where in chapter 1, verses 3 and 4, we read that: ". . . Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." While in chapter 6, verse 14, the Apostle exclaims: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The other side is that our affections are now in heaven because our Lord is there. Our politics are there, all our interests are there, we live there—or should do so—in spirit now, and we await the moment when He Himself shall introduce us to that place which will be our home for ever.

DO WE REALIZE the immensity of our privilege, and the greatness of our responsibility as a heavenly people in connection with the present crisis? Let us read carefully, and ponder in God's presence 1 Timothy 2. 1-8, and there we shall find directions for the present time stated as clearly as if they had been written for our exclusive benefit. Here is **A CLARION CALL TO ALL CHRISTIANS** to exercise their function as intercessors. We are exhorted to pray "for all men"—of every nationality—"for kings"—note the plural—"and for all that are in authority."

Observe! We are not instructed to assemble ourselves in order to extol the prowess of men, to acclaim the success of arms, or to assert our confidence in the arm of flesh. The directions are clear and unmistakable, the object of our intercession is to be that God's glory may be maintained, that the interests of His people everywhere may be conserved, and that men of every class and

of every clime may be saved. Just as our Lord said regarding the Temple: "My house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11. 17, marginal reading), so the house of God as presented in 1 Timothy, composed of all the people of God, is the channel of prayer for all nations now. Let us see how it works—Kings decree—Politicians legislate—Diplomats scheme—Men of the world, when called upon to do so, record their convictions and indicate their will by their votes. With all these things we have nothing whatever to do ;

WE HAVE TO DO WITH GOD !

He is behind all these various agencies that we have enumerated, and He is working to-day not for the betterment of mankind as such, not for the improvement of the world as at present constituted, but for that which we have just indicated, and for which we are exhorted to pray. So that we who are the children of God, and we alone, are in immediate and constant communication with the power to whom every other power must submit, and who will ultimately work everything "after the counsel of His own will." Again we venture to inquire:

DO WE REALIZE the privilege and the responsibility that are ours? It is because we are a heavenly people that we can exercise this holy function. Let us recall how Abraham prayed for Sodom. Lot, attracted by its well-watered plains, and indifferent to the call that had brought Abraham out to be a stranger and pilgrim, was caught in its vortex, and was in danger of sharing its doom. Abraham, outside of it, prayed for it, and that because perchance there might be some righteous men therein. How delightful and withal how instructive it is to listen to that saintly man as he interceded with God, to hear God's replies to his pleading, and to see how one man could—unknown to any—gain the ear and secure the promise of Him in whose hand lay the destiny of Sodom. In the self-same way we may gain the ear now of Him to

whom belongs the ultimate government, by Christ, of the whole universe.

The very fact that we are a heavenly people means that we must necessarily be affected by what is going on here. We cannot be indifferent to the unspeakable suffering and anguish that meet us at every turn. Our hearts go out in the tenderness and sympathy of Christ to the wounded and dying. We mourn as we think of blasted hopes, of blighted lives and desolate homes, and we weep for those who in this the hour of their dire extremity know not God. It may be asked, "What are we to do?" The answer is, "PRAY!!!!" The call is loud and insistent, but it is because we feel that we do not yet fully appreciate the tremendous importance thereof that we dare to repeat the question—

DO WE REALIZE the great privilege and responsibility that devolve upon us as the children of God?

In most places the Lord's people have the opportunity of being gathered together once a week to pray, but unfortunately this meeting generally has been—and, we regret to say, is still—the most sparsely attended of all meetings; the same few attend week by week, and the same voices are constantly heard in audible supplication.

We earnestly appeal to our beloved fellow-believers, if there is no meeting for prayer in your district arrange one forthwith; if such a meeting already exists let nothing prevent your being there. Drop business, set aside household duties, forgo evening classes, and be done with everything that would hinder attendance at the meeting for prayer. Let us, on that particular occasion, fill the building in which we are wont to assemble; let every brother and sister assume the only attitude that is becoming in God's presence; let every brother's tongue be loosed; let the duration of the meeting be regulated not by the clock, but by the power for intercession, and let us there, as well as daily in our own closet—

Pray! and Pray! and PRAY!!!

“His Desire is Toward Me.”

(HAMILTON SMITH).

DOES this lovely utterance of the bride in the Song of Songs give expression to any experience that we have ever known in the secret of our soul's history with the Lord?

The bride could not always have spoken thus. There came a day when the vision of the Bridegroom filled her soul: when, for the first time, realizing something of the preciousness of His love, and the sweetness of His name, she exclaims, “*Thy love is better than wine,*” and “*Thy name is as ointment poured forth*” (1. 2, 3).

He became something to her, but was she anything to Him? This was the question that weighed upon her heart. She knew something of her deep need. “I am black because the sun hath looked upon me”: she knew something of His deep perfections, for she could say, “*Behold, thou art fair, my Beloved*” (1. 16). Her heart went out in longing to Him, but was it possible that One so fair could have any affection for one so black? The desire of her heart finds expression in her request, “*Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.*” If He loves me let Him give me the token of His love.

And then, in the progress of her history, there came a time when she heard the voice of her Beloved: “*My Beloved spake and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away*” (2. 10). It was the personal call of the Bridegroom. He answers the longing of her soul. He lets her know that He has longings after her. He will not be without her: “*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away*” (2. 13). And at once the glad response is drawn from the bride, “*My Beloved is mine, and I am His*” (2. 16). It is true she has some sense that she belongs to Him, but the uppermost thought in her heart is, I have an interest in Him; He is mine; “**MY BELOVED IS MINE.**”

But, in the progress of the Song of Songs, the bride passes through other

and varied experiences, leading her into a deeper acquaintance with her Beloved. For a season the Bridegroom withdraws Himself, leaving the bride in darkness and alone (3. 1, 2). The bride seeks her Beloved but cannot find Him. In vain she searches the city, He is not there; in vain she inquires of the watchmen, they cannot help her. But when she has passed them by,—when other helpers fail, then He discovers Himself to her in all His glory as the Bridegroom and the King. She sees the King crowned with glory and honour, but she sees the Bridegroom “in the day of the gladness of His heart” (3. 4–11). And having revealed His own glory, He declares all that the bride is in His sight: “*Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee*” (4. 7).

But alas, in spite of this wonderful unfolding of His thoughts toward His bride, her heart grows slothful, resting content in the assurance of His love. She fails to respond to His voice, and He withdraws, but only to reawaken yearnings of heart after Himself. If affections were dull in His presence, He will awaken them by His absence. She opens to Him, but He is gone: she seeks Him, but He cannot be found: she calls to Him, but there is no answer. In the city she is only exposed to sorrow and shame; her Beloved is not there.

But the absence of the Bridegroom has kindled afresh all her affections; her heart is longing to declare His glories. Her companions inquire, “*What is thy Beloved more than another?*” And at once her heart overflows with His praise. He is “the chiefest among ten thousand. . . . He is altogether lovely” (5. 10–6.).

Her heart is filled with His glories, her lips tell forth His praise. He rises up before the vision of her soul. No longer is there need to seek Him; she knows where He is: “*My Beloved is gone down into His garden*” (6. 2);

she has found Him, and engrossed with the glories of the Bridegroom she exclaims, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (6. 3). Time was when her first thought was, "My Beloved is mine," *He belongs to me*; but now her first thought is, "I AM MY BELOVED'S," I belong to Him.

But blessed as these experiences are she has yet to make a deeper acquaintance with the heart of the Bridegroom. The vision of the Bridegroom had filled her soul, and she had witnessed to others of His glories (5. 9-16), but now she is to taste the far deeper joy of hearing from the lips of the Bridegroom the thoughts of His heart about her: "Thou art beautiful, O my love," "How fair and how pleasant art thou" (6. 4, 7. 6).

She tells others what the Bridegroom is in her sight, but He tells the bride what she is in His sight. In secret He pours into her ear all the delight that she is to Him. He would have her to know, not only how beautiful she is in His sight, but how precious she is to His heart: "My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one" (6. 9). Others there may be, but none can compare with the bride in His sight.

At once her heart responds with an outburst of joy, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me" (7. 10). Time was when she could say, with great delight, "*My Beloved is mine*"; then, as she ripens in acquaintance with Him, she says, "*I am my Beloved's*"; and finally, lost in wonder, as she hears from His lips the unfolding of the depths of His love to her, she exclaims, "I am my Beloved's, and HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME."

And does not every true believer know something of these experiences? Can we not look back to a time when, realizing our deep need, and something of the love and grace of Christ, we were drawn to Him? And yet, as we thought of the blackness of our hearts the question would arise, "Can it be possible that He loves me—even me?" And we longed to get some assurance of our

personal interest in Christ: and then in answer to all these longings—for He satisfieth the longing soul—there came a day when, as we sometimes sing,

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest."

We heard the voice of the Beloved—the voice of the Son of God—calling us to rise up from this poor world and come away. We heard Him say, "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone"; that the storm that was over our heads had burst upon His head—His thorn-crowned head. And as we looked by faith upon the risen Saviour all our fears were dispelled, like those of the disciples of old, as they heard Him say, "Behold My hands and My feet." Beholding those wounds, the witness of His death, the glorious truth was borne in upon our souls, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." We could say at last, He is my Saviour; "*My Beloved is mine.*"

How good to have the happy assurance that "Jesus is mine." But He would lead us on into a deeper knowledge of His thoughts to us-ward. He would have us begin at the cross, but He would not have us stop there. As with the disciples, He would establish our hearts with the story of the cross, telling us by the wounds in His hands and feet of a dying Saviour; and as with those same disciples, He would have us to pass on in our faith, and receive the wonderful message of the risen Saviour when He said to Mary, "Go to *My brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God." He would have us know that not only He is our Saviour, but that we are His brethren; His Father our Father, and His God our God. And as this message lays hold of our souls we can say, with great delight, "*I am my Beloved's.*"

How good to know that I belong to Christ, and Christ is mine. But is this all? We have received great benefits from the Lord, forgiveness, justification, the gift of the Spirit, shelter from judg-

ment and a title to glory, and we can truly say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." But is this all the Lord had in view when He took that great journey from the throne in heaven to a cross on earth? Was it only for this that He who was rich became poor? Only for this that the Creator of the worlds became a stranger in the land? Only for this that He wept in the garden, and suffered on the cross? Was there no deeper, greater longing in His heart than just to confer benefits upon you and me? Indeed there was, and we wrong His great heart of love when we measure the greatness of His thoughts toward us by our poor thoughts of Him.

If we would know His thoughts toward us, we must look back before ever the earth was, before a single created being had a being; then in that great eternity He looked through time into an eternity beyond, and saw a great company of people according to the purpose of His own heart, and, beholding them, He could say, "My delights were with the sons of men."

And when He came into time, it is blessedly true that He healed our sicknesses and set the captive free; that He fed the hungry and clothed the naked; that He forgave our sins and raised the dead: all this He did, but He did more. Not only He met our needs, but beyond everything else He won the hearts of those whose needs He met. He attracted poor sinners and attached their hearts to Himself. He gave them to know that not only He was their Saviour, not only that they belonged to Him, but that His desire was toward them.

His desire is toward us, and therefore He became a poor Man, a lonely Man, a weary Man, and a thirsty Man to win our hearts. His desire is

toward us, and therefore He suffered, bled and died to make us like Himself. His desire is toward us, and therefore is He coming again to receive us unto Himself that where He is we may be also. He seems to say, "I want you; I can dispense with your riches, your abilities, and even your service, but I cannot do without you. I want you so much that I became a poor Man to win your heart; I want you so much that I died to make you like Myself; I want you so much that soon I am coming for you to have you with Myself." And as we enter into His thoughts toward us, well may we each exclaim, with great delight, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me."

How good, as I pass through a world of sin and sorrow, death and judgment, to be able to look up to the Man in the glory and say, "He is my Saviour."

More wonderful still as I pass through a world of dangers and snares on every hand, to be able to look up to the Saviour at the right hand of power, and say, "I am His."

But most wonderful of all to be able to say, "There is a home in the glory that awaits me, and a Man in the glory that wants me." "His desire is toward me." He wants me so much that in the days of His flesh He wept for me and prayed for me, He suffered for me, and died for me; and all the days of my journey He is living for me; and soon—very soon—He is coming for me. And not till He has me with Him, and like Him, will the desires of His heart toward me be satisfied. But when all the redeemed are gathered home and His "new name's imprinted on every sinless brow," then shall we realize in a deeper, fuller way that His desire is toward us, and "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

"Sing, my soul! He loved thee,
Jesus gave Himself for me."

The Regions Beyond.

(H. P. BARKER).

AMONG the many villages which are to-day mere heaps of debris, the result of continual bombardment by German guns, perhaps none has suffered more severely than Baccarat, in French Lorraine. In its main street not the semblance of a house remains. The walls of its church still stand, but they have been riddled with shot and shell, and the belfry tower has been knocked to pieces.

Amid all the havoc, however, the village fountain, a beautiful work of art, stands uninjured. Its copious stream of water still flows, as free as ever, for the thirsty and way-worn traveller.

May we not see in this a picture of how the grace of God has pursued its way, impeded neither by the rise and fall of empires, nor by any of the tragic events of the past nineteen centuries; Cherished institutions have been swept into oblivion; the scourge of war has devastated continents from end to end; the face of the world has undergone repeated changes. But the fountain of grace still flows; thirsty multitudes still betake themselves thereto, and find salvation.

The church, left here on earth to witness for her Lord during His absence, has not escaped the ruthless havoc wrought by the great enemy of God and man. Her pristine brightness was soon lost, and she became the lodging-place of every unclean bird. Unregenerate men, tools of Satan, seized power and authority in the church, dragged her down into the mire of worldliness, contaminated her with abominable heresies, and rent her by a hundred schisms. But, in spite of all, the fountain of salvation still affords refreshing draughts of life-giving water; the invitation to drink is still addressed to "whosoever will." The gospel is as much as ever God's power unto salvation to every one that believeth; His servants are still entitled, nay, *commanded*, to carry the

glad tidings to every creature under heaven.

It is true that the need for pastoral care among the sheep of God's flock was never so great. For lack of wholesome food many are sickly all their lives. The ministry of the Word, the ministry of *Christ* to His people in such a way as to quicken their consciences and move their affections is urgently called for. But we are not to let this, *or anything else*, stand in the way of our continual endeavour to spread the glad tidings of salvation among those still in ignorance thereof.

I. The Example of Christ.

Let us see what, on two occasions, the Lord Himself did. The setting sun looked down upon a wonderful scene. Thronging crowds had flocked from far and near to sit at the feet of Galilee's mighty Prophet. (The story is told in the closing verses of Luke 4.) Those that had sick friends brought them, and they were healed, one and all. Demons were cast out; the power of God was manifesting itself on behalf of His creature, man.

What an opportunity for these multitudes to be taught! So eager for teaching were they that the next day, though the Lord had withdrawn to a place of solitude, they discovered His retreat and came surging around Him once more, clamouring for His continued presence. Here surely was an open door for ministry, and a need beyond all question.

But *they had heard* the glad tidings of the kingdom; *they had witnessed* the gracious deeds of the Saviour, and He turns from them, not with coldness or indifference, but with a longing to reach others who had not yet seen and heard. "*I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also,*" He says, and leaves them for the populous high-

lands of Galilee. In acting thus He was, as ever, pursuing the pathway of the will of God, for in announcing His departure to preach in the regions beyond, He adds: "*for therefore am I sent.*"

The other incident to which I refer is recorded in the following chapter. A large and representative company of most intelligent people had come to attend the Master's teaching. There they were: respected leaders of the Pharisee party, men learned in the law from every town, not only of the northern province, but from far-away Judæa. Teachers were there from the great metropolitan synagogues; Rabbis from Jerusalem who led the religious thought of the nation. There they sat, listening to the gracious words of the One who spake as no other had ever done. What an occasion! No doubt Peter, John and the other zealous disciples would think it highly important that these interesting inquirers, these men so highly placed in the religious world, should thoroughly understand their Master's message.

But lo, an interruption! The roof of the house is torn up and a couch lowered into the midst of the crowded meeting. The Master pauses. He turns from His teaching to the man upon the couch and graciously says: "*Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*"

Think of it, my soul! The greatest of teachers turns from one of His greatest opportunities, to talk to a needy sinner about forgiveness! The great personages were displeased. But the Saviour found His meat in doing the will of God, in calling, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The consideration of these two incidents should for ever banish from our lips the plea of "*So much need at home*" as an excuse for neglecting the "regions beyond." To plead in this manner is not to follow the Master's steps. Yet do we not often hear such reasoning? "I cannot think of China, or Africa, or South America, because

of the greatness of the need *here.*" Has the reader never heard such language?

Mr. Eugene Stock aptly compares the situation to one which *might* have arisen at the feeding of the five thousand.

"Let us imagine," he says, "what would have happened on the Galilean hillside, when the Lord fed the five thousand, if the apostles had acted as some act now. The twelve would be helping the first row over and over again, leaving the back rows unsupplied. Suppose one of them, say Andrew, ventures to say to his brother, Simon Peter, 'Ought we all to be feeding the front row? Ought we not to divide, and some of us go to the back rows?' Then suppose that Peter replies: 'Oh, no! don't you see these front people are so hungry? They have not had half enough yet; besides, they are nearest to us, so we are more responsible for them.'

"Then, if Andrew resumes his appeal, suppose Peter goes on to say: 'Very well; you are quite right. You go and feed all those back rows, but I can't spare anyone else. I and the other ten of us have more than we can do here.'

"Once more, suppose Andrew persuades Philip to go with him; then perhaps Matthew will cry out and say: 'Why, they're all going to those farthest rows! Is no one to be left to these needy people in front?' Let me ask . . . Do you recognize these sentences at all?"

I may be told that *divine guidance* settles all these questions, and that the great thing is to go where the Lord directs. Perfectly true; but in this case why urge the fact of the need at home upon those who seem to be hearing their Master say, "Who will go for us?"

II. The Example of Paul.

Let us consider the attitude of the Apostle Paul to this question. He had often thought, with earnest desire, of the newly formed assembly in the city of the Cæsars. Unceasingly he made

mention of them in his prayers, and besought God that, if it were His will, he might be prospered—in journeying to them. “I long to see you,” he said, for he knew that his visit and ministry among them would be for their establishment in the grace of God. No wonder that he affirmed that *oftentimes* he had purposed to come to them. He had been, however, up to that time, hindered. (See Romans 1. 8–13.)

Now what was it that again and again hindered the Apostle thus? What was it that stood in the way so often when his desire was to preach the word among the Roman believers? A passage towards the end of the epistle informs us. We learn from chapter 15. that *for many years* Paul had had a *great* desire to come to Rome, but that he had been hindered by the fact that he strove to preach the gospel *in places where Christ had not yet been named!* (see vers. 19–29). In his judgment this work claimed precedence over that, so important in its place, which awaited him in the imperial city.

Notice a further thing. The Apostle’s ardently desired and long-promised visit to Rome was, after all, to be secondary to a journey to Spain! “Having a great desire these many years to come unto you,” he says, “*whenever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you*” (ver. 24). He repeats his intention in verse 28: “*I will come by you into Spain.*”

The eyes of the intrepid Apostle were turned towards the great Iberian peninsula: that was the goal of his desire, as far as the sphere of his service was concerned. The saints at Rome needed his ministry; yes, but greater still was the need that lay further afield, and he would, if permitted to come to Rome, merely sojourn there for a while, to see the saints, and be brought by them on his way to Spain! (ver. 24). Whether he ever got as far as Spain, after his release from his first imprisonment, we do not know. It is not material to our

point. We speak merely of the motives and desires which influenced the Apostle in his path of service. He certainly did not allow the specious plea of “so much need among Christians” to weigh with him against the call of the still greater need of the “regions beyond.”

III. The Example of Timothy.

But to return to our main theme. Timothy was a man of whom Paul could say, “He worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do” (1 Cor. 16. 10). Now Timothy was left by the Apostle at Ephesus for the special purpose of maintaining sound doctrine there (1 Tim. 1. 3). The assembly in this city was numerous, and afforded wide scope for the exercise of such a gift as Timothy’s. Yet, after all, the city itself was heathen still. Their goddess Diana still reigned in the hearts of the Ephesians. The Christians were but an insignificant handful compared with the mass of the inhabitants. Timothy was to be mindful of this. He was not to be so absorbed in his conflict for sound doctrine and wholesome practice as to forget the deep need of the great throbbing heathen city. He was to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4. 5), not in a kind of semi-Christianized world, but in the heathendom of densest darkness which surrounded him, among the thousands of the Ephesian Diana worshippers.

Timothy is rightly regarded as a pattern for the “man of God” to-day. Let us remember that in our time also Christians (even if all who merely profess the name of Christian be reckoned) are in a minority. The bulk of the world is still heathen. And if we cannot but be increasingly conscious of the great need of the ministry of Christ everywhere in Christendom, let not the consciousness of *that* hinder anyone from going to the lands of darkness if thus guided of the Lord. For it is indeed a high privilege to be permitted to preach Christ where He is not named.

The Years that the Locust has Eaten.

(T. OLIVER,
Galashiels).

"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar and the palmerworm" (Joel 2. 25).

AS we stand on the threshold of a new year, the word "year" has a peculiar significance. What are the lessons which, in the past year, have been impressed upon our souls by God's gracious dealings? How much time has been spent in following the bent of our own wills, and how much in seeking the glory of God? Soul-searching questions are these for everyone who bears the name of Christ.

In the thousand pages of the Bible there is no passage of greater encouragement to the man or the woman who has been a backslider than this single verse in the prophecy of Joel. There are some lessons which may be drawn from a consideration of the verse which cannot fail to be helpful to those who have turned to God from idols. It is well not to limit this turning to the all-essential turning-round which commenced our spiritual life history with God. We need frequent restoration.

Everyone is liable to have an idol, although in this enlightened age they are not of "stock and stone." They are ideals or creatures of our own imagination. Christians generally appear to have little conception of what constitutes an idol. The heathen must have some material object on which to concentrate his mind, but everything which is outside the sphere of eternal life is material for the formation of an idol.

In all cases of spiritual declension and the subsequent restoration we must go right back in our soul's consideration to the very spot where the declension began, and judge the root of the evil. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the pilgrim had to go back to where he lost his roll before communion was restored. When a Christian slips back into the world we are too apt to lose

sight of the possibility of restoration. But Scripture supposes nothing else but restoration for the true believer, and in writing to the saints in Galatia, the Apostle Paul describes who it is that has to restore whosoever be overtaken in a fault—it is those who are *spiritual*, not those who are merely intelligent in the Scriptures, who are to restore such, and they must do so in the spirit of meekness, considering their own liability to temptation (Gal. 6. 1). Looking at the verse a little in detail, the following points are worthy of note.

I. The Palmerworm.

The palmerworm is a rough hairy caterpillar, and may be taken to represent the grosser forms of pleasure which are but for a season.

We read in John's Epistle that if any man says he is without sin he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. It is painfully true that when the Christian gets out of communion he becomes a prey to the lusts of the flesh, and is no more able to resist the evil within and without than a man in his natural state. When Samson got out of communion he yielded to the seductive charms of the temptress and became as weak as another man.

When failure comes in we are apt to accredit Satan as the cause of it, but Satan should not be blamed. He is not directly responsible that men and women fall victims to wicked passions—"every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed" (James 1. 14). Though no doubt Satan exults when a Christian falls a victim to his lusts, for can he not hold up such a proof that the people of God are no better in their conduct than his own subjects? How many years are often devoured by the palmerworm?

II. The Caterpillar.

The caterpillar may be taken to symbolize the lighter forms of pleasure. The caterpillar is an embryo form of butterfly. The butterfly is usually taken as representing pleasure in its full activity. A Christian who has been really redeemed by the precious blood of Christ does not ever again fully enjoy worldly pleasure. His whole heart can never be in it. He never indeed reaches the butterfly phase of pleasure. It is the incipient or caterpillar stage which is the most fruitful cause of his being ensnared and seduced from the path of faith. Quite innocent pastimes occupy his attention, to the exclusion, or partial exclusion, of the things of Christ. But whist, golf or motoring can dominate the soul of the Christian and keep him out of touch with Christ just as effectually as gross licence can do, they are all the more seductive on account of their apparent harmlessness: "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*" (1 John 2. 15).

III. The Cankerworm.

The cankerworm may be taken to represent the influence of business. This conclusion is borne out by the following scriptures: "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven; the cankerworm spoileth (or spreadeth himself) and fleeth away" (Nahum 3. 16). "Your gold and silver is cankered" (James 5. 3). The canker in these references is obviously related to commerce. That a Christian often owes poverty of soul to allowing business to engross him need not be dilated upon. The evidences are all too frequent and apparent.

The sparks of heavenly light deposited in Christians are continually being hidden under a bushel (the symbol of business), or under a bed (the symbol of ease), instead of being, as candles, set on candlesticks to illuminate the world with the knowledge of God.

The Lord instructed His own while here, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5. 14). While the Apostle exhorted the Philippian believers: "Among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2. 16). "Holding forth" is often thought to be preaching, but this is erroneous. It need not be preaching nor even speaking of any kind, it is just simply moving in the calm enjoyment of the love of God, *i.e.* being truly meek and lowly in heart, so that we do not obscure the heavenly light which God has deposited in every Christian.

Our responsibility is obvious. We are charged with the duty of light-bearers, not to obscure the light of truth but to let it shine. We are witnesses for Christ. The world does not read the Word of God, hence the necessity that the Word should be exhibited in human mould. "*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition*" (1 Tim. 6. 9).

IV. The Locust.

All the aforementioned pests are creeping insects. They do not rise above the earth, but the locust rises up into the air and flies. The locust may therefore be taken to set forth the influence of the various forms of intellectualism, the most fruitful source of spiritual declension. Satan is styled "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2. 2). Intellectualism finds its greatest pleasure in Satan's special preserves.

Locusts are of different kinds. They are very fruitful (Nahum 3. 15), and they go forth by bands (Prov. 30. 27). The wonderful achievements of the human mind in the twentieth century answer to the very fruitful character of the locust. Moreover, in every sphere of life intellectualism has demonstrated the secular advantages of association or community of effort, and thus the triumph of mind over matter. The

locusts then, gregarious in character, illustrate for us the character of intellectualism.

Locusts are of different kinds. What may be a locust to one would not prove the same to another person. There is the political "locust," which gradually substitutes the newspaper for the Word of God, and eats up every green leaf in the soul so that it becomes a wilderness for God. That we are so unfamiliar with the Word is simply because we do not study it.

The working-man politician spends fifteen minutes at breakfast time, fifteen minutes at dinner-time, and thirty minutes at night studying his politics. An hour a day keeps him well abreast of the times in his world, so an hour a day studying the Word of God would keep the Christian progressing very favourably in the politics of heaven. "Our *politeuma* or conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3. 20), literally our "politics" are there. We need not, therefore, be perturbed as to what faction or nation is in the ascendancy in the world, or whether the historic "balance of power" is preserved or not.

Space forbids our considering in detail many phases of "locust" activity, but we need only enumerate the scientific, the artistic, the literary and the religious to show how diverse may be the influences which cause "green" souls to become parched deserts.

The "religious locust" would seek to occupy us with forms and ceremonies to the exclusion of the apprehension of the Spirit which gives life. This was well understood by the Apostle when he wrote, "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" (Col. 2. 8).

Because our daily work does not involve flights of intellectual fancy, we must not be carried away with the idea that in consequence we are immune from the influence of the locust. The

Bible itself may afford substance for the forming of a locust if we study it in a wrong way. Let us suppose a young Christian starts to study his Bible. He imagines it necessary that he must purchase a Greek grammar, lexicon and Testament. He goes on very well for a time, but ultimately he feels that he knows more than his less fortunate fellows. An arrogant spirit becomes developed. His downfall is but a matter of time. God cannot tolerate pride. Therefore we must look to ourselves to be careful of the object of our study, that the purpose is but to enlarge our hearts and not to puff up by increasing the analytical power of our brains.

The preceding remarks have dealt more with how the years are lost than how they are restored. The latter is not easily put into words, because with each it must be a secret process with the Lord Himself which each must know for himself in the unspoken language of the heart. As a physical asset the years are gone for ever. Hezekiah could by earnest prayer have fifteen years added or restored to his life, but we cannot by any action of our own add a minute to our days.

The spiritual substance is, however, of far greater moment than the mere interval of time which cradles it, and it is this spiritual substance to which the restoration applies. Mere longevity is nothing if it does not lead us to a greater enjoyment of eternal life. Better that we should spend one hour under the power of the Spirit of God than a century under the soul-destroying influences of the world, because the results of the former will come out in the glorious life of the beloved city which will come down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, spoken of in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation. How comforting are the words of our text, "*I will restore.*" It is not our efforts that will recover what is lost, but He will do it when we are cast wholly upon Him and the full and perfect grace that is His.

The Corn of Canaan.

(H. J. VINE).

"The children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn (or produce) of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn (produce) of the land" (Joshua 5. 10-12.)

IN a former paper we have pointed out the miraculous character of manna—the corn of heaven, the meat of the mighty—given by God to Israel for their journey through the wilderness. The corn of which Israel ate in the land of Canaan was different from that, in that it was not then given miraculously but grew and multiplied naturally, in the ordinary way, in suitable soil. And yet there is that which is miraculous about corn, for it is not found in a wild state like other cereals which can be developed by cultivation, neither is there any grass which can be regarded as its parent form. Naturally speaking, if Joseph had not with God-given wisdom stored up the precious grain in Egypt, wheat would have disappeared from the earth altogether. Its place in nature has been unique, since the beginning when God first gave it in that once most favoured East; for with it came the knowledge to those whose life was dependent on it, that to let it go out of cultivation was to lose it, so that through *seed time and harvest* it has been reproduced and its place maintained in the earth as the true staff of life. Its vital element none can explain. Still it is; and in it—given of God—we have a remarkable type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the heavenly One, and heaven is His home. Of this Canaan speaks. He is "the Corn of wheat" (John 12. 24), and He, even on earth, was "the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3. 13). And with the heavenly harvest in view in resurrection He is spoken of as "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15. 23).

The Spirit speaks specially in Scripture of corn as signaling the blessing of God. When Isaac blessed Jacob his

son, he said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and *plenty of corn and wine*" (Gen. 27. 28), and again he said, "Yea, he shall be blessed . . . *with corn and wine have I sustained him.*"

The heart is impressed with the singularity and beauty of this remarkable type. The Lord spoke of Himself as "THE corn of wheat" (R.V.). He stood alone in His heavenliness, until through His death others should share His life and character. He was the One who only answered to the promised blessing of God, and He was divinely provided in an exceptional way for us; but His death was an absolute necessity, or we could have had no part in Him or with Him. In all His singular and solitary heavenliness and beauty He would have remained eternally beyond our reach, as He said, "*Except the Corn of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone*" (John 12. 24). But, blessed be His Name, in His great grace and love He has been into death; He has died; and much fruit is the happy result, even according to His own word. "*If it die, it bears much fruit.*" Therefore, in risen life, He is not only our food; we not only participate *in* Him, we also participate *with* Him, in the heavenly character, and in the out-of-death life, which is His as the risen Man. Praise God! our part is now in Him and with Him for ever! He is the Firstborn from among the dead! He is the Firstborn of the many brethren, and God has predestinated these brethren to be conformed to His image, to the image of God's Son.

"*Thou wast alone, till like the precious grain,
In death Thou layest, but didst rise again;
And in Thy risen life, a countless host
Are 'all of one' with Thee, Thy joy and boast.*"

"Corn shall make the Young Men Flourish."

The Corn of Canaan is for the blessing and sustaining of the soul in the strength and energy of the resurrection life, which is the life of all believers as identified with Christ, but it is also that which God has given to cause us to flourish in heavenly things. He says, speaking of Israel when they shall be associated with Christ in the promised land, "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! *Corn shall make the young men flourish (or grow)*" (Zech. 9. 16, 17). We are distinctly told that grace and peace are multiplied to us in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we are encouraged to grow in grace and the knowledge of Himself.

As being risen with Christ, and as having mortified the sinful members which are upon the earth, we are shown in the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 3., how the saints flourish as being of the new man, where Christ is everything and in all. They put on bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance. The peace of Christ and the word of Christ dwell in them with divine love; whilst thanksgiving and singing with grace in their hearts to God, show how those flourish who feed on the true Corn of Canaan.

We cannot feed upon Christ in this way apart from the Word. Paul exhorted Timothy to give attention to this that he might flourish in the things of the Lord, "that his profiting might appear to all" (1 Tim. 4. 15). He was also to meditate on these things, and be wholly in them. Many lose the power of meditation in the hurry and rush of the day. They destroy the bulwarks of their minds. They lose the ability to discern between good and evil. The Produce of Canaan, rightly assimilated, is the food needed for this.

The Corn and the Dew of Heaven.

It is a noticeable fact that, as with the manna so with the corn, "*the dew of heaven*" is immediately associated with it. This speaks of God's presence by the Spirit. It is in the consciousness of this we feed rightly. Blessing, sustenance, strength and growth surely accompany this. In Hosea 14., where God tells us of the restoration, revival and prosperity of Israel, He says, "I will be *as the dew* unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (vers. 5, 6). In a spiritual sense, those flourish who feed on Christ, the Corn of Canaan, in the power of the Spirit in the blessed presence of God, giving attention to the written Word.

God must have His Portion First.

A very important feature connected with Israel's appropriation of the Corn of Canaan must be noticed here. No one was to eat of the precious grain until a wave sheaf of it had been waved before God. The divine statute reads thus: "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord. . . . Ye shall neither eat bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God" (Lev. 23. 10, 11, 14).

This striking statute teaches us in a most explicit manner that the fresh fruit of the heavenly country, the Corn of the heavenly Canaan, upon which those who are risen with Christ now feed, is in the first place appreciated in all its worth by our God and Father Himself; and is afterward given to us for our appreciation. In simple words, that our blessed risen Saviour is first for the delight of the Father's heart and then for ours. It is meet that this should be

the ordered way. But what wonderful grace is here disclosed! We are called to find our delight in the same perfect One in whom God Himself finds His delight! Great indeed is the divine grace that outshines here! We, who once groaned under the oppressive power of darkness, under the authority of Satan, the prince of this world, as Israel did under Pharaoh, should, being redeemed in Christ through His blood, be brought in faith to the heavenly land, and there be given to feed upon the heavenly fare, the portion of our God and Father, and of the saints in light!

*“ Yes, He has made us meet
With Him in light to dwell;
And there we taste the fruit so sweet
Of love we know so well.”*

The Corn awaited Israel's Entrance to Canaan.

When Israel entered Canaan they did not bring the corn up from the wilderness with them. It was in the land before they were there; nor had they to labour to produce it. The precious produce, the fresh fruit of the country, was grown, gathered and garnered, and awaited their approach and their appropriation. It is just so with our heavenly food now. Christ risen and ascended is the food which divine grace has provided and prepared for us at this present time. Christ is our life. Christ on the other side of death, Christ in heavenly glory, awaits the approach and the appropriation in faith of those who are His own. The Holy Spirit is the power for this; and in holy leisure and liberty our rejoicing souls may satisfy their new desires by feeding on the full provision which is ours in Christ the First-born from among the dead, the exalted One at God's right hand, the heavenly Man of God's purpose and providing.

We have not to get up and get down to gather this food, as with the manna in the wilderness; for, as we have said, the natural food of this heavenly sphere simply awaits our appropriation. It is the proper provision freely given for the

support and sustenance of those who are dead and risen with Christ, stimulating and strengthening them in the sphere of God's purpose.

How the Corn was to be Eaten.

In Joshua 5. 11 we are told of two ways in which this Corn of Canaan was partaken of by the Israelites. They ate “ the produce of the land on the morrow after the passover, *unleavened cakes* and *parched corn* in the selfsame day.” Both “ unleavened cakes ” and “ parched corn ” are explanatory of the previous words. Therefore it would seem that “ produce ” is the right rendering rather than “ the old corn ” of the land; for parching was a special treatment of the fresh corn of the land (see Lev. 2. 14 and 23. 14).

Leaven is typical of evil in the Word, and the unleavened cakes speak of the sinless perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that the cakes were eaten on the same day as the parched corn reminds us that in feeding upon our blessed Lord in this day—“ the day of salvation ”—we are to remember that He suffered, being subject to fiery trial and testing, of which the parching or roasting speaks. In all things He was tempted and tried, but entirely apart from sin (Heb. 4. 15).

We feed upon Him to-day as the ascended One, as the glorified One in heaven, the One who, full of heavenly grace, separated from sinners, is become higher than the heavens; nevertheless, knowing Him there, we are told to “ consider Him well ” who is there, and “ who endured such great contradiction from sinners against Himself that ye be not weary, fainting in your minds ” (Heb. 12. 3). It is this food which strengthens and sustains the renewed mind of the believer.

Moreover the action of the fire had a very distinct effect upon the Corn of Canaan. Of our blessed, sinless, holy Saviour we read: “ It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are

all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to *make perfect* the Leader of their salvation *through sufferings*" (Heb. 2. 10, N.T.).

The Corn of wheat was perfect: Jesus was perfect. This suffering, however, tells us of that with which He had not been in contact before; but being so, how could it be otherwise than that further perfection should become manifest in Him? Not that the suffering itself added anything to Him, but rather that it became the means of manifesting His own perfectness. Wonderful indeed it is to ponder these further words of the Holy Spirit as to His suffering: "In the days of His flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death with strong crying and tears (and having been heard because of His piety), though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been perfected, became to all them that obey Him Author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5. 7-9, N.T.).

In this way, He who spake with divine authority, who commanded in supremacy unquestioned, came into testing circumstances, where the perfection of obedience showed itself in Him; as He, God the Son, amidst fiery sufferings, learned this which was not previously familiar to Him; but being perfected—as Man having come through all in perfection—all now who obey Him who thus perfectly obeyed, find Him to be the Author of eternal salvation. This is indeed both blessed and wonderful.

This parched Corn, the Corn of Canaan, prepared by the action of fire, has a peculiar place in the Word. We might dwell long and profitably upon it; but in bringing this meditation to a close I will just indicate a little how it

was used, so that we may ponder it over and "CONSIDER HIM WELL" of whom it speaks.

1. In a very exceptional way it was a *sweet savour to God Himself*. A special meat offering to the Lord could be made of it; of "firstfruits of fresh ripe corn parched by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears" (Lev. 2. 14). Oil and frankincense were to be added to it.

2. It is *the sustenance of the heavenly warriors*, of those who are in the conflict of Ephesians 6. As typical of this, Israel ate it before their victorious warring in Canaan (Jos. 5. 11). It was taken to the trenches by David to his warrior brethren who were facing the Philistines at Elah (1 Sam. 17. 17). This incident sets forth for us the fact that Christ feeds those with it whom He is not ashamed to call brethren! Parched corn imparts *strength and support* to us. It also *cheers and gladdens* the heart. In a spiritual way God feeds the hearts of His warring saints with Christ in glory who Himself has suffered and endured.

3. It is the food with which the blessed Lord *satisfies* those who are drawn to Him *now*, before they share in His glory above, as His heavenly bride.

This is beautifully pictured for us by the Spirit in the story of Boaz, that mighty man of wealth, who spoke kindly to Ruth, who afterwards became his bride, and set her, a poor and needy seeker after corn, at ease in his presence, and handed her with his own hand parched corn as she sat with the reapers, so that "she did eat and was sufficed" (Ruth 2. 14). Yes, truly, Christ satisfies. He more than satisfies.

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find."

May the ministry of intercession be for each of us as the Word of God was in Jeremiah's heart—as a burning fire shut up in his bones, so that he was weary with forbearing, and so that he could not stay. Only so shall the ardent soul fulfil the high destiny designed for each by the crucified and risen Lord.

“A Kingdom that Cannot be Moved.” (J. WILSON SMITH).

WHERE can such a kingdom be found? We witness to-day the instability of thrones and kingdoms on all hands, and are sensible of a state of insecurity as to things below, as perhaps never before. Just as civilization was reaching her climax, peace tribunals promising arbitration, and the brotherhood of man appearing, in doctrine at least, to guarantee concord everywhere, there fell, like a bolt, on the most advanced of the nations, a convulsion which has shaken their very foundations. What does this mean?

If such a break-up of the bonds of society in this, the year of our Lord, 1916, when not only civilization but the peace-giving truths of Christianity have spread far and wide, what security have we for the future, even supposing that other forms of government, and a still more effective kind of education, are called into existence?

Is it likely that these things will be more able to prevent another shake of the nations?

Far from it! The fact is that, in their very nature, these kingdoms are shakable, transitory, dissoluble. Where, to-day, are the great kingdoms which, of old, swayed the sceptre? Where is Babylon and Medo-Persia and Greece? They had their day and have been shaken; and what has happened to them will also happen to the kingdoms of the present. They are all to become like the chaff of the threshing-floor, and to crumble into dust.

A stone, cut out without hands, is to fall on the entire image, and to destroy it utterly (Dan. 2. 45). This, we learn, is the divinely appointed end of every species of human government, whether monarchical or democratic. The whole thing must give way to a kingdom of divine order, constructed “without hands” and in which no element of human imperfection may have a place.

This kingdom will “stand for ever.” It will be actual; its King an absolute monarch; its rule righteous; its subjects secure while dwelling happily under their vines and fig trees; there shall be no evil occurrent; no adversary; Satan shall be bound; and obedience, real or feigned, rendered to its laws. The costly and most unprofitable science of war shall be learned no more; ploughshares and pruning-hooks shall do their own work, and peace shall reign to the ends of the earth. All very lovely, but is this the kingdom which we, Christians, receive and which cannot be moved?

No, when that kingdom begins to run its course we shall be beyond all earthly rule; we shall be with the Lord in the Father’s House, and in the place which His entrance on high has secured for us. The call of the church is heavenly, and our kingdom is spiritual. Hence the Apostle Paul could write that the Lord should preserve him unto His *heavenly* kingdom (see 2 Tim. 4. 18). These two kingdoms must therefore be clearly distinguished, and the peculiar calling of the church—that is, of all the saints of the present period—intelligently maintained. This is, among other things, the kingdom which we receive, and which, thank God, cannot be moved.

It may not be seen in actuality; it may still exist in mystery, for the King is hidden in the heavens, and is refused by men here below; but, if not actual, nor visible, nor tangible, it is exceedingly real. It cannot be moved.

Tides may ebb and flow; empires may rise and fall; calms and convulsions may succeed one another; summer yield to autumn and winter; and memory may sink into oblivion; but whatever else may be shakable and shaken, this, the kingdom which we receive, cannot be moved.

We have, thank God, an anchorage in the storms which no power of evil

can touch; a foundation on a rock which no flood can undermine; a security which is inviolable amid the convulsions of time, and through ages eternal this cannot be moved!

We, ourselves, how weak! How fearful! How easily shaken! We are able, therefore, all the more to value, as honoured subjects of it, a kingdom which cannot be moved, and may well "have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." This is our one business to-day when things around are tottering, and when men's hearts fail them for fear. "For," says the scripture under consideration, "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 28, 29).

Godly fear becomes the servants and worshippers of such a God as ours. He is spoken of in the succeeding chapter of our epistle as "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ"; but though the God

of peace He is, none the less, "a consuming fire." "God is love," but "God is light" as well. What reverence, what awe, should mark those who serve Him! What essential holiness must characterize His kingdom! Hence its stability.

The inherent corruption of all human kingdoms brings about, eventually, their downfall. Self-interest lies, necessarily, at the bottom of each and all; but not so in the kingdom which cannot be moved. Love to others—a holy and blessed love—is one of its leading features; and hence we are charged, in the sequel, to "let brotherly love continue." The immobility of the kingdom which we receive, and the continuance of brotherly love, are our sun by day and moon by night, till both are perfected in "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

May we serve God acceptably and love our brethren continually.

Lessons from the Tabernacle.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

No. I. Introduction.

GOD dwelling among His people! What a wonderful thought! There is no true blessing, no true joy, no permanent happiness apart from God. The creature's blessing is wrapped up in the Creator. In Him is all blessing, its start and its finish, its fulness and its finality. Apart from this blessedness there is absolutely nothing.

It cannot be gainsaid that Christians generally are content to walk on a very low level. If they are sure of their own salvation, they very often do not trouble about anything else, either the salvation of others, or the devoted answer in heart to the God who has redeemed them. They have little acquaintance with their Bibles, little knowledge of prayer, very often no family prayer.

Thank God, if they are saved, but alas! their religion on the whole is

purely selfish, beginning and ending with the desire to be assured of heaven when they die.

But God does not want us to defer heaven till we get there. We shall dwell with God then, but He desires to dwell among His people now. God desires your society now. Do you desire His?

I remember hearing a servant of the Lord narrate how he gave an address to a number of Christians. He dwelt on the forgiveness of sins, and he was rewarded by seeing beaming faces, and hearing murmurs of approval and enjoyment. He then went on to speak of God's thoughts for His people, the truth about the church, the assembly, God's dwelling-place, and there was languid attention, and no murmurs of approval. Why was this? Alas! that it should be so.

Now it is just this thought of God dwelling among His people that is presented to us in a very striking way in the design of the tabernacle, actually and typically. *Actually*, for God really dwelt among His people in the wilderness; *typically*, for the tabernacle itself was typical in all its details of heavenly things, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so clearly states.

That God should have acted thus, so far back in the history of the world, is deeply affecting, and should lead every Christian to deep and earnest inquiry as to how far each one is entering into these deep and precious thoughts of God.

It was of the tabernacle that God said:—

“ There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. . . .

“ And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

“ And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God ” (Ex. 29. 43-46).

Let your eye rest on those defenceless, erstwhile slaves in the wilderness, God dwelling in their midst, their glory and their Defence, the cloudy pillar guiding them, the daily manna, angels' food, their sustenance, the water from the smitten rock refreshing them, and then look upon the heathen nations around them sunk in voluptuous sins, enslaved by a sensual idolatry that led captive their minds and ruined their bodies; and tell me if this great thought of God dwelling among His people is not wonderful. Can you not see that it is so, even with Israel in the limited way in which it was then ?

And if this were shadow, what must the substance be ? Though in another connection we can apply the words:—

“ If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious ” (2. Cor. 3. 11).

The thought of God dwelling among His people is carried on in connection with the land:—

“ And I will set My tabernacle among you; and My soul shall not abhor you.

“ And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people ” (Lev. 26. 11, 12).

And we are left in no doubt as to the *present* application of the type, for we have the gist of these very passages quoted in the New Testament.

“ Ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people ” (2 Cor. 6. 16).

No man has a right to alter the text of Scripture in quoting it. That would be tampering with the Word of God. But when the Holy Ghost alters a quotation, the form in which He presents it becomes itself Scripture, and as authoritative as the scripture quoted from.

It is interesting to see the word “ among ” used in Exodus 29. and Leviticus 26. altered to “ in ” in 2 Corinthians 6., marking the great truth of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in God's people, the great distinguishing mark of the believer in this dispensation. And further, the word “ temple ” is used, giving the idea of permanence, which the word “ tabernacle ” would not, as long as we were down here.

The Epistle to the Hebrews brings out the connection there is between type and antitype. The writer contrasts the house Moses, the *servant*, built, that is the tabernacle, with the house built now, over which Christ, *as Son*, presides. So we read:—

“ Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

“ But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we

hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end " (Heb. 3, 5, 6).

But that of which the tabernacle spoke will one day find its consummation. In the figure, the staves were drawn out, when it reached the land, emblem of rest. So we read in the one beautiful description given us in the Bible of the eternal state, when everything will be for ever according to God in all the ineffable blessedness of His Being:—

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God " (Rev. 21. 3).

Here again, amazing fact, we have Leviticus 26 quoted. How delightful it is to trace God's thoughts through His Word. He never gives them up, and He will win His people for Himself and for His own heart for ever. How blessed!

One last thought. The instructions as to the tabernacle were given to Moses on the same occasion as the giving of the law. The awful majesty of God was shown by the thunderings and lightnings and Mount Sinai smoking.

"And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel " (Ex. 24. 17).

"Heavenly Light."

WE laid the body of a faithful and much respected Christian to rest in the cemetery of a Scotch border town the other day. Some of his words during his last night on earth may be a cheer and help to others as they were to his family and to us.

He said, "I've been striving a bit; I thought there was a gate, but the way is wide open."

The *ceremonial* law, that is the instructions as to the rearing of the tabernacle, the institution of the priesthood and the ordering of the sacrifices, followed hard on the heels of the *moral* law, that is the ten commandments and legal instructions as to conduct. Why was this?

For the simple reason man would have been utterly destroyed if the moral law alone had applied to him. For instance, the first commandment of all is:—

"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me " (Ex. 20. 3).

And what happened? Before ever Moses had time to carry the ten commandments into the camp, the people had broken the very first and chiefest commandment, and that under the leadership of the one who, next to Moses, had the greatest opportunity of knowing the right. Such is man. And what would have happened if the naked law had been carried into the camp? Death and desolation. How wonderful it is to see the *ceremonial* law, speaking in figure of God's righteous demands, and God Himself finding a way to meet those claims and thus blessing the sinner in righteousness, having for its antitype Christ, His divine person, His finished work, His resurrection—in short, it typified the only ground on which God could bless man and dwell in His midst.

May God exercise us deeply as to these things.

"Heavenly light makes all things bright."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me be stirred up to praise His holy name."

Then, as a last word of advice to his sons, he said, "Business as usual, *but only for a living.*"

The Ups and Downs of Life.

F. B. HOLE.

THE fear of change, which carries with it apprehension in regard to the future, is a great hindrance to a vast number of believers. We started our Christian career by facing the *sin* question, and finding a divinely-given solution of it in the gospel. This was followed by the uprising of the *self* question, and to this perhaps we have found an answer, so that we taste in some degree the sweets of victory over sin. There yet remains the *circumstances* question, and we most of us find it the most difficult problem of all.

The year 1915 has drawn to a close. It has been marked by changes greater in number and more sweeping in their effects than any which this generation has known. The year 1916 dawns, and the portents are dark; changes, more and deeper yet, seem to be indicated. How shall we face them? Let us do so with the remembrance that by these very changes God is giving us an education, the benefits of which we shall carry with us for all eternity.

Change has always been an essential part of the education of God's saints. The biographies of the Bible bear ample witness to this, but perhaps no one life exemplifies it more strikingly than that of Daniel. Let us consider his history for a few moments.

He began life in an *exalted* station. He was "of the king's seed, and of the princes . . . in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them. . . ." He was, in short, of royal descent, and perfectly suited to his high position both physically and mentally.

Early in life, however, a blow descended which brought him down very *low*. Jerusalem fell, before the military prowess of Babylon. Zedekiah, its last king, the head of Daniel's house, was dethroned, and Daniel, though spared

with other young princes in the general slaughter, found himself a captive in a foreign land.

Did he repine? Did he, assuming that "all was up," abandon himself to a life of as much ease and pleasure as was obtainable under the circumstances? By no means. The very opposite. It was just then that in the fear of God he made his immortal resolve "that he would not defile himself" by the smallest complicity with the idolatry which permeated the very atmosphere of Babylon, cost what it might. Morally and spiritually he was far greater when down than when up.

The very advance which he made during this time of adversity only paved the way, however, for another change. His thorough-going separation to God from evil led to his acquiring a very remarkable measure of power with God in prayer, and soon an occasion arose which put it to the proof. When the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream, forgot it, and then threatened to slay all the wise men of Babylon because they were unable both to recall the dream for him and then interpret it, Daniel and his companions besieged heaven in prayer until the thing was revealed to Daniel, and he was able so effectually to meet the demands of the enraged king that the latter not only fell before him, doing him homage, but confessed the supreme glory of his God, and ended by making him "a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon."

Thus at a single bound did Daniel go *up* in the world once more. He was not spoiled by this sudden wave of prosperity; this is made very evident by what we have in the fourth chapter. No man save one who was walking with God would have been able to foretell disaster to, and also rebuke, the great king of whom it was said, "Whom he would

he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down." Clearly then Daniel who was "set up" at that moment had no fear at the prospect of being "put down." It also stands to reason that no man would have been able to boldly counsel righteousness and mercy as he did save one who habitually practised those virtues himself.

In due time the next change came. We have no record of how it came, but that it did come verses 11 to 13 of chapter 5. declare. Apparently Daniel dropped into obscurity for many years. It may have been that with the death of Nebuchadnezzar, who respected him, he was forgotten; anyway, it is evident that he was living in complete obscurity in the days of Belshazzar. The queen-mother in Belshazzar's feast on that fatal night remembered him, and his divine gifts, but the very terms in which she describes him prove that to the king and his thousand lords he was utterly unknown.

What an immense compliment to Daniel was this! He had neither part nor lot in the riotous iniquities of Belshazzar's degenerate court. We see here—all honour to him!—the same Daniel as first appeared in chapter 1., resolutely separate from evil. And there is more than this. It was in the latter years of this period of eclipse that he received the first two of those wonderful visions vouchsafed to him. They are recorded in chapters 7. and 8 of his book. During this time when he was *down* he was evidently much in communion with heaven.

On that last dread night Daniel flashed like a meteor across the Chaldean sky. In spite of the terrible nature of his message, and his own contemptuous refusal of Belshazzar's honours, he was clothed in scarlet, with a gold chain about his neck, and he was proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom. He was *up* once more.

Up, as he himself knew right well, only for a few brief hours. That night

Babylon fell before the hosts of Darius, Belshazzar was slain, and the Chaldean empire was no more. As part of the governmental fabric by his new appointment, Daniel fell with it, and naturally lapsed once more into obscurity.

For the third time the period of being "*down* in the world" became a season of great profit. The first two verses of chapter 9. show us that Daniel used this fresh time of retirement in the study of Scripture. Reading attentively in the book of Jeremiah he came across the prediction in chapter 29. 10 that the desolations of Jerusalem were on this occasion to be limited to seventy years. The discovery of this unexpected grace brought him to his knees in an agony of confession and prayer. Was not the judgment of the very power that had overthrown Jerusalem the dawn of hope? Was not the time of their weeping nearly at an end? His prayer vibrates with the spirit of hope and repentance, and he who can read it in cold print without emotion must have a hard heart indeed.

His prayer was that of a righteous man, fervent and effectual, and brought down an immediate answer. Further revelations reached him ere he had properly ceased, and through him there was given the prophecy of the "seventy weeks," the time-table of Israel's destiny on which was clearly marked the exact time of the death of their great Messiah, and our adorable Saviour.

In due time we once more find Daniel *exalted*. The man who steadily walks with God in adversity cannot be hid. We know not how, but somehow his excellent qualities become known to Darius, the new ruler, and in chapter 6. we find him moving on the ascending scale, until as the chief of the three presidents over the princes he is next to the king in authority.

Once more in this exalted station we find the same fearless fidelity to God coupled with grace and meekness and the absence of self-advertisement for

which he is deservedly famous. Nothing is a greater evidence of strength than the ability in a great crisis to proceed exactly as before. The weak man either trims his sail to catch the passing breeze, and alters so as to comply with what is popular, or else he attempts to signalize his non-compliance by becoming ultra and extreme and rude. Daniel proceeded just "as he did aforetime."

How dramatically he was flung *down* into the den of lions, every Sunday-school child knows, and we need not repeat it. By the next morning he was *up* again, up higher than ever if possible, and that to the great glory of his God. This period of exaltation lasted for long into the reign of Cyrus, probably to the end of his life.

As to this time of prosperity two things may be said. First he was permitted to see the prophecy of Jeremiah fulfilled, and the decree for the rebuilding of the much-loved house of God issued (see 6. 10, Ezra 1. 1). Indeed from his exalted place he may have had a share in bringing it to pass. Second, he was as much in touch with God during this last period of eminence in old age as ever. It was in the third year of Cyrus, two years after the issuing of the decree, that the final vision by the river Hiddekel was given to him, and that he was twice saluted as "a man greatly beloved."

That vision closed, as recorded in chapter 12., by a plain intimation to Daniel that he was yet once more to go *down*, and that into a darker eclipse,

according to nature's standards, than any he had yet known. And yet, though death should take him off the scene long before the advent of the promised glory, so that the last "down" he should ever know would be the quiet of the grave, even that sombre announcement was tinged with the gold of this thought, that his waiting time should be a season of rest, and with the yet far brighter thought that when the glory did dawn and its blessing flood the scene he should not be missing, for he should "stand in his lot at the end of days." This prediction clearly entitled him to close his aged eyes upon earth with his heart illumined with the light of resurrection.

In the day of Messiah's peaceful and changeless glory, thou, O Daniel, the man greatly beloved, wilt look back upon thy changeful life of ups and downs, and say, "Such experiences, though trying at the time, were well worth while, for they have enriched my soul to eternity with a knowledge of God, which is as gold seven times purified in a furnace."

Let us start upon the unknown 1916 with all its ups and downs with something of this spirit. Though conscious of how very inferior to him we are, we yet may sing

"Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone."

But if we do we shall do well to couple with it that other hymn which says—

"The GOD that lived in Daniel's time
Is just the same to-day."

Prayers for Spain.

THE references to Spain in Romans 15. should greatly encourage those who labour in the gospel there. For if the Apostle prayed often about Rome, and the saints there, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world, we may be certain that he prayed with equal constancy and earnestness for Spain, the country that was so much upon his heart. Are not those fervent outpour-

ings of soul still present before God? Does not He, who treasures the prayers of His saints in the golden vials, remember those earnest cries? And who knows if it may not please God to yet grant an abundant answer to those supplications of His beloved servant, and to do so in our day, now that the gospel, after long centuries, is again being preached in that country? (H.P.B.)

Studies in the Psalms—Fourth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 105.—106.

THESE two Psalms which conclude the fourth book are evidently complementary the one to the other, the former giving us the precious story of the ways of God with His people in grace, according to His purpose, with no mention of their sins, the latter supplying a full confession of their ways in rebellion and disregard of God.

There is little doubt they were put together in their present form during the captivity in Babylon; we learn this from the petition in Psalm 106. 47, "Gather us from among the nations." The original wording in 1 Chronicles 16. 35 is "Deliver us from the nations"; this is quite suitable to the early part of the reign of David, while the words in the Psalter agree with the conditions in the captivity. Other evidence to the same effect is found in the first fifteen verses of Psalm 105., which are taken from the same chapter in 1 Chronicles, verses 8-22.

The rehearsal in our two Psalms of the early history of the people of God's choice is analogous to the account at the end of the Book of Numbers (chap. 33.) of their previous wanderings in the wilderness (*cf.* Deut. 8. 2), and is intended to supply a special instruction to the nation in the future, when God will be dealing with them again, to bring them into the land of promise, in which He will "plant them with His whole heart and with His whole soul" (Jer. 32. 41). Such a review of our ways with God and His with us is of deep practical importance and will be perfectly realized for all believers, before the tribunal of Christ, where, having been "raised in glory," we must be manifested, that we may know as we are known. Then all the sin-induced blindness that has hindered us seeing eye to eye with God will be for ever removed, and though our sins will stand out before us in their full charac-

ter, over against them will be displayed the perfect grace of God, which righteously blots out the evil record to His own glory, through the work of the cross. What incalculable and eternal loss would it be to miss such an exposure! Communion in full accord with God would be for ever imperfect. That it would be well for us to anticipate that solemn moment here and now we may learn from the Apostle's word to the Corinthians: "We *have* been made manifest to God" (2 Cor. 5. 11). There are times in the lives of most of us when in a special way this is known, the Spirit of God lighting up our past, so that even now we may be in fuller harmony with His perfect thoughts.

These two Psalms are thus a record of things which should be remembered (*cf.* Rev. 2. 5 and 3. 3), and to this we are exhorted in Psalm 105. 5: "Remember His marvellous works that He hath done, His wonders and the judgments of His mouth," with this end in view, that Jehovah may be praised and His doings published as a testimony among the heathen. Such will be the happy service of "the seed of Abraham His servant and the children of Jacob His chosen ones." The remaining part of Psalm 105. will be readily seen to be the record of the fulfilment by Jehovah of His unconditional covenant with Abraham (vers. 8-10). This differs entirely from the covenant from Sinai, according to which the blessing depended upon the obedience of the people; whereas the faithfulness of God to His own word will secure the accomplishment of the earlier one. Accordingly as we have noticed, the goodness of God is the great theme in Psalm 105., all record of the sins of the people being omitted. The land of Canaan which is promised in verse 11 is reached in verse 44, and at once the Psalm closes with the significant words showing that grace should lead to

obedience "that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws." When this consummation is arrived at, Hallelujah concludes the Psalm. The special instruction it contains as to grace is emphasized by the omission of the history under law given in the Book of Numbers. In Exodus up to Sinai the murmurings of the people entailed no penalty, they were answered in mercy, and the record of the wilderness ends: "He brought forth His people with joy and His chosen with a song of gladness" (ver. 43, cf. Is. 35. 10). The rebellion at the Red Sea mentioned in the next Psalm is entirely omitted here. The joy of Jehovah in His own delivering grace, which is answered in the song of His people, seems to put in the background their sins. The selection of Joseph from his brethren, his exaltation through suffering, with the deliverance of the nation from Egypt, through judgment on their enemies, testify to the same unqualified grace.

It may further be helpful to remind our readers that the prayers of Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel do not recall the unconditional promises to Abraham mentioned in our Psalm. Nehemiah indeed refers to Abraham as chosen of God, but makes the people enter into a curse and into an oath to walk in God's law which was given by Moses and to observe and do all the commandments of Jehovah (Neh. 10. 29). With this the Old Testament closes, and the refusal of the grace which came by Jesus Christ leaves the nation under the penalty of the broken law till He comes again to establish the new covenant, the foundation of which He has already laid in His own blood, that it might be of effect to sinners.

We as Christians enter now and in a fuller way than Israel ever will into this provision of grace. In it we stand (Rom. 5. 2). Our calling is to the praise of the glory of His grace, and our destiny is to display the exceeding riches of the same grace (Eph. 1. and 2.). We may well look diligently lest any of us fail of entering into it (Heb. 12. 15).

PSALM 106. begins and ends with the praise of Jah, and between the two Hallelujahs we listen to the heartfelt confession of the sins which had been so conspicuous in the history of the nation. This association touchingly illustrates how His mercy endures for ever, for those who are truly repentant, so that their history is made to end in praise (cf. Heb. 11. 21).

The first verses are introductory, a call of the Spirit to the people to give thanks to Jehovah for His goodness and a prayer of the Psalmist to be remembered with the favour proper to the people of God, as he longs to see the ultimate issue of His ways in their blessing. The confession begins in verse 6, the writer associating himself with the guilty nation says, "We have sinned"; a most important principle is here disclosed (see Dan. 9. 5 *et seq.*), dependant upon the unity of God's people before Him. This common responsibility for sin should be more deeply realized now that the unity is in "one body" than when it depended on twelve tribes.

Following this, eight sins are mentioned in the confession, not in the order of occurrence; perhaps others may be able to discern a moral sequence in these, and in the Egyptian plagues of Psalm 105. which are likewise not given historically; the fifth and sixth are omitted altogether.

The confession in our Psalm begins with what is called the rebellion on the shores of the Red Sea (Ex. 14. 10, etc.). The reason is given that "they considered not thy wonders in Egypt and remembered not the multitude of thy mercies." In place of this so harshly did they judge their Deliverer that they thought He wanted a cemetery for them out of Egypt. In such an emergency, lack of faith exposes us to defeat, unless grace steps in, as on this occasion, and acts in spite of the state of the people, on their behalf. We shall see in all the sins which follow how retribution or the threat of it is incurred, but the results of dealing in grace on this occasion

should be noted, for the people reached a point never afterwards attained, when as our Psalm reads, "then believed they His words, they sang His praise"; so in Hebrews 11. the only act not attributed to the faith of an individual is the passage of the sea.

The next instance of sin is taken from Numbers 11. 4: "They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness" (ver. 14). In this case penalty follows, their request is granted, but He "sent leanness into their soul." Any request inspired by lust must recoil with damage on the petitioner. God will never be made the servant of our evil desires. The insurrection against Moses, the mediator, and Aaron, the priest, comes third in order, with its terrible penalty of fire and living burial. This sin is fatal, being against the very means divinely appointed for blessing. The antitype will be found in the vain assumption of those who are ministers of the priestly rights which belong to Christ alone. Men speaking perverted things apply it to any who draw near to God in worship according to the privilege common to all Christians (see 1 Peter 2. 5). Such an interpretation well illustrates what it is to handle the word of God deceitfully.

The fourth sin cited, not in historical order, is the making and worshipping the calf in Horeb. They attributed their salvation to an ox that eateth grass, and forgot their true Saviour and the manner of His salvation. In this case their national extinction is only averted by the intercession of Moses.

The details of their fifth offence are found in Numbers 13. and 14. The Psalmist in referring to it goes to the root of the evil: "They despised the pleasant land and believed not His word." How much evil of this character is in many minds it is serious to consider, especially when we note the consequences in God's chastening, for it not only brought the danger of immediate overthrow, in which all that generation were ultimately involved, but in verse 27 their dispersion among the nations seems implied (*cf.* Ezek. 20. 23).

The sixth sin is given in verses 28-31, not only a shameless allowance of the lusts of the flesh but the consecration of these lusts to the worship of a god! Can anything be more debasing? As we learn from Numbers 30. 16, it was Balaam's masterpiece of iniquity so to involve the people in sin that the holy God, concerning whom he had some knowledge, must turn against them. The same wickedness is mentioned as corrupting the church at Pergamos (Rev. 2.). A faithful witness was found in Antipas in New Testament times, just as among the Israelites Phinehas stands forth and the plague is stayed by judgment. Eating the sacrifices of the dead probably refers to some of the necromantic rites freely practised among these nations.

The incurable nature of the evil in man is evidenced in the seventh offence given in verses 32, 33. After forty years' experience of Jehovah's mercies they murmur as at the beginning to the provocation of the spirit of Moses, who loses his place as leader; the cause of this should be carefully noted, it was "for their sakes" (see Deut. 1. 37 and 3. 26). For if their leaders did not truly represent God to the people according to the priestly grace set forth in chapter 17. 10, they must be the witnesses in their own punishment of His displeasure with them.

The sin in the land with its terrible consequences lasting into our own times is taken up from verse 34. They did not destroy the nations, and they served their idols. The unnatural cruelty of human sacrifices is specially mentioned. Judgment takes its course, but finally Jehovah remembers His covenant and causes them to find favour with their conquerors. This had an initiatory fulfilment under the Persian kings, but will be more manifestly accomplished in the future according to Isaiah 49. 22, etc. In this way will the prayer of verse 47 be answered and all will end in the blessing of man and the praise of God.

Comments and Communications.

(EDITOR).

The Gospel to the Soldiers.

GREAT opportunities come and go, and to miss them as they pass is to miss them for ever. This being so, let us bestir ourselves lest we lose the present great opportunity of winning souls for Christ.

We have to regretfully confess that men and women in civil life are not seeking after God as it was hoped and expected they would do, and as they gave signs of doing, when first the war broke out. The reason for this, we fear, may lie in some measure in the fact that from the pulpits of the land "the righteousness of our cause," to use a popular expression, has been persistently preached, and this has had the effect of putting consciences to sleep that were startled into activity. We do not say that it may not be partly or wholly true that "our cause is righteous" as between nation and nation, but if it is so, it is the business of the rulers of the land to clearly establish this, and so satisfy what is called the "national conscience." But the business of those who profess to serve God in spiritual things is, as ever, and more so now than ever, to bring home to the *individual consciences* of their hearers *their responsibility and guilt as sinners before God*. In this we believe there has been great failure.

But while indifference to the claims of the will of God and forgetfulness of His mercies are so widespread in the nation there is undoubtedly a readiness to hear the word on the part of those who have joined the fighting forces. To thousands of these it is a serious time; they have considered the risks, and desire in taking them to be right with God and for eternity. The feeling was well expressed by one young soldier to us a few months ago. He said, "I am on a draft for the front, and I might easily go out there and never return, I want to be right." But

even for the consciences of such the devil has prepared a deadly opiate in the lying doctrine, that death on the battlefield will secure heaven for them, and, alas, he finds many ready to preach this "other gospel." And so many gallant young men are marching into the very jaws of death deceived by those to whom they look for guidance in these things. This is an additional reason why the truth of the gospel of Christ should be lovingly yet persistently pressed upon the men.

And this should be done at once, while the men are still at home, that they may carry into their hardships and dangers the knowledge at least of the power and readiness of the Lord Jesus to bless and save them, and better still that they might receive in faith this word of life. The one message from many at the front is, "Tell the men to turn to God before they come out here." And every man who goes out carrying with him the knowledge of Christ as his Saviour may be, and many are, the means of great blessing to their comrades in danger.

Extracts from three letters received in one week from young men who were converted to God at special meetings for soldiers held in the north of England before they went abroad may give encouragement to continue the work.

From the Dardanelles. . . . "You would be surprised to see the happy nights we are having, and how the soldiers will come and kneel down beside the trench and accept Christ as their Saviour."

From France. . . . "I would like to have a few days in — to testify to the Lord's glorious love to poor sinners. I am sure if only a few of us repentant sinners could get back amongst the men at home we could do good amongst them after our experience out here by telling of His

most gracious mercy and power. . . . We have two Bible Classes a week at our rest camp."

From France. . . . "I want you to know that at least one, and I hope a good many more, found the Friend you used to talk to us about in the hall. I am glad that I ever went to —, for I shall always look back to it as the place where I found the Friend that never leaves you, and who is able to strengthen you, never mind what pain or how hard a lot you have. We have some very nice services back of the line, and I would not miss one for the world. I should like to add that I should like our lads at home to get this great Friend. . . ."

Now is the time to trade for the Master (Luke 19. 15), and we are persuaded that we can get no better and quicker returns for labour spent and gospel preached anywhere than amongst the men in khaki. We must not neglect other work, but the present is an opportunity for this special service that must be seized at once or be lost for ever.

The Unprofitable Prayer Meeting.

We have received the following communication from a correspondent, and invite any of our readers who may be able to render help on the most important questions raised in it to do so. Their replies should reach the Editor as early in the month as possible.

"This is a day of much formal prayer, yet I question if the great proportion of it effects really anything. The dull recitations of more or less devotional language do not edify the hearers because of their repetition, nor do they move the hand of God because of their formality.

"Take, for example, the numerous prayer meetings for the gospel work, often in places where there has never been a conversion for years. What is the reason that prayer is ineffectual where there seems no lack of fervency? (James 5. 16). Does

fervency afford external evidences or does it refer to internal work in the soul? Is there such a thing as the gift of prayer?

"During the war Intercessory services have been held all over Christendom. For the most part these have been confined to stereotyped rehearsals by those fitted either by constitution or training for correct expression of thought. Is this real prayer? We hear of very effective prayer meetings on the battlefield. Do German shells cause the difference in effectiveness?

"At one time those who attended prayer meetings were afflicted by long-winded half-hour disquisitions on dogma which always left the impression that the audience was not God but fellow-men and women. Most of the long prayers have died out with the old theologians, but it does not necessarily follow that reduction in quantity makes for improvement in quality.

"Where a man has the responsibility of a small prayer meeting thrust upon him, he is tempted to pray half an hour in order to fill in the usual time for a meeting. Needless to say it would take a man to be imbued with extraordinary spiritual energy if such practice could be effectively sustained. Should the meetings in such places be curtailed to suit a five-minute prayer? Will you or any of your readers suggest how prayer meetings could be relieved of such objectionable features?"

The formality of the usual meetings for prayer, and the very little fervent, persistent and continuous supplication and intercession should be a real grief to all, but it may be that at this time the Lord will give a reviving in this respect. If we seek Him in private He will guide by His Holy Spirit as to the gatherings together of those whose hearts are burdened, and only good to us who pray, blessing to those for whom we pray, and glory to His Name will be the result.

Answers to Correspondents.

References to the Sword in the Gospels.

A correspondent asks for an explanation of the references to the sword in the Gospels.

The sword is the great destroyer of human hopes; it is the evidence of the presence of irreconcilable principles or interests; and it represents the power by which men secure for themselves their supposed rights. If these three things are borne in mind the references to it in the Gospels will be intelligible.

(1) "*A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*" (Luke 2. 35). Here Simeon prophesies the complete destruction of all the natural thoughts and the hopes on the merely human plane that even those who looked for redemption in Israel entertained in the Lord. These thoughts and hopes would be specially strong in Mary as the mother of the Lord. But she was to see Him reviled, "spoken against," rejected and crucified, and by that piercing sorrow, the thoughts and hopes that were founded upon what was natural were discerned and utterly destroyed, while those that were of faith and the Spirit were established in resurrection. The Word of God is likened to a sharp two-edged sword in its power to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart and to divide between what is *natural* and what is *spiritual* (Heb. 4. 12).

(2) "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword*" (Matt. 10. 34). The sword in this passage indicates that the coming of the Lord into the world brought into it principles and interests to which those that already governed it were irreconcilably opposed. It is true that He is the Prince of Peace, but men did not want Him, and they preferred the world as it was. There must in consequence be division and variance between those who became His disciples and those who held with

the world, and in the most intimate circles the cleavage would be the most pronounced.

The primary application of this passage was to the Lord's disciples amongst the Jews, and it will apply to them very specially during the time of Jacob's trouble, still to come, when compromise between those who look for Him and those who follow Antichrist will be impossible; of this the early part of the chapter speaks. But the principle holds good now.

(3) "*Then Jesus said unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*" (Matt. 26. 52).

In this passage the sword comes into view as the power by which men secure for themselves their supposed rights. Peter evidently knew no greater power, and in his zeal for his Lord's cause he drew it courageously. He had to learn that not by such carnal weapons could the Lord's interests be advanced. He was to behold the amazing spectacle of the Messiah of Israel being led without resistance to shame, dishonour and death; and to discover that when apparently in utter weakness and defeat **HE WAS THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD**. The truth had to be declared that by obedience unto death, by sacrifice and not by self-defence there would be established His kingdom that cannot be moved. That alone should show us how irreconcilable are the kingdoms of this world and the Lord's kingdom.

"They that take the sword shall perish by the sword" we believe has reference to taking the sword in defence of the Lord's interests. He could not support his disciples in such a course, and they would be no match in ruth-

lessness for the powers inspired by bitter hatred of His name who would be opposed to them and so they must needs perish in such a conflict.

(4) "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke 22. 36). These words, with the disciple's reply, "Here are two swords," may be more difficult to understand. But they become clear if the change that was taking place in the state of things is seen. The Lord had sent them forth while with them, and had exercised His rights as the true Messiah on their behalf. All in the land belonged to Him, and He saw that they lacked nothing. Just as the ass's colt (Mark 11.) and the guest chamber (Luke 22.) had been immediately at His disposal, so also had all that His servants needed in their service for Him. But the end

of all that had come and He was to be reckoned among the transgressors. They would then have to suffer because they were His servants, and as all His rights on earth were to be definitely refused Him they would have to look after themselves. They thought evidently that His words were to be taken literally and produced two swords. His answer, "It is enough," would seem to mean, "It is no use pursuing the subject." Until His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit they could not enter into the meaning of the great change that His rejection had made.

We do not see in any of these passages any reference to nations drawing the sword, nor instructions to the believer as to how to act in such circumstances.

The Christian and the Social Welfare of Men.

M. Z. inquires whether a *true* believer should take an active part in any society or association whose sole object is for the welfare of men socially and not spiritually.

A Christian should do good to all men, and that in every way as he is able, but the end in view in all that he does should be the blessing of their souls, for every other kind of good is transient, this alone abides.

The sympathy and co-operation of others having the same great object in view is always a great help in seeking the blessing of men, but these do not need to form an association for their work, the divine bonds that bind them and oneness of mind and purpose should be enough.

Now if a Christian joins a purely worldly society having as its object the social advancement of men, he dissipates his energies upon something that does not lead to his goal, that indeed often leads far from it. He associates with those who are not likeminded and who may have no love or sympathy with that that lies nearest to his own heart, and he becomes unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for even infi-

dels and blasphemers of Christ labour hard for the social uplifting of their fellows, and are often most enthusiastic supporters of societies having this end in view. Such association on his part will not effect the good he seeks, and can only damage his own soul.

Nothing lifts men out of the mire so quickly and permanently as the gospel of the grace of God, for it not only brings salvation but teaches men to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world. To carry this to men is our business, but no *worldly* association can help us in it, for those who form these societies do not know the power of this mighty lever for themselves.

Let us not weary in well-doing, there is much to be done in every way, and to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction but keep ourselves unspotted from the world is pure religion and undefiled (James 1.). The Christian cannot do the latter if he joins a worldly society.

Separation from Evil and Service.

O. M. J.—Separation from evil is necessary if one desires to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use (2 Tim. 2.). And one who is "happy to spend his Saturday evenings at Picture Shows or at 'Pastor' Russell's meetings" is certainly not separate from evil, for the first is

of the world, and the teaching of the second is of the devil. It does not require great spiritual perception to see the incongruity between these things and the service of the Lord, but if any are doubtful as to it a prayerful study of 2 Timothy 2. 15-22 should make it clear.

May the Lord come at any moment?

H. P. inquires upon what ground the statement that "Christ may come at any moment" rests. He says, "While the change will take place in a moment" (1 Cor. 15, 52), has it been carelessly left for "any moment"? Has not God fixed the appointed time?

God has certainly fixed the moment when the Lord shall descend from heaven to catch up His church to Himself, but He has not revealed that moment to us. This we may clearly gather from Mark 13. 32, where the Lord has told us that "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man," and from Acts 1. 7, where the Lord said to His disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." These words in both instances have to do with the Lord's coming to His earthly people Israel and the establishment of His kingdom on the earth, and, if the hour of His coming

to do that is not revealed, seeing that times and seasons have their place in connection with Israel, how much more unlikely it is that the moment can be fixed by us for the catching away to heaven of the church.

The "quickly" coming "Bright and Morning Star" challenges the affections of His bride, and looks for a true response from her. "Surely I come quickly" are His last words to her in the Holy Scripture. She has to look for Himself, and for nothing else, and happy indeed is every heart that lives in the constant expectation of His coming, saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Fulfilling all Righteousness.

H. H. H.—The words of the Lord to John the Baptist, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3.), had special reference to the time then being. John was sent to Israel preaching repentance in view of the judgment that was coming, and those of them who were affected by his message were baptized of him, confessing their sins. Their contrition was manifested by their baptism; it was the outward evidence of their self-judgment and repentance before God. This was the only way of righteousness for them—the acknowledgment before God that they had no righteousness at all. To these repentant Israelites Jesus went and identified Himself with them in their sorrow for their sins. He had no sin, but He had come of that nation

according to God's purpose and promise, and it was most guilty before God, and He joined those who felt their sin in their confession before God. Righteousness, in the fulness of His grace, brought Him where sin had brought them, that He might lead them on in the path of righteousness which they had begun to tread. The "us" was Himself and John, and in this again His wonderful grace is seen. He associates His faithful servant with Himself in this matter. John had baptized them with water unto repentance, that was the beginning of righteousness; He would baptize them with the Holy Ghost, that was the consummation of it. This promise will be fulfilled for Israel in the millennium kingdom.

Help in Trouble.

(E. CROSS).

GOD is the beginning and the end of everything. He who has the fear of God has no other fear; for there is nothing else to fear where "God is all in all." It is not that there are no minor fears. Pain, deprivation, distress, each have their respective fears in their respective spheres. But none of them possesses the soul as it passes by faith out of the sphere of their operation into the presence of God.

Thus says Jesus: "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; Fear Him, who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12. 4, 5). Thus again saith the Psalmist, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Ps. 56. 3).

We are in the midst of distress and trouble on every hand. In the world, war; in Christendom, increasing apostasy; among the more spiritual sections of true Christians, weakness and faint-heartedness in "the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and the general tendency all around is slackness and decrease of spiritual energy and devotedness in the truth. In the midst of all this the heart needs an anchor in a sure place, a covert in the storm, a haven of rest from the pressure around. How comforting to know that "God is our refuge and strength: a very present help in trouble." And it surely is so. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Where are we to-day? Just where we were yesterday. In the midst of the ruin of the church, the increasing apostasy of Christendom, the growing power of popery, democracy and socialistic atheism, we are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is our hope; our only hope; our "blessed

hope." He is the hope of Israel (Jer. 17. 13). He is the hope of the world (Hag. 2. 7). He is our hope (1 Tim. 1. 1).

Now, let us not be discouraged, nor down-hearted. "Hope thou in God," says the Psalmist; "for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

As black as things are, they will be much blacker. But remember that "the evening and the morning were the first day." And so Daniel found it in the "vision of the evening and the morning," which issued in the destruction of the great enemy (Dan. 8. 25, 26), and the deliverance of his people.

So again in Zechariah 14. 6, 7, a similar truth appears. First, verse 6, it will come to pass that in the distress of Jerusalem at that day, the darkness is supernaturally intensified, the stars are obscured by night, and there is no light by day; "the light shall not be clear and dark," i.e. there is no light, day or night, but it shall be a day, one sole day, known to the Lord, unthought of in its awfulness, unknown to man, "dies iræ, dies illa," not day and night, governed by the heavenly rulers of God's primal ordering, but blackness of gloom in divine judgment. The blackness of man's impenitent heart, blinded by the god of this world, refused the light when it shone here, and so the blackness of that day will overtake him unawares.

But then (verse 7) if judgment is God's strange work, and it must be carried out until it is exhausted, beyond the bounds of what is now apparent, the glory of His grace again transcends all His present ways, for "at evening tide it shall be light."

And in this strain Isaiah writes: "The moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancient people gloriously" (Isa. 24. 23). And again:

“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” (Isa. 60. 18-22).

And this again foreshadows the fuller glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, as it is written: “And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof . . . and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there” (Rev. 21. 23, etc.).

Thus the evening and the morning are still the first day. And though “weeping may endure for the night,” it remains true that “joy cometh in the morning.”

Five times Daniel is assured by the angel of the “truth” of all the revelations made to him (Dan. 7. 16, 19; 8. 26; 10. 21; 11. 2), which, though so full of distress as he contemplates the exceeding sufferings of his people, all issued in their final deliverance and blessing; and similarly, as the Spirit pictures for us the transcendent glories of the believer’s hopes in the closing chapters of the Revelation, we are assured again and again that “these are the true sayings of God” (Rev. 19.9; 21. 5; 22. 6).

Then let us accustom ourselves to dwell upon these things, as it is written, “that ye may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Of sorrow and distress there is plenty in the world. Like thorns and thistles, they grow of their own accord. We move in their midst unavoidably every day. They abound everywhere; in the church and in the world. But occupation with them produces only distress of soul, and carries distress with it. If the pressure comes upon you, seek grace to bear it; if it meets you in another, seek to relieve it with the ministry of good; remove it altogether where you can. Thus you will be happy yourself, and you will help to make others happy, and you will be following in the footsteps of the Master, who “went about doing good and relieving the oppressed,” and by His own example encouraging others to “trust in God” (Heb. 2. 13).

Thus speaks the great Apostle: “For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if any praise, think on these things. What ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things do; and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4. 8, 9, N.T.).

The Attractive Power of Christ.

THE planet Neptune is under the genial and mighty influence of the sun, though nearly 3,000,000,000 (three thousand million) miles away from it! What a mighty attraction the sun has! that star circles round it without the least aberration from its perfectly regulated orbit in the acknowledgment of the sun’s inherent power.

And so we may add to Dr. Chalmers’s well-known apothegm: “the expulsive power of a new object,” the attractive power of the same; for Christ not only expels the evil, but He wins the heart. He wins by weaning, or rather He weans by winning. “He must increase, but I must decrease,” said the devoted Baptist. As Christ rises, so self wanes and fades, morally into its wretched nothingness. So may it be.
(J. W. S.)

The Preciousness of Christ.

(A. J. PIDGEON).

“Unto you that believe He is the precious” (1 Peter 2. 4-7).

HOW beautifully is the preciousness of Christ to us illustrated by Mary’s adoration of Him at the supper which they made Him at Bethany (John 12.).

He was so precious to her that she thought no sacrifice too great for Him, and so she poured the ointment upon Him, and the odour thereof filled the house. She did it in view of His burying. She was in the secret of what He was pressing on towards, and her action proved her appreciation of Him. So, too, we realise His preciousness, and never more so than when gathered at His supper to remember Him in death for us. Then we may bring our alabaster boxes of praise and worship, expressing our appreciation of Him. And this is fragrant ointment, acceptable to Him.

HE IS PRECIOUS TO US. He has undertaken our case fully. He has charged Himself with all our liabilities. He has borne the judgment of our sins and death which was our due. He bore our sins in His own body when Jehovah laid upon Him the iniquity of *us all*. His precious blood, infinitely greater in value than gold or silver, was the price paid for our redemption. He meekly submitted to all the shame of Calvary’s cross, and voluntarily offered Himself without spot to God. He drank the cup of death, that we might have life. Precious Saviour!

HE IS PRECIOUS TO GOD. He, alone, stood for God perfectly. His whole life was a sweet-smelling odour—a delightful fragrance to God. He restored the glory that He had not taken away. He only did the Father’s will—it was His meat to do it. He gave the

Father infinite pleasure in His devotedness to that will. Imperfections are seen in the prophets. Moses failed, David sinned, Isaiah says, “Woe is me.” Jeremiah exclaims, “I am black.” Job owns, “I am vile.” But He was the Father’s delight, perfect, spotless, holy, undefiled, and pure. He always stood for God.

Joseph was a type of Him. He was the one loved of his father; one who sought his brethren’s welfare; the one who was put into the pit and the dungeon as a result of their hatred; his dreams, revealing his future glories, they despised. Jesus came, the Father’s well-beloved One, but His brethren received Him not. They cried, “Away with Him.” His ministry, yea, and Himself, were refused, whilst His references to His future glories as Son of Man were regarded as blasphemy. Truly of Jesus it can be said as it was said of Joseph: “the archers have sorely grieved Him, shot at Him, and hated Him” (Gen. 49. 23), but He was the One who, like Joseph, was raised to deliver them: to do which He was both separate and separated from His brethren (ver. 26).

In Deuteronomy 33. 13-17 all the *precious things* are to come upon Joseph, setting forth in figure those millennial blessings which this earth shall enjoy under the true Joseph, whose glory is to fill the earth. He is the Heir, and His great inheritance bathed in the joy of His glory shall yield Him full homage.

May we in the days of His rejection yield Him our homage now as those who know—

“The precious Saviour and the power
That makes Him precious too.”

The Christian on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe.

Higher Criticism in the Mission Field. (H. P. BARKER).

"A spurious faith is to be distinguished from the genuine and Scriptural: First, by its want of success; and secondly, by its hurtful reaction upon the possessor."—JOHN SMITH.

TO-DAY an old gentleman—an earnest Christian—called to see us and solicit our aid. In a neighbouring town of about 40,000 people . . . there was a flourishing, self-supporting company of Christians. . . . The recent pastor, an exponent of modern theology, soon found his congregation dwindling. As they could no longer support him he resigned. His substitute, a student from a neighbouring theological college, well versed in the latest deliverance from Germany, fed (perhaps I should say poisoned) the flock every Sunday for awhile, until his weekly congregation had dwindled down to one old woman and the old gentleman who brought us this dismal tale."

So writes a missionary in the Far East, Mr. Paget Wilkes, whose book, "Missionary Joys in Japan," affords a capital insight into the lights and shadows of gospel work in the island empire. The words which we quote raise a very serious question, namely, what steps should be taken by Christians in England, America, etc., to clear themselves of all complicity in the work of Satan, so injurious to the interests of Christ's kingdom, so destructive of spirituality, so productive of moral disaster? Is it enough that they should withhold their subscriptions from missionary societies which employ agents tainted with German theology? This, of course, those who are loyal to Christ and the Scriptures will do. They will decline to lend their aid in the remotest way to the propagation of that which is so dishonouring to their Lord. But is no further step necessary? We lay the question frankly before our Christian readers: Is it not due to our Lord and Saviour that we should sever every link of fellowship and friendship with those who tolerate the continuance of this evil in their midst?

Do not such scriptures as the following clearly teach us our duty in this matter?

"Mark them which cause divisions

and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and AVOID THEM" (Rom. 16. 17).

"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED" (Gal. 1. 8).

"SHUN profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto MORE UN-GODLINESS. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred. . . . If a man therefore PURGE HIMSELF FROM THESE, he shall be a vessel unto honour" (2 Tim. 2. 16-21).

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers. . . . Whose mouth MUST BE STOPPED . . . they profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1. 10, 11, 16).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS" (2 John 10, 11).

"I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold THE DOCTRINE of Balaam. . . . So hast thou also them that hold THE DOCTRINE of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2. 14, 16).

It is becoming increasingly apparent that Christians are ranging themselves into two opposing camps as regards this question.

First, there are those who, by God's grace, are determined to clear themselves of all complicity in the work of darkness carried on under the name of "Modern theological thought," "Higher Criticism," "German Philosophy," etc. They will not work in harness with those who are leavened with the evil. They will not give their money to societies that tolerate the leaven in any of their missionaries. They will not remain in communion with any ecclesiastical body which permits fellowship with those whom the Word of God forbids us to receive into our house, or even to greet with an ordinary "God speed."

Secondly, there are those who are content to go on more or less indifferent to the evil of unsound teaching as to the Word of God and the Person of Christ. They look with a lenient eye on such doctrines, or, if they deplore them, they see no reason why they should discontinue fellowship and friendship with their propagators. They thus flout the plainest injunctions of Scripture. They prefer an easy-going tolerance to faithful separation from what is nothing but disloyalty to Christ. They become, by their neutrality, *partakers of the evil deeds* of the false teachers. This is clear from the passage already quoted from the Second Epistle of John.

The evil is glaring enough in Christendom, and the havoc that it works is traceable on every hand. But when it invades the mission field, as it is now doing, it threatens to corrupt the choicest fruits of the gospel, and a clarion call is needed to remind those who are brought in contact with it, *that loyalty to their Lord demands that they should not parley with traitors!*

Lest it be thought that we are exaggerating the danger, and representing it to be more widespread than it is, we make further quotations from "Missionary Joys in Japan." The writer says (pp. 312 et seq.):

"I pass on to speak of some of the practical effects of Modern Criticism as we have seen

it in the mission field. They are, alas! continually before us. As the Japanese Church is comparatively small, it is obvious that there can be but few leaders of distinctive ability, and, therefore, the majority of those who are occupied with Higher Critical theories have taken them second or third hand from English and German text-books. I fear, moreover, that many of them have but a superficial understanding of the matter in hand, and yet do not on that account hesitate to speak *ex cathedra*. Alas, the dogmatism of the critical school carries them away, and intellectual vanity considerably helps in the process. There seems to be with it so little real perusal and study of the Bible itself. Most of the time is given to books about THE BOOK.

One very earnest and successful evangelist told me the other day that his brother—a graduate of a leading theological college—had informed him that he no longer had much use for the Bible. On asking him how many times he had read it through, he received the significant reply: "Not once." Lectures, theological treatises, and magazines told him all he needed to know about it!

Not many years since, I became acquainted with a young European resident in Japan. He was very earnest, self-sacrificing, and devoted in his efforts to lead men to Christ, both Japanese and "foreign." I knew of none more whole-hearted in the service of the Lord. To-day he never attends a place of worship, and has given up all his work for Christ.

Meeting him not long since, I inquired of him with some care. Attendance at a leading Japanese church, where modern theology is taught, disabused his mind, he said, of all such narrow religious notions as he formerly held. He has no more interest in religion, and I fear Christ is now nothing more to him than a name. He himself attributes his "fuller light" to his acquaintance with modern criticism.

A missionary told me quite recently of one of the leading and most earnest young men of his church. Desiring to be trained as a worker, he was sent to — Theological School, where advanced Biblical criticism is taught. Within a year he had left, convinced that there was nothing in Christianity after all, and the last I have heard of him is that he is dying of consumption, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world.

Not long since I met a graduate of another theological college, where criticism of a moderate order is presented to the students. After finishing his course, he was on the point of giving up his intended ministerial course. He did not know that he really believed in anything at all.

Another who graduated at the same college I knew well before he entered, —, a bright, earnest soul-winner. He returned home after three years, cold, dead, formal and unhappy, and it took some years before he regained his zeal and love for the Lord, if indeed he has ever fully recovered it at all.

In the year 1892 there was an unusual work of grace on the Pacific coast of U.S.A. amongst the Japanese. Some of those who are to-day the most spiritual leaders in Japan were saved at that time. Among them was a man remarkably converted, whom it was soon evident that God had chosen as a special instrument. He was much used of the Lord in America amongst his own nationals, until some years later he returned to Japan. Here he was appointed English teacher in a large mission school. Almost at once a Revival followed; both teachers and students were convicted of sin in no ordinary degree. Many were converted and saved of the Lord. His next appointment was to the pastorate of a country church. He had not been here long before all his old fire and evangelistic zeal had disappeared. He shortly afterwards resigned, and returned to America.

In 1911 Mr. —, one of my personal friends, who told me the story, and who himself was one of the converts of the '92 Revival, visited America for some special meetings. He had been very intimately acquainted with him in the early days of his Christian life. Making inquiries as to the whereabouts of his old friend, he learnt to his amazement and sorrow that he was keeping a house of shame in the town of —. With the greatest difficulty he contrived to meet him, through the good offices of a mutual acquaintance, and begged him to tell him the story of his downfall. It appeared that after leaving the mission school for his new pastorate *he was induced to read books of modern criticism*, in the hope, we presume, of making himself more intellectually fitted for his task. The result was spiritual bankruptcy. The solemn fear of God, the quick sensitiveness to sin, swiftly disappeared, and he found himself robbed of all life and power. "You may pray for me," he said to his old friend, "if you believe in it, but I have given up all that

sort of thing long ago," and so they parted; but not before my friend, in the entrance of his house, had got down on his knees and poured out his aching heart for this poor deluded and unhappy soul.

My pen is not Quixotic, nor am I writing at random. For, as another missionary of ripe experience said, when I asked him if he knew of any instances of theological students losing their faith in Christ, as well as abandoning all thoughts of the ministry, "Why, the history of — College abounds in such instances!"

Many others, moreover, who have not given up their ministerial work, remain in the churches to scatter, I fear, seeds of scepticism and unbelief.

In talking over the condition of affairs with missionaries of ripe experience, I find them of the opinion, with myself, that one of the crying evils is the literature placed at the disposal of young theological students. Only saved from heathenism a few years at most, without any careful training in the perusal and study of the Scriptures, they are plunged into surroundings where all the vapourings of German, English, and American critics are at their disposal. It seems the proper thing nowadays to stock the libraries of theological colleges with this kind of literature; and these young men, already predisposed to a think-as-you-please attitude, find plenty of *pabulum* for their intellectual pride. They are in some respects hardly to be blamed, for unless a course of teaching is adopted, to counteract and show both the moral and metaphysical defects in the underlying principles of destructive criticism, what can prevent an untrained and uninstructed mind from swallowing wholesale the wisdom of German *savants* when their college library abounds with their learned volumes?

These, then, are some of the results as we have seen them. For sixteen years I have been labouring in this country [Japan], and have travelled many thousands of miles in all directions, met missionaries of all denominations, seen all kinds of work, mixed with Christians of all classes and persuasions, and have never yet seen or heard of any individual or any body of Christians brought nearer to Christ, and made more earnest or intelligent workers in His kingdom, through the influence of modern criticism. I have, on the contrary, seen and heard of many bewildered, deceived and spiritually ruined thereby. It

is the consensus of opinion among the most earnest workers that wherever it comes it brings blight and paralysis into the churches. The present condition of weakness and lack of evangelistic zeal and devotion can unquestionably be traced in some large degree to its desolating influences."

We have quoted at some length from the volume previously mentioned, in order that our readers may be impressed with the seriousness of the matter. Theological Colleges, established for the purpose of training young Japanese converts, have become centres of poisonous, antichristian influence. They are doing incalculable harm.

But whence comes the money with which such colleges are founded and kept going? It comes chiefly from the pockets of Christians in Britain, America and the Colonies. They give what in many cases costs them much self-denial and sacrifice; they give willingly, because they imagine they are helping to spread the gospel among the heathen. In reality, they are helping on Satan's work of undermining Christianity in the hearts of young Japanese students.

Better to fling your shillings into the sea; better to use them for the purchase of worthless gew-gaws than entrust them to so-called missionary societies unless these take up an attitude of uncompromising faithfulness in this matter.

On the other hand, the knowledge of the havoc wrought by the spread of modern theology should urge us who believe in the Scriptures as the very Word of the living God, to redouble our efforts to spread *the truth*. Let us not suffer ourselves to be hoodwinked. We read of so many Protestant missionaries in a certain country. Do we jump to the conclusion that it means that there is that number of earnest servants of God labouring for the conversion of the people of that country? Such a conclusion is wholly erroneous. Many of these "missionaries" are tainted emis-

saries from colleges which are hot-beds of unbelief. They themselves need to be converted to God. Their presence in the mission field is a terrible *hindrance* to the work of God.

It is a far cry from Japan to Mexico. We might speak of China, of India, and of other mission fields where Higher Criticism and New Theology have found an entrance.

Space forbids, however, and we must swing from the Far East to the Far West, where we find the same leaven at work. A missionary in Mexico, personally known to the writer, says in a recent letter:

"We have to mourn indifference and lack of definite gospel teaching. When a GREAT MANY of the missionaries (?) *do not themselves accept the Word of God as such, and mix up in politics, it is little wonder that Protestantism means little of Christianity.*"

But we forbear to multiply quotations. The evil is everywhere. And the Christian's attitude towards it is indicated in the Scriptures. God always makes provision, "*lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity*" (Ps. 125. 3). But our attitude is not to be a merely negative one. God has set before us an object for our continual contemplation: His own beloved Son. Everything good, everything true, everything lovely is set forth livingly in Him, and as we keep His company we grow in His likeness. And *He* is to be the Subject of our testimony. If we speak of *things*, they are things connected with Him. It is His Person, His work, His grace—all that He is, and has done, and given, to which we are to bear witness.

May God give His people grace, wisdom, and faithfulness in these admittedly difficult times to walk in true loyalty to Christ, maintaining no link with the world, whose God and prince is Satan, nor with "vessels to dishonour," who manifest themselves as such by turning from the truth and undermining the faith of others.

The Truth or its Effects?

(H. J. VINE).

“Grace and truth subsist through Jesus Christ.”

THE eye of a master artist takes in the beautiful prospect of the landscape made warm and beautiful by the rays of the glorious midday sun and he reproduces it upon the canvas in vivid and lasting colours. The painting is admired, and copied, and recopied. But the original stands alone as the *true* and representative transcript—the work of the master. Other copies may come near, or be far removed from its excellence, but that only is resorted to as the real representation.

How great was the glory that shone upon Saul of Tarsus, when the Lord Jesus spoke to him on his persecuting pathway to Damascus. It was a radiance “*above the brightness of the sun!*” Through him the Holy Spirit has given to us the true meaning of that wonderful event and of the resultant truths connected with it. He, to use our illustration, has put the picture upon the canvas. This was the man—Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, who went forth and proclaimed that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Father had previously revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of the living God*. That is the rock-foundation of Christ’s assembly. Peter confessed Him, but he did not become the minister of this great and glorious truth. The keys of the kingdom of the heavens were given to him, not of the assembly. It was through Paul that this truth was specially ministered. He tells us, “God who set me apart even from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal HIS SON in me, that I may announce HIM as glad tidings among the nations”; and again, “By revelation the mystery has been made known to me . . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men”; also, “The assembly, of which I became minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given me towards you

to complete the word of God” (Col. 1. 25).

Peter, after his confession, speaks of Jesus as THE SON but once. Paul, who ministered the truth concerning the assembly in such a special way, often does so, for that is the vitality and strength of the assembly. It is, however, through John, the disciple, that leaned on the bosom of Jesus, that the Holy Spirit gives us the deepest and fullest unfolding of the truth concerning the adorable Son of God; leading us on to that wonderful word at the close of his first epistle: “We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

It is thus that the truth has been premised, pictured and preserved for us by the Holy Spirit. And John, linking the apostolic witnesses all together, says, “He that knoweth God heareth *us*. He that is not of God heareth not *us*. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4. 6). It is to the truth, and not to its effects, that the Spirit of truth brings us; to that which is from the beginning, and not to the later copies of it; to the faith once revealed, and not to subsequent imitations. “He that knoweth God,” wrote the surviving disciple, “heareth *us*.” We are not told to hear the immediate or later so-called apostolic successors, but to hear the apostles themselves. And we may well be thankful that this is so, for on every hand there are systems of religion which claim Christian authority, but which in doctrine, or practice, or both, are found to be in opposition to the revealed truth of God. These systems tell us we must hear them: God tells us that those who know Him hear the truth made known to apostolic witnesses,

Those who have been delivered from the authority of darkness through the grace and power of God, and have been set in His marvellous light in communion with Him through the redeeming blood of Christ, are constantly encouraged by the Spirit of God to progress in the truth. The death of Christ has met our old sinful state, and put away our sins. He came by water and blood for this purpose; and that we might have eternal life in Him—the Son of God—on the other side of death. The Spirit bears witness as to this, and the truth known in divine power by us gives freedom to follow the Spirit's leading. On the one hand He encourages us into deepened communion in fullness of joy, and on the other to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him who is the Truth. He leads; He guides; He teaches. He does not drive us; but we may easily grieve Him, though He never gives us up; but giving us to feel anything that has disturbed our communion, He desires our recovery and restoration, through confession to the Father and the prevailing advocacy of the Son, that He may lead us on in the truth.

A very definite objective is thus kept before the saints of God; and the activity of the gifts from the ascended Head on high has this also in view, for all the members of His body, the assembly: "till we *all* arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; and it is added, "*holding the truth in love*, (that) we may grow up to Him in all things, who is the Head" (Eph. 4. 13-15).

Where freedom is known through the truth, the Holy Spirit leads on such. He is called the Spirit of truth (never the Spirit of light), for He indwells those who are in the light, on the ground of Christ's death and blood-shedding, to bring before them the glory of the Son who said, "I am the way, *and the truth*, and the life. No one comes to the Father unless by Me."

Next to self-occupation, one of the most subtle snares and hindrances to our joy in communion, and prosperity in the truth, is occupation with the effects of the truth instead of with the truth itself—the study of movements and their histories—good or bad—instead of giving heed to the truth, which produced in such movements anything that is according to God—the constant dwelling upon the departures from the truth in certain respects, instead of apprehending the truth itself, which would preserve us from those departures, and which we should then *rightly feel* as walking in the truth ourselves.

See that perfect masterpiece placed before the student. He has to reproduce that picture twice. He diligently applies himself to his interesting task. If he is wise, however, he will not carry away his first copy, and then make his second painting from that; but, laying it aside rather, he will now with increased experience, still follow the perfect original. It is just here that many get astray. They follow those who have sought to follow the truth as it was perfectly revealed at the beginning, instead of following the truth which such faithful men followed, and they forget that there is always failure in the carrying out of the truth even on the part of the most faithful. They see and study the effects of the teaching of such, and they have an imperfect copy for their study, instead of getting their own souls filled with the blessed truth which produces those effects—in as far as they are of God. The truth of the Head in glory greatly affected certain godly souls, giving them the blessed sense that they were livingly united to Him, and to all the members of His body on earth. This positive truth detached them from systems which were inconsistent with that truth. Now, alas, instead of having the heart and mind filled with that same unchangeable truth, we find a mournful mass of time, and thought, and energy wasted in occupation with the historical results. We may well feel with God all the failure that has come into the

assemblies, just as God foretold and foreshadowed that it would come; but we shall only prosper ourselves and help others, as with purpose of heart in the energy of the Spirit, we press forward in the truth itself as it has been graciously made known.

It is the normal work of the Spirit to glorify the Son of God. He has come for that purpose, and to show to us the things of the Father and the Son, and the coming things. May we be in liberty of Spirit to be led and guided by Him. "He shall guide you into all the truth," said our blessed Lord concerning Him. The Son of God is now in glory, and the Spirit is here—in and with us on earth.

*"'Tis thence—now Christ is gone on high,
Redemption's work complete—
The Spirit brings His glory nigh,
To those who for Him wait."*

The Talk about Difficulties.

WE are warned in the Word that in the last days "difficult times" shall come, and we have surely reached them. But along with the forewarning there is given to us that which can thoroughly forearm us, so that we may meet the difficulties courageously. Then how is it that we hear so much discouraging talk about the difficulties as though nothing else could be seen? Is it not a sure but unwitting confession of our own failure and weakness, and does it not prove that we have not understood the meaning of the word "God hath not given to us the spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion"? (2 Tim. 1. 7).

There stands a five-barred gate, and beyond it a hedge, and behind that a

Beloved brethren, can anything be the truth—by whatever name it is called—if it turns us away from simplicity and singleness as to the Son in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells? He loved the assembly and gave Himself for it. Now risen and glorified, He, to whom is given the pre-eminence in all things, is the living Head of His body, the assembly which He loves so well. Soon He will come again and present her to Himself, without spot, or wrinkle, but all glorious. Blessed be His Holy Name!

The Father's voice says, "Hear Him." The Holy Spirit glorifies Him. All the Scriptures point to Him. He said of Himself, "I am the Truth." May we, therefore, be found in ever deepening communion, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Himself till He come.

ditch. These would be great difficulties to that old, broken-winded farm horse; he could not face them, urge him as you might. But bring up that well-trained blood hunter, they only serve to show his mettle. He takes them with flashing eye and easy grace, because of the life and spirit within him. Sad that any Christian should be broken-winded and done spiritually, when he might be like the blood hunter in the presence of difficulties. David said: "By my God I have run through a troop, by my God I have leapt over a wall." And we in "difficult times" may be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and so fight the good fight, and keep the faith. Let us wake up to the greatness of our resources.

J. T. M.

"I am the Light of the World" (Jno. 8. 12).

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| The Light | John 12. 35 |
| The True Light | John 1. 9 |
| A Great Light | Isa. 9. 2 |
| A Light come into the World | John 12. 46 |
| The Light of the World | John 8. 12 |
| The Light of Men | John 1. 4 |
| A Light to lighten the Gentiles | Luke 2. 32 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| A Light of the Gentiles | Isa. 42. 6 |
| A Star | Num. 24. 17 |
| The Morning Star | Rev. 2. 28 |
| The Bright and Morning Star | Rev. 22. 16 |
| The Day Star | 2 Peter 1. 19 |
| The Dayspring from on High | Luke 1. 78 |
| The Sun of Righteousness | Mal. 4. 2 |

Lessons from the Tabernacle.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

No. II. The Collection. (Read Exodus 15. 1-9.)

THE first action towards the making of the tabernacle was the collection of materials needed for its manufacture.

Collections are a prominent and nauseating feature of Christendom at the present time. Every sort of unworthy expedient is resorted to to raise money for religious causes.

If only the way in which this first great collection was taken was studied, and copied, things would be all the better.

First of all we read :

“And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it **WILLINGLY** with his **HEART** ye shall take my offering” (vers. 1, 2).

God wants nothing from an unwilling giver. It is remarkable the actual word “giver” is only once* in Scripture, and it is in this very connection.

“Every man according as he purposeth in his **HEART**, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: *for God loveth A CHEERFUL GIVER*” (2 Cor. 9. 7).

God wants no pressed men. He wants willing, heart-felt service, to perform which is counted a joy and a privilege.

A story is told of a somewhat parsimonious brother who intended giving sixpence, but discovered, to his dismay, that he had slipped half a sovereign into the collection box instead.

He explained his mistake to those who had charge of the collection, and requested the return of nine shillings and sixpence. This they were unable to accede to, whereupon he retired, saying, “Well, at any rate, God will give me credit for giving ten shillings.”

“Oh! no,” replied the deacons. “You will only be rewarded for what you intended to give, viz. sixpence.”

The *heart* is everything in this con-

nection. How moving and touching the words of Scripture, “The Lord *loveth* a cheerful giver.”

It is remarkable what response was given by the Children of Israel. But yesterday they were slaves, crying under the lash of the Egyptian taskmasters; to-day they are God’s freemen, redeemed and blessed.

It is supposed that this body of weak, defenceless, unorganized men and women collected a sum equivalent to £270,000. What a contrast to shaking the collection box and abject begging for pennies, in the name of the Lord, as is so common in these Laodicean days.

How delightful is the spirit of Exodus 35., where we get such expressions as—

“A willing heart” (ver. 5).

“Every one, whose heart stirred him up” (ver. 21).

“Every one, whose spirit made him willing” (ver. 21).

“As many as were willing hearted” (ver. 22).

“All the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom” (ver. 26).

“A willing offering” (ver. 29).

“Filled with wisdom of heart” (ver. 35).

Nay, more, the tide of happy, whole-hearted giving was to such a height that Moses had to cause a proclamation to be made in the camp, saying :

“Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” (Ex. 36. 6, 7).

What a beautiful picture this affords of the grace of God working in the heart of erstwhile slaves in a desert of no creature resources.

May all this speak loudly to each one of us, and may the Lord find more true and hearty response to His exceeding grace in our lives.

* “Giver of usury” (Isa. 24. 2), is not really a giver, but a matter of payment of interest.

Brethren Dwelling Together in Unity. (J. T. MAWSON).

An Address on Psalm 133.

I WOULD call your attention to the fact that when we take up the Scriptures to read them, we are not reading the words of men, no matter how good or wise, but we are reading the words of God. That is a fact acknowledged by us as a point of doctrine, but how little we appreciate the tremendous import of it. God has been pleased to express His thoughts for our guidance and our blessing, and we have those thoughts in the Bible. It is the Word of God. If it is the Word of God it carries authority; if it is the Word of God it must be absolutely and infinitely wise; if it is the Word of God it cannot be improved upon; if it is the Word of God we must take heed to it and do it. To cherish a spirit that is foreign to it or to act in a way contrary to it means to set ourselves in opposition to the revealed will of God.

Keeping these things in mind, let us consider Psalm 133. It says, "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*" To whom is it good and pleasant? Surely to all those who love what is of God. But not to them only; the Psalm shows us that it is good and pleasant to God Himself. That when He looks down on this world, filled as it is with hatred and strife, and in which there roll waves of blood-lust, there is something that is good and pleasant to Him in the midst of it, and that is unity among brethren. Let us not introduce any of our "buts" into the passage, but let us take it as it stands, and consider it as the word of God to us, then the beauty and power of it will not fail to affect us.

But who are these "brethren"? How wide is the sweep of that good word? We who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity present in this hall are included in it, surely, but it goes out wider. Let us stand in thought and listen to Him, saying, as He did to Mary, "Go unto

My brethren." We are in such danger of that withering sectarianism that talks about *our brethren*, and that thinks along narrow lines and in limited circles, that we need constantly to turn back to His words, and to let the love with which they are vibrant thrill and enlarge our souls. He speaks of "My brethren," and when we understand the meaning of that word, and who they are of whom the Lord thus speaks, let us know that God says that it is good and pleasant to Him when they dwell together in unity.

What Unity is like.

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

This precious ointment, the holy anointing oil, is described for us in Exodus 30. If we read from the 22nd verse to the 33rd, we shall find how definite and particular were the instructions given by God to Moses regarding it. And we learn that it was to be for God's sanctuary alone. It had not to be imitated nor had any of the Israelites to have it in their houses. God reserved it for Himself and His own pleasure. He surrounded Himself with its fragrance in His own dwelling, and the reason for this was that it told forth in a type the preciousness of Christ to God as He lived His life of holy devotedness to Him on earth. When men saw Him they discerned no beauty in Him that they should desire Him; but there never was a moment that His Father's eye saw anything else but beauty. From the start of His life to the close of it, it was all beautiful and fragrant: every moment of it, on all occasions, in public and in private, entirely and altogether it was perfect. His words and works that men could hear and see, and the thoughts and the

feelings behind the words and works that men could not see yielded alike infinite delight to the Father's heart. We can understand that. We delight to know that that was so—we are assured that nothing but that could be true.

Is it possible that there could be anything like that in the world now? I want you to notice that I am asking a question, and I want you to consider the question well and weigh your answer before you give it. Is it possible that there can be anything in this world to-day fragrant to God as was the life of Jesus? Yes, thank God, it is possible. Lest you should think that I am saying something that I am not warranted in saying, I will quote the words of the Psalm again: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

It is evident then that the blessedness of unity amongst brethren cannot be exaggerated, and as we consider the way that God looks upon it, we shall all be ready to admit that we should each endeavour with a whole-hearted and continual diligence to avoid everything that would mar it where it does exist, and to restore it where, through folly or self-will, it has been broken. To do other than this would be to manifest a sinful indifference to that which is pleasurable to God.

How the Unity can be maintained.

The question naturally arises, How, then, can this most desirable unity be obtained and maintained? Well, it cannot be formed, kept, or restored by ecclesiastical rules or regulations, nor by acting upon precedent or tradition. It is not an ecclesiastical unity at all in the sense in which we understand the word. In the government of this land there is a *legislative body* and an *administration* for the carrying out of the laws that it places upon the statute book. Now in

the Scripture we have administration connected with the assembly of God, but never legislation. The assembly has to give effect to the purposes and the will of God, and these are clearly given in the Word. It has not to form rules and laws for itself. When it began to legislate—supposing that the Word of God alone was not sufficient for its guidance in every time of difficulty, then began the era of its greatest sorrows; and whenever any part of it, any group of men within it, has set about to legislate for itself divisions have become permanent. I suggest to you that you should carefully consider this, and I think that you will find in it the cause of much discord and many unhappy divisions in the church of God. It is a matter of intense seriousness, nor can the evil of it be exaggerated. Think of men making rules and laws for God's assembly in which the Holy Ghost is! What presumptuous folly is this! No wonder that out of it should come the devil's own discord, instead of that harmony which is of God.

If the Lord had to rebuke the Scribes of old because they made the Word of God of none effect by the tradition of the elders, how much more does such folly call for censure to-day, since in addition to the Word of God we have the Holy Ghost within the assembly to give effect to the Word He has written.

This unity can only be secured and maintained in the life of Christ expressed in us in the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ is our life, and God's thought for us is that that precious and perfect life, which was so fragrant to Him, should be reproduced in us who are members of the body of Christ, and it is as that life expresses itself in one way in one member and another way in another that the unity of the whole goes up in fragrance to God. Colossians 3. gives it to us. Read first chapter 1. 27: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." Lay hold upon

the words, "Christ in you." Now read the third verse of chapter 3: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, and when *Christ, who is our life,*"—keep that in mind, that Christ is our life. Now look at the ninth verse:

"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:

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

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.

And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called **IN ONE BODY**; and be ye thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

These verses unfold for us the character of the new man in which Christ is all and in all. The graces of which they speak have to be put on, they are to be seen externally, but they are the result of life within. They describe for us things that came out in all their perfection in Christ, and they are now to be the adorning of those who form His body. The fragrant oil of the sanctuary was poured upon the head of Aaron, but it went even to the skirts of his garments. Christ is the Head of the body, and the fragrance of all that is delightful to God is upon Him in perfection, but the whole body must be characterized by the grace of the Head: that very fragrance must flow to the most extreme member of His body here below. It is this that these verses teach us. May we all earnestly seek to have our full part in it.

But how will this work out in practice? Simply enough. If there is a Christian upon earth with whom you have a quarrel forgive him, and do it at once. If there is one who tries and irritates you, show forbearance, put on with regard to him bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering; let love cover all your actions to all who are fellow-members with you of the body of which Christ is Head. Take this group of heavenly graces, make them your study daily, and determine by the grace of Christ that they shall be your standard, even though you fail, for you had better stumble aiming at the highest than walk securely on a lower plane.

It should be abundantly clear to the youngest and the least intelligent Christian that if we abounded towards all who love the Lord in these precious graces discord would be impossible, and that the blending of these things together in the power of the Spirit would be most fragrant to God as being the reproduction of the life of Christ in His members below. And, thank God, every one of us may have a part in this.

A Sovereign Cordial against Fainting Fits and other Nervous Disorders.

But you may say: "No doubt, unity amongst brethren is most blessed and desirable, but the brethren with whom I have to do are so difficult to get on with; they are cantankerous, self-opinionated, and unspiritual, so that I have despaired of ever being able to dwell in unity with them. In such circumstances what should I do?"

One thing I would ask in answering such a question. Do those brethren earnestly desire to walk in the truth? Do they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity? If so, and if you are like-minded in purpose with them as to this, it is evident that you have grown weary in well-doing, and that you need a spiritual cordial to revive your fainting spirit, and to put fresh energy into your endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Turn to Psalm 45. 8. It may be that in this verse we shall find something that will meet the need. "*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces where they have made thee glad.*" You will notice that in this psalm the Lord is spoken of as being glorious and precious in the estimation of those who in grace have been brought to know Him, and in this verse He possesses a fragrance to them that none else can. Some of the ingredients that make up that fragrance are the same as those given in Exodus 30. There, as we have seen, it is what He is to God; here it is what He is to us. But there is one ingredient here, the aloes, that is not found in Exodus 30. This arrested my attention in considering the passage, and made me search to see how this special perfume was procured. I found in an old dictionary the following account of it. It was the inner wood, or heart of a tree that grew in India, exceedingly fragrant, worth more than its weight in gold, and said to be a sovereign cordial for all fainting fits and nervous disorders. If the learned compiler of that old dictionary had intended to give a description of the love of Christ, he could not have succeeded better.

The aloes tree had to be cleft if the fragrance of its heart was to be disclosed, and it was at Calvary, when cleft by the sword of God's judgment against sin, that the heart of Christ disclosed all the greatness of its love, and there is nothing in the universe more fragrant than that—the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. Further, His love is far more precious than gold. If the world could bring all the gold that it possesses and could place it upon that table, none of us who know the love of Christ would exchange that knowledge for that great price, it is more precious than gold. And it is said to be a sovereign remedy for all fainting fits. This is the answer to your need. You say your

brethren are difficult to get on with; that you have done your best to dwell in unity with them, but you have found that it is of no use. You have grown weary in well-doing, and are suffering from a spiritual fainting fit. What is the remedy? This is the remedy—the love of Christ. To come more under its influence and to know it better is what you need. To receive in a fuller measure into your own heart this sovereign cordial, this is the only remedy that I know of.

There seems to be a condition spiritually that answers to the very common nervous breakdown. Spiritual neurasthenia is a serious trouble, and causes much disquiet and trouble in God's family; how irritable, how sensitive, how quick to take offence—how short of patience we often are. But there is a sovereign remedy. It is the love of Christ. How it quietens and soothes us to get near the Lord; how it allays the fever, throws things into their proper perspective, removes fears and suspicions, invigorates and strengthens us, and makes us able to meet the things that otherwise would irritate us, enables us to meet them in the grace of Christ. When we are drawn into His company and begin to realize what His love is—that love that He bears to all His own even unto the end, we become ashamed of our selfishness, our impatience, our irritability, and our hearts warm towards even the most unlovely of our brethren. This makes us strong to serve others in their weakness, as He did when He bent at the feet of His disciples and washed their feet, though He was their Lord and Master. What love was His, and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

It is in the power of His life which has become our life, and as we are maintained by the Holy Spirit in the consciousness of His love to us that we shall set ourselves with renewed purpose of heart to dwell together in unity with our brethren.

(To be continued.)

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 107.—108.

PSALM 107. In this opening Psalm of Book V which gives us a summing up of God's ways and purposes in connection with His people, we find a full answer to the prayer in verse 47 of the preceding one. The nation redeemed from the hand of the enemy is gathered out of all lands (Amos 9. 9; Jer. 16. 15), and celebrates the everlasting mercy of Jehovah, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, chapter 33. 11, and reviews the way by which He has led them. The analogy with the fifth Book of Moses will be evident, but there is a contrast which is perhaps more important to notice, for in Deuteronomy the nation is left under law, declared in 1 Corinthians 15. 56 to be the power of sin; whereas, in the Book of the Psalms which now occupies us, we shall see how the Spirit works to give a fixed or steadfast heart, on which the law is written, according to grace and the mercy which endures for ever.

In what follows, five different examples of God's dealings are given, and it might be thought from their general character that no national application was intended; nevertheless, as we proceed it will be seen that the whole history of Israel, beginning with their journey through the wilderness, is portrayed, terminating with their trials in the land, in a day still future (ver. 39), for the promises of Israel's restoration are by no means exhausted in their return from Babylon in the past.

In the second and third of these experiences, we are plainly told that the sufferings are on account of sin (see vers. 11 and 17), but the same is true of the first, fourth, and fifth, as we may learn from the history of the nation. The great instruction for ourselves is that "no circumstances herein mentioned put the redeemed beyond the reach of Jehovah's deliverance," as another has remarked.

What could appear more hopeless than their circumstances in the wilderness in their early history? Turned back from the border of the promised land because of their deliberate refusal to go forward, they wander in the desert, the mighty nation of Egypt behind them, and before them the powerful peoples of Canaan with the giants holding their inheritance; they have only God to turn to, but He is enough, and leads them by a straight way to go to a city of habitation (Exod. 15. 15, 17). Nor will it be otherwise in their future wilderness history (Ezek. 20. 35, 36; Hosea 2. 14), from which they come forth morally cleansed from their state of sin. The result, as in the succeeding case, is praise or the demand for it, but in this first experience there is a new-found knowledge of God who creates the longing and hunger in order to satisfy it Himself (ver. 9).

In the second experience, verses 10-14, we learn that the bondage, the chains and the darkness (Isa. 42. 7) are the direct result of rebellion against God's will, and the despising His counsels by the prophets. The suffering is aggravated by hard labour (cf. Judges 16. 21), and to this is ascribed the breaking their spirit, which in the absence of other resources, leads to the cry for which Jehovah waits (Hosea 5. 15; 6. 3). The correspondence between verse 16 and Isaiah 45. 2 shows that the captivity in Babylon is here referred to.

In the third experience, verses 17-20, the nation is seen under discipline, as a company of fools, a title well earned from the days of Moses (Deut. 32. 6) to the time of Jeremiah (ch. 5. 21). The retribution comes on them, not for one act, as in the list of misdeeds in Psalm 106., but for a course of folly; "foolish men, because of the way of their transgression" (the expression is used to denote the course of conduct,

the habit of life), and because of iniquities bring affliction upon themselves (the proper reflexive signification of the conjugation is by all means to be retained) (Perowne). If we interpret the words as applicable to the nation, we must read them in the light of such passages as Isaiah 1. 5, 6, and Jeremiah 8. 10, 22. The individual application is forcibly traced in Job 33. 19, etc. The word that heals is found in both passages (Job 33. 24; Isa. 1. 16-20), beautifully anticipating the present glad tidings of grace.

The fourth example finds its fulfilment in Israel scattered among the nations (so often figured by the sea, Rev. 17. 15), according to Amos 9. 9, and Jeremiah 16. 15. As in the other cases it is only when they come to their wits' end that they turn in the agony of their distress to God, and relief comes through His mercy. This, of course, is blessed mercy for fools, but is far away from the true path of a saint, though he may often be fool enough to need such mercy. The path of wisdom is clearly traced in such passages as Psalm 16. and Proverbs 3. 3, etc.

The last part of the Psalm from verse 33 supposes Israel restored to their land, the accompaniments of which will be the reversal of conditions which had obtained before in the kingdom of men; but before the final settlement, the people must experience one more season of trial (verse 39). The mention of "oppression" and the punishment on the Princes indicates that the great Gentile powers have turned against them, but God has at this time received them under His more manifest protection and He answers at once by "pouring contempt on their Princes and causing them to wander in a trackless waste"; words taken from Job 12. 21 and 24. At the same time He secures His now redeemed and gathered people in a perpetuity of blessing, to which they have hitherto been strangers. The last verse tells us the character of him who receives profit now by learning Jehovah's ways, it is the wise. Unhappily wisdom

is an attainment reached by few, "it cannot be gotten for gold—the price of wisdom is above rubies, the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it." As Job tells us in the same passage, "it is hidden from the eyes of all living." Yet how simple are its elements, "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding!"

Psalm 108 has the peculiarity of being composed of the ends of two others, the first portion being taken from Psalm 57. verses 7-11, and the rest from Psalm 60. verses 5-12. The first parts of both these contain a prayer of distress, which is triumphantly answered in the closing portions. The conclusion we arrive at from this combination is that the people of the steadfast heart secure the inheritance. They are in direct contrast to the former generation, "a generation which set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit was *not steadfast* with their God" (Ps. 78. 8, etc.). The Psalm is ascribed to David; in verses 1-6 he speaks, representing the restored nation (Isa. 26. 2); in verses 7-9 he declares God's purpose as to the land, the remaining part is intercessory.

In the first section we should notice how a steadfast heart tells itself out in praise, and with such spiritual energy that it waits not for the morning light to rouse it, but itself awakes the dawn (ver. 2). Moreover, the grace that thus acts is not limited to the Jew, the praise is rendered among the surrounding Gentile peoples and nations, so that they may be led into the true knowledge of God which His favour has brought to Israel. Verse 5 implies, as Delitsch has remarked, "that heaven and earth have a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the divine glory over both."

In the second part of our Psalm from verse 5, the thought of faith to connect the power of God's right hand with the deliverance of His beloved people is very fine. Their hearts having been set right He can act for them "in holiness" and bring them into their inheritance with

joy, according to Jeremiah 32. 41. Does this not speak to our hearts, that there is a present joy of the Spirit in leading our souls into the realisation of our portion, in the heavenlies, in union with Christ?

According to the promise to Abraham, Israel was to inherit the land from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean; in fulfilment of this the places whose names are selected for mention are on both sides of Jordan. Succoth is on the East, Shechem on the West. Similarly Gilead and Manasseh occupy the largest area on the East, while both geographically and politically, Ephraim and Judah are the most important tribes on the West. Ephraim famed for its war-like character, is "the defence of my head," and Judah, the royal tribe, is "my sceptre." The King then

turns to the hostile nations occupying territory which really belonged to Israel, Moab, on the East, noted for her pride (Jer. 45. 29; Isa. 16. 6), is contemptuously referred to as "my wash-pot," the vessel in which he (the King) will wash his feet after the victory is complete. Edom, on the West, is the slave to whom he throws his shoe, which he has just drawn off (Perowne). Then tracing the localities from East to West over Philistia will I triumph (lit. shout aloud). Petra, the strong city of Edom, remains for conquest, and God is sought as indispensable for victory, for vain is the salvation of man, if He treads down the adversaries, in the power of His victory His people will do valiantly (Ps. 118. 16). The ways and purposes of God revealed in these two Psalms in relation to Israel are brought out in the next two in relation to Messiah.

The Lord and the Scriptures.

JESUS said, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled (Matt. 26. 54).

Remark here in so solemn and crucial a moment, the place that the Lord gives to the Scriptures: that thus it must be, for it was there. *They are the Word of God.* (J. N. D., Syn. Mat., p. 185.)

The New Man.

IF the NEW man were better known by us, there would be less of that which characterises the old man in evidence.

If the ONE new man were better known in the power of the one Spirit, less would be seen of the enmity and division of religious antagonism which belongs to the old man.

If the one new man IN CHRIST were better understood in a spiritual sense, there would be less allowed of that which was judged at the cross, where our old man was crucified with Christ.

If the one new man in Christ which is created BY, IN AND AFTER CHRIST were better understood, then there would be more of Christ's character and grace in evidence.

If the one new man where CHRIST IS EVERYTHING AND IN ALL were rightly known and appreciated in a divine way, then exactly that would be seen as to life and character with those who have put off the old man and put on the new.

When our blessed Lord Jesus Christ appears publicly, "HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, AND TO BE ADMIRIED IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE," May it be more so now with us for His Name's sake.

(H. J. V.)

Reveille.

(R. Y. FARRANT).

HUSH! let earthly notes be silent—
Stand, ye saints, with listening ear,
Now the upper clouds are parting,
Soon the Master will appear!

“Jesus cometh,” shout that watchword
Till earth’s gloomy vaults resound,
Till her myriad armies tremble,
Marching to their battle ground.

Sinners! hear the note of warning—
Saints, awake, arise, arise,
Let no earthly thing arrest you,
Fling off ev’ry worldly guise.

Let them go! e’en garments hating
Spotted by the hateful flesh,
Let the winds of Heaven rend them,
Rend each captivating mesh!

Wake, ye sleepers, O awaken—
Years ago the midnight cry
Rang in thrilling accents o’er ye,
Rouse ye from your lethargy!

Signs and wonders are we seeking?
Not for these we watch and pray,
Though the air be filled with murmurs,
Murmurs of the coming Day.

Yet nor signs nor wonders seeking,
At Thy Feet, O Lord, we learn,
Though from mortal eyes now hidden,
Quickly Thou wilt yet return.

Yes, Thy words are true and faithful,
Yes—Thy Word’s a deathless page,
It shall judge the bygone ages,
It shall judge the present age.

And the tale the times are telling
We interpret as we go,
See sin’s floodtide higher swelling,
Mark the progress of the foe.

Hush—let earthly notes be silent,
Soon He comes—the Star of Day!
Still more swiftly run to meet Him,
Cast your faithless fears away!

A Song of Hope.

(INGLIS FLEMING)

IN Christ we’re loved, in Christ we’re blest,
In Him we surely stand;
And all is made to work for good,
Beneath His skilful hand.

His home above shines ever fair,
Before our raptur’d eyes;
This world—defiled—is not our rest,
“Arise! depart!” He cries.

He comes! He comes! the gladd’ning word,
Falls sweet upon our ear;
The right is His, the crown He’ll wear,
God’s victory is near.

This storm-swept world, at His command,
From waging war will cease;
The King shall reign in righteousness,
The nations be at peace.

Come then, Lord Jesus, claim Thy bride,
Come, Lord, and take Thy throne;
Come and fulfil God’s counsels vast,
Come! hush creation’s groan.

Earth calls in pain, ’tis Thou alone
Canst it from bondage free;
Lord! make the deserts bloom; Lord, bring
The year of Jubilee.

O keep us, Jesus Lord, until that day,
Walking with girded loins, apart from all
That savours of this world that Thee refused,
Until Thou come with shout and trump, and we
Behold Thee as Thou art and like Thee be.

Are the Anglo-Saxons the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel?

(A. J. POLLOCK).

We have been asked by correspondents to publish a paper upon this subject, interest in which seems to have revived since the outbreak of the war. It is not possible in a short magazine article to go into such a question exhaustively, but we think that what we are here able to put before our readers should convince them that only those whose acquaintance with the Scriptures is of the most superficial character could be led into accepting this theory. Many earnest Christians, we believe, have adopted it, the result being that they are hindered from grasping the purpose of God in this present period, which is the gathering out of the nations His assembly, and giving to it heavenly hopes and a heavenly destiny. Earthly hopes belong to Israel, and every promise made to that nation will be fulfilled by the faithful Fulfiller of promises, but this will be in a coming dispensation.—(Ed.)

WE have before us a catalogue of over 150 books and pamphlets dealing with the above subject, showing a very considerable activity in propagating this theory, the contention being that the British nation and the United States of America are the descendants of the "ten tribes" forming the kingdom of Israel, and who were, in large numbers, deported to Assyria (see 2 Kings 15. 29; 17. 6) in 721 B.C.

The alleged proofs advanced by the advocates of this theory are twofold—historical and scriptural.

Historical Proofs.

It is plain from Scripture where the Israelites, that is the ten tribes, were deported, viz. the region beyond the Euphrates, between the Black and Caspian seas. Some 800 years after their captivity Josephus, the Jewish historian, said that they were then beyond the Euphrates, and had become an immense multitude. So far we are on firm ground.

From this point we are treated by the advocates of this theory to tradition, legend, and probabilities.

The Rev. I. M. Condit, M.A., in his pamphlet, says :

"Now this multitude, which had become so vast [referring to the 'immense multitude' of the descendants of the deported Israelites Josephus wrote about], *seems** to be clearly identified with the ancient Scythians, and it *seems** to be quite as clear that the Scythians are the ancestors of the Saxon Race" (page 7).

The above extract is too vague and unhistorical to carry conviction, but it is a fair sample of the most that is put forth by the advocates of the Anglo-Israelite theory.

Mr. Condit goes on :

"There ought to be no difficulty in connecting the Israelites and Scythians, as their *starting-point, destination, and date* are the same" (page 7).

Where is the proof of this? We know the Israelites were deported 721 B.C. to Assyria, from which neighbourhood the Scythians are said to have emigrated, but the evidence that connects them with the Saxons is very vague and unreliable. Mr. Condit *assumes* that the Israelites and Scythians were the same people, and then speaks of their having a common start, destination and date.

Because the Normans reached England in 1066 A.D., and found the Saxons there, are we to suppose the Saxons and Normans to be the same people, because thenceforth their history is one? Either they remained separate, or became merged, but they could not be identical.

Sharon Turner, the celebrated historian of the Anglo-Saxons, says:

"Of the various Scythian nations, which have been recorded, the Sakai or Sacae are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons may be inferred with the least violation of probability."

This is strong and cautious language. That the Scythians were the ancestors

* The italics are the writer's.

of the Sakai or Sacae is at best an *inference*, and one which, Mr. Turner states, *violates probability*.

True, the same historian says:

"The Saxons were a Scythian nation, and were called Saca, Sachi, Sacki, and Sack-Sen."

But these two statements do not tally. Nor do they in the least prove that the Israelites and Scythians were identical.

Nothing daunted, Mr. Condit, who quotes Mr. Turner, says:

"These names, by dropping the initial 'I,' are easily traced to Isaac; and by adding the suffix 'on,' meaning 'son,' we easily have 'Saxon,' the 'Sons of Isaac.'"

It reminds us of the rough-and-ready method of Procrustes, the mythological robber, who placed all his victims on a bed, and chopped off sufficient to make those too long for the bed fit its length, and dragged out those who were too short so as to fill its length. By such methods anything can be manipulated at will. What right has Mr. Condit and others of his way of thinking to drop the initial "I"?

It would be just as sensible to drop the initial "A" in *Abel*, and identify that first martyr with *Bel*, the heathen idol of Isaiah 46. 1. Such a contention shows how hard up the advocates of this theory are for facts. They have to resort to *fancies*. They build their airy notions on legends, traditions, and myths.

Mr. Condit says:

"The Danites were closely associated with the Phœnicians, so that wherever one is mentioned we also hear of the other. As an historical fact, it is known that the Phœnicians settled in South Ireland, and it is scarcely less certain that the Danites settled in North Ireland. As the Phœnicians and Danites fraternised together in Palestine and went trading together abroad, is it not quite a likely thing that they settled one in the north and the other in the south?" (page 1).

According to this writer he has historical evidence for the Phœnicians settling in Ireland, but even according

to himself he has only inference and fancy for his statement that the Danites settled in Ireland also.

Where does he get his statements from, that the Danites were closely associated with the Phœnicians? In the days of Israel in Palestine the strip of country to the north was not called Phœnicia at all, nor its inhabitants Phœnicians. The country was called Zidon, from its chief city, and its inhabitants Zidonians, or Canaan and Canaanites.

If you get a map of Canaan, as divided among the tribes, you will find Dan in the south, and the territory south of that tribe Philistia, and as far removed on the coast line from Zidon as possible.

It is true that Dan made a northern eruption to get more territory, but one reason given for their success is this:

"And there was no Deliverer, because it was FAR from Zidon" (Judges 18. 28).

The chief city taken, Laish, was renamed Dan, and part of the tribe of that name settled there, hence the expression "from Dan to Beersheba"—that is from extreme north to extreme south.

But all this does not remotely prove Mr. Condit's statement.

He might as well tell us that the Prussians are Danites, because one of their chief towns is called *Dan-zig*.

As a matter of fact, the origin of the word Dane, which the Anglo-Israelites seek to identify with Dan, is unknown, and there we must leave it.

The late Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., in his book, "The Lost Tribes of Israel," says:

"The Normans [or *Northmen*] . . . are believed to be descended from Benjamin, because of their character, which was the character of that tribe, and also because the Norman standard was a wolf, which also was the standard of the tribe of Benjamin" (p. 59).

From a K.C. one would expect better proof than this. Ferocious conduct, and

a wolf as standard, are surely not enough to render the Normans and the Benjamites identical. Ferocious conduct is the common characteristic of the human race in war, it is not the special character of one little tribe in Israel and one little nation in Northern France.

Moreover, Benjamin belonged to the two tribes and not to the ten, so that Mr. Harris, in his zeal, goes beyond Anglo-Israel, and is on a fair way to become Anglo-Benjamin.

The lion is the standard of Judah, and the standard of Britain; therefore, according to this kind of argument, Britons and Judaites are identical. But they do not argue thus. Why not? It would be just as reasonable to do so. The fact is, the facts are against them.

Many Anglo-Israelites contend that the British people are descended from Ephraim and the people of the United States of America from Manasseh. Seeing the Puritan Fathers were English, their descendants were English. Their blood was just the same. How and why, when and where Ephraimites, or the English nation according to Anglo-Israelites, became Manassehites is a puzzle beyond either wit or reason to circumvent. At what part of the stormy journey in the *Mayflower* did the change of blood and ancestry take place among the Pilgrim Fathers?

First we have Scythians and Saxons identical, which is not an impossibility, though there is no proof of it, but it is an utter impossibility for an Ephraimite to become a Manassehite by birth and blood. And yet this is what we are asked to believe.

Alleged Scriptural Proofs

Let us turn from these puerilities and examine very briefly what scriptural proofs the Anglo-Israelites present.

First of all it is strongly insisted by Anglo-Israelite writers that we must not confound Judah or the Jews with Israel.

Mr. Harris says :

“When it [the Bible] speaks of Israel, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the ten tribes are meant.”

Mr. Harris puts the percentage far too high, as we shall presently see. Under the heading, “The Scriptural Evidences,” he writes:

“(1) Israel is to become a great multitudinous race of immense power. God, in speaking to Abram, says:—

“‘I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth then shall thy seed also be numbered’” (Gen. 13. 16).

“‘And God brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be’ (Gen. 15. 5).”

And again, after his name became Abraham:—

“‘In blessing I will bless thee; and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast observed my voice’ (Gen. 22. 17, 18).

“Note that these are unconditional promises which God is bound to fulfil.”

Then Mr. Harris, without more ado, expatiates upon the immense population of the English race. But consider his argument. He bids us differentiate carefully between the Jews and Israel, then as proof texts of *Israel* becoming a great nation he gives us three texts. *These contain God's promise to Abraham, who was the progenitor of BOTH JEWS AND ISRAELITES.*

Next Mr. Harris says:

“(2) Israel is to be a blessing to the whole world.

“‘This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise’ (Isa. 43. 21).

“‘The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon grass’ (Micah 5. 7).

“Great Britain alone of all the nations can be taken to fulfil the prophecy.”

Isaiah 43. 21 must be read in connection with verse 22. God contrasts

the object for which Israel was formed with their conduct. He says in plaintive, touching language :

“But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.”

Isaiah 43. 21 does not help to identify the British nation with Israel.

As to Micah 5. 7 it is clearly future. Verse 2 prophesies the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, ignores the present dispensation, as the Old Testament prophets invariably do, and then prophesies the deliverance of Israel by the personal intervention of Messiah, and their deliverance from Assyrian invasion. *Now* Messiah is rejected, and therefore it cannot refer to the present period. It awaits its fulfilment, which will take place, as we have said, when Christ comes personally to deliver His people, Israel and set up His millennial reign. Then Micah 5. 7 will be fulfilled. And further even from Mr. Harris's standpoint, “The remnant of Jacob” refers as much to Judah as to Israel. “Bethlehem Ephratah” was in Judah.

It is a case of a verse being wrenched out of its context, and forced to do service in the upholding of a pet theory.

Next in proof Mr. Harris quotes:

“Loose the bands of wickedness, and undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke’ (Isa. 58. 6).”

In this he sees an allusion to Great Britain abolishing the slave trade, followed fifty years later by the United States doing the same.

But would the reader be surprised if we tell him that this K.C. has suppressed a very vital part of the verse? God says, calling Israel to *true*, and not feigned, repentance:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”

God tells His people this is just what they were *not* doing. It is not a com-

mand to do it, as Mr. Harris misquotes it, but a reproach that they were *not* doing it. On the contrary, Jehovah tells His people plainly:

“Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness” (ver. 4)

Verily, a case is hard put to, to be only able to quote passages that do not clearly apply at all, or misquote or mutilate texts to serve a party purpose.

Proof 3 given by Mr. Harris is as follows:

“(3) Israel is to be an invincible nation.

“‘No weapon that is formed against thee can prosper’ (Isa. 54. 17).

“Fear thou not (Israel), for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee’ (Isa. 41. 10).”

Then Mr. Harris contends because the British have been uniformly victorious, that the above scriptures prove the British race to be the lost ten tribes, or any rate Ephraim, and the United States, Manasseh. Mr. Harris quotes the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the victory of Waterloo. *But the Saxons were subjugated by Danes and Normans in a very terrible way.* The English were driven out of France by Joan of Arc, and lost their American Colonies, so that historically Mr. Harris is beside the mark.

And scripturally these passages do not prove his contention. Isaiah 54. 17 refers to the whole twelve tribes. The ten tribes were separated from the two, but they are to be joined together as one stock in a future day, and these glowing prophecies refer to them. At any rate read Isaiah 52., and you will find Zion and Jerusalem addressed right through the chapter; Isaiah 53. is too well known to need description, bringing in, as it does, in such vivid details the death of their Messiah, and the prophecy of its glorious results, whilst chapter 54. breaks forth into loud and exultant triumph as the “royal” prophet sees the wonderful place Israel—the whole

twelve tribes—shall have when the Messiah reigns in power and glory.

Chapter 1. verse 1 tells us Isaiah's vision is concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and seeing Jerusalem is the true metropolis of all the tribes, God brushes aside the division that had occurred, and prophesies again and again of Israel's glory—Israel covering the whole twelve tribes. Mr. Harris is too arbitrary in differentiating between Judah and Israel, and misses the spirit of Isaiah's glowing prophecy. How petty the mind of man is naturally, and how a theory warps careful judgment.

Mr. Harris next gives proof:

"Israel is to be the great money-lending race.

"Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow' (Deut. 28. 12)."

He states this alone is fulfilled by Great Britain, who, he says, receives 50 or 60 million pounds annually as interest upon her loan to other nations.

Now Deuteronomy 28. gives us part of the charge which Moses gave to the Children of Israel, *including all the twelve tribes*, at the close of his marvellous career. The blessings promised were to be consequent on obedience; the curses, on disobedience. Now can the British nation be said to be obedient to God? Does the history of the last thousand years bear testimony to this? Were the Saxons God-fearing? Were the Normans? Were the ancient barons of England? Were they obedient to God during the Plantagenet, the Tudor, the Stuart periods? Are they obedient now? Thank God, there are many Christians in these islands, but the nation is God-forgetting, and pleasure-loving. And this proof also fails from the fact that Britain and her Allies is now raising a loan in U.S.A.

The very fact that Israel is driven out of her own land is a proof that the curses and not the blessings of Deuteronomy 28. are theirs.

The next proof text quoted by Mr. Harris is :

"The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath, throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant: it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever' (Ex. 31. 16, 17)."

This is clearly *all* Israel. Mr. Harris says:

"The British nation alone of the nations on earth possesses this sign."

But this is not true. The British nation does not keep the Jewish Sabbath, that is the seventh day of the week, but the Christian Sunday, that is the first day of the week, a very different thing. And even as to the Christian Sunday, did the Scythians, the Saxons, the Normans, the early English keep Sunday any more than the French or Spaniards? Or does the British nation keep Sunday any more than the Swedes and Norwegians and Germans?

It would be more convincing to say that the Seventh-Day Adventists are the descendants of the lost tribes, because they keep the Sabbath.

This *completes* Mr. Harris's "Scriptural Evidences." He remarks that there are many other remarkable prophecies about Israel, which are fulfilled by the British race. As a trained lawyer he would certainly bring forward the best and strongest proofs he could, so the reader can weigh what his best and strongest proofs amount to.

The writer was offered Mr. Harris's book as the clearest and most convincing in small compass by the publishers of the catalogue of over 150 books and pamphlets on this subject, so he feels he is doing no injustice to the cause in exhausting his "SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCES," and allowing the theory to stand or fall by their test. Fall it certainly does without a hope of recovery.

Now, if the British are Anglo-Israelites, *all* the prophecies concerning Israel should apply. Balaam's inspired prophecy says:

"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23. 9).

This is emphatically not true of the British nation.

Again:

"Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince" (Hos. 3. 4).

This is not true of the British nation. The Saxons had kings, likewise the Normans, and the English. This is true of the Jews now, literally fulfilled, but not of the British nation.

Again:

"The Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen" (Deut. 4. 27).

This is prophesied of all Israel, and is clearly seen in the Jews. The British nation are not scattered among the nations, nor are they few in number. But how does this tally with the promise to Abraham that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand upon the seashore? We reply that prophecy remains to be fulfilled, when all his seed, both according to the flesh, and spiritually according to Galatians, shall in the day of manifestation, when Christ shall reign gloriously, fulfil to the letter this glowing prophecy. For proof that they will then multiply, read Jeremiah 30. 19.

Again:

"God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant [that is, *circumcision*], therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations" (Gen. 17. 9).

This is not true of the British nation. Texts like these might be multiplied, but we forbear. We, unhesitatingly, claim that they shatter all contentions that the British nation is Anglo-Israel.

The Rev. David Baron, a well-known Christian writer of Jewish birth, says:

"By this new system, while the curses are left to the Jew, all the blessings are applied not even to those 'in Christ,' but indiscriminately to a nation, which, as a nation, is as apostate from God as any other of which 'Christendom' is composed, though I thankfully recognize the fact that there are many of God's true people in it."—"The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew."

"I have said above that Anglo-Israelitism applies the promises given to converted Israel indiscriminately to the English nation. It does not stop even here . . . but goes on to rob Christ Himself of His glory by applying to the British people prophecies which belong, not even to Israel, but to Israel's Saviour. I have seen, for instance, again and again the second Psalm, with the address of the Father to the Son, 'Ask of Me and I will give thee the heathen [or 'nations'] for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,' interpreted of the British Empire" (*Ibid.*, p. 203).

I believe the result of this unscientific, unhistorical, and unscriptural theory is to divert Christians from their high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If one of Abraham's race believes to-day, he surrenders gladly earthly hopes and aspirations. He ceases to be a Jew (or an Israelite, if he could know himself to be one), *religiously*, he becomes a Christian, and part of the assembly that is called out from the nations to be a people for God's Son.

I have no hesitation in denouncing the theory as a great snare designed to lower the standard of Christianity, and divert believers from their true position in Christ.

It is interesting to trace the testimony in Scripture as to the disposition of the twelve tribes, and if Levi is counted, thirteen. After the division between the two and the ten tribes was effected, we learn that the tribe of Levi joined itself to Judah, and that the spiritually-minded in all Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice, and so strengthened the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Chron. 11. 13-17).

Further, this disposition to leave the ten tribes and cast in their lot with the two became very noticeable when there was revival in Judah. Israel's history was unrelieved by revival. So we read in the reign of the pious King Asa that—

"He gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they

fell to him out of Israel IN ABUNDANCE, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him" (2 Chron. 15. 9).

In response to Hezekiah's appeal at a later date we read:

"Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 30. 11).

Now are we to suppose that in the return of God's people to the land in Ezra's and Nehemiah's time that *only* those belonging to the southern kingdom returned. There are evidences that it was not so here and there, as, for instance, Ezra 2. 28 tells us of 223 men of Bethel and Ai returning, Bethel being in Ephraim and the centre of the idolatrous worship instituted by Jeroboam.

Then in the New Testament we read of Anna of the tribe of Aser, and the writer James addresses the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

So that it does not do to draw too hard and fast a line, though doubtless the Israelites are scattered among the nations, and will be under God's hand

till the hour of their repentance and restoration to their own land as reconciled to Judah.

We cannot do better, in conclusion, than quote Professor Rawlinson's comments on Hine's "Identifications," a standard book among Anglo-Israelites:

"Such effect as it may have can only be on the ignorant and unlearned—on those who are unaware of the absolute and entire diversity in language, physical type, religious opinions, and manners and customs, between the Israelites and the various races from whom the English nation can be shown historically to be descended."

To the above the Rev. D. Baron adds:

"As a matter of fact, there is as little absolute proof that the Anglo-Saxons are the Saxæ, or Scythians, as that the Saxæ are Israelites."

The "Encyclopædia Britannica" says that "this theory of Anglo-Israel rests on premises which are deemed by scholars both theological and anthropological to be utterly unsound."

"That in All Things He might have the Pre-eminence" (Col. 1. 18).

The Beginning of the Creation of God Rev. 3. 14
My Firstborn Ps. 89. 27
The Firstborn from the dead Col. 1. 18
The Firstbegotten of the dead Rev. 1. 5
The Firstborn among many Brethren Rom. 8. 29
The Firstfruits of them that slept 1 Cor. 15. 20

The Last Adam 1 Cor. 15. 45
The Resurrection John 11. 25
A Quickening Spirit 1 Cor. 15. 45
The Head (even Christ) . . . Eph. 4. 15
The Head of the Body the Church Col. 1. 18
The Head over all things to the Church Eph. 1. 22
The Head of every Man . . . 1 Cor. 11. 3
The Head of all Principality and Power Col. 2. 10

Jesus is Lord.

The Lord 1 Cor. 12. 3
One Lord Eph. 4. 5
God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ . . . Acts 2. 36
Lord of lords Rev. 17. 14
King of kings Rev. 17. 14

Lord both of the dead and living Rom. 14. 9
Lord of the Sabbath Luke 6. 5
Lord of Peace 2 Thess. 3. 16
Lord of all Acts 10. 36
Lord over all Rom. 10. 12

"The Name of the Lord is a Strong Tower" (Prov. 18. 10).

The Strength of the Children of Israel Joel 3. 12-16
A Strength to the Poor Isa. 25. 4
A Strength to the Needy in distress Isa. 25. 4
A Refuge from the Storm . . . Isa. 25. 4

A Covert from the Tempest . . . Isa. 32. 2
The Hope of His People . . . Joel 3. 12-16
or Place of Repair (*margin.*)
or Harbour of His People (*margin.*)
An Horn of Salvation Luke 1. 69

“Anna, a Prophetess.”

(T. OLIVER,
Galashiels).

ONLY a forlorn old woman presented herself to the gaze of the passer-by in the person of Anna, yet she was the only woman spoken of in the gospels as a prophetess. Now a prophet or prophetess is one who is not merely in the secret of the Lord as to coming events, but one who is able to bring the consciences of hearers in touch with the mind of God as to present things.

Anna's manner of life is a highly instructive study. Therein were three striking characteristics :—

- (a) She departed not from the temple.
- (b) She served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
- (c) She spoke of Him (the coming Messiah) to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2. 37, 38).

As before His first coming, so before His second coming, these characteristics mark every devoted servant of the Lord. In the 4th chapter of John's Gospel the Lord Jesus, weary and foot-sore with His journey, resting by the well of Samaria, assured the woman that the hour was coming when man would not worship God in temples of his own construction, but that the true worshipper would worship in spirit and in truth. Hence by analogy, that Anna did not depart from the temple sets forth the prime importance of being an abiding worshipper.

A common idea, even amongst Christians, is that worship can only be touched for a few minutes once a week. If that is the height of our aim then we shall continue to miss God's mark. Worship is an attitude of soul which should continue, although receiving

fresh stimuli, on the first day of the week, through the collective attitude.

The next characteristic is that of fasting and prayer. In this respect Anna served God night and day. Steadfastness in prayer is greatly emphasized in the Pauline epistles. For example, the Apostle assured the Colossian and Thessalonian assemblies that he and his fellow-labourers did not cease to pray for them; he enjoined the believers in Thessalonica to pray without ceasing; and told his son Timothy that he wished that men would pray everywhere.

The seemliness of continuous prayer is often readily conceded where there is little experimental sympathy with the concurrent practice of fasting, but fasting is undoubtedly an essential element in effectual prayer. This would include not only abstinence from food, but abstention from gratification of the natural desires in all material things. The frequency of the records in the gospels of the practice of the Lord Jesus in this respect is sufficient incentive for our following such an example.

As a consequence of Anna's attitude of worship and prayer she was able to bear witness to the virtues of the coming Messiah to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. In all generations, every servant who has earned the “well done” of his blessed Master has been marked by service in the same sequence—first worship, then prayer, finally audible testimony.

The greatest victories of Christianity are not gained on the platform, but in the silence of personal communion with the Father and the Son, into whose fellowship we have been introduced by grace.

“Belov'd of our souls! Well-Belov'd of the Father!
Omnipotent Saviour, Redeemer and Guide,
O come, and from waste and from wilderness gather
Thy loved ones for whom Thou hast suffered and died.”

Correspondence.

The Unprofitable Prayer Meeting.

Dear Brother,—I have read in this month's "Scripture Truth" the article on the Unprofitable Prayer Meeting. No doubt you will receive many very helpful letters from brethren on the matter, but I felt I must send you the enclosed booklet on the subject by C.H.M.* with the request that you forward it to your correspondent; it will no doubt help him.

I would like to offer a few remarks on this matter. First of all, prayer is *not* a formal thing, it is the blessed privilege of *all* the dear children of God, their place of strength, their precious place of communion with Him. Note what the Word of God says: "Praying ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6. 18). Do we pray *always*? Do we *live* in an *atmosphere* of prayer? or do we go about our business in the ordinary way and go to the prayer meetings at the *prescribed times* and expect to jump into an attitude and atmosphere of prayer? Have we not a lesson in 1 Samuel 4.? Was there not *feroency* in Israel then? But God could not bless them because of the sin amongst them. Oh! let us learn this lesson as Israel did in 1 Samuel 7.; let us get on our faces before the Lord; let us have done with cold formality, and let us be, as it were, "water poured out."

Consider a few passages of Scripture: Note the word *believing* in Matthew 21. 22. Is this true of us when we ask? Do we *believe* when we ask, or do we ask and FORGET? John 14. 13, 14: what a blessed promise! and also John 15. 7.: let us meditate upon it in His blessed presence. 1 John 3. 21, 22.: ought this precious passage not to cause us to pause when we see no answer to our prayers, and see how *we* are walking, whether we are doing those

things which are pleasing in HIS sight; also what more can we want than 1 John 5. 14, 15?

Your correspondent mentions "Intercessory Services." Do you not think that some of these are referred to by the Apostle James (James 4. 1-3)?

To sum up, let us *each one* have this matter out in secret in the Lord's presence; then we, with a fresh sense of His wondrous grace and love, and an intimate knowledge of His will, and a burning desire to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, shall come together not only on meeting nights, but as often as possible, and there will no longer be *recitations* and *praying by the clock*, but there will be real, agonising, fervent prayer, which God will be glorified in answering.

Yours affectionately in Him,

E. W. Pollard.

Dear Mr. Editor,—We are indebted to your correspondent for calling attention to this very important matter, and also to you for opening your columns for the consideration of same. It seems to me that in the first place we err in looking upon the prayer meeting as simply some ordinary gathering which we may or may not attend, just as we feel inclined.

It is sometimes announced as "the usual prayer meeting." We come together with nothing definite on our mind, a few long discursive prayers (?) are uttered, and, because of a mistaken idea that we should not separate till a certain hour, the meeting drags wearily on till the striking of the clock brings welcome release. As to the so-called prayers, these may be generally analysed as follows: Introduction, a Biblical exposition; next, prayer for saints in

* See notice on cover, p. 3.

general, those we know in particular; next, prayer for servants, specially those known to us, not forgetting those whom we do not know, and who, "according to their light," are seeking to serve the Lord; and lastly, a well-finished conclusion. The result of this is that if there be a simple brother present who has some definite desire in his heart, he is afraid to express it, because he does not feel able to sandwich it between an elaborate introduction and conclusion.

While I have stated the case with great frankness, I do not think I have exaggerated, and we must face the facts if we are to find the remedy. When we turn to Luke 11., we find that after our Lord had—in response to the disciples' request, "teach us to pray" (ver. 1)—given that prayer which is such a model of conciseness and brevity, He seemed to emphasize the value of brevity, definiteness, and importunity. The Man in verse 5 stated his desire and no more; he asked until he received (ver. 8), and at once applying the parable, the Lord added, "Ask and ye shall receive," etc. (vers. 9, 10). When we read that prayer of prayers in John 17., and also the model prayer in Daniel 9., we are impressed—are we not?—with the short, definite petitions contained therein and either prayer can be read very leisurely in five minutes. Now let us take a leaf from our own experience. In home life, when something occurs that causes anxiety, e.g. sickness, how

definite and how fervent are our prayers. How we want to be sure that we have gained God's ear, and how earnestly we wait upon Him till we receive the answer. So, too, in meetings for prayer, have we not found that the best meetings were those at which some definite subject for supplication was before us?

This leads us to make a suggestion, which is that the Lord's people—particularly sisters who are precluded from giving audible expression to their desires in a mixed gathering—should indicate, in writing or otherwise, any matter that burdens their spirit. Let us pray only when we have something for which to pray, and if we find ourselves in that condition that we have nothing for which to ask, let us cry to God to remove whatever hinders our exercise of our priestly function as intercessors. When we do pray, let our prayers be brief, definite, and intelligible; and when we receive the answer, let us not forget to return thanks for it. There can be no question that the much-to-be-desired quickening of God's people to-day depends *not* upon the revival of any particular truth, but upon the revival of the spirit of true waiting upon God, first in private, and second in company with "*All them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*"

Affectionately yours in Christ,

W. Bramwell Dick.

January, 1916.

"The Lord the Spirit."—2 Cor. 3. 18, margin.

From "Letters of J. N. Darby," Vol. 2, p. 99.

BELOVED BROTHER,—I have no objection to call the Holy Ghost Lord as a general title in glory and Godhead, just as Jehovah our God is called Lord—regularly so, in the New Testament. "The Lord said unto my Lord," Jehovah to Adonai, and thus I am quite free, and have no quarrel with those who do, because He who is God must in a certain

sense be Lord; and I think that 2 Corinthians 3. 18 does connect Lord closely with the Spirit; but verse 6 gives it a peculiar force, when after a long parenthesis verse 17 takes it up again. The revelation of the Lord is in the present power of the Spirit of God; and that is the way in which we have even the new covenant. But he

identifies this with the present power of the Spirit in saying, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

I do not think 2 Thessalonians 3. 5 amounts to a very distinct testimony. It is the general expression for the ordering, guiding power of grace over His people, and without any definite distinction. It is Christ that comes, if we define, with the term Lord to the mind. In the regular use of the word Kurios is used in two ways in the New Testament. The LXX have always translated Jehovah by Kurios, and so it is used as a name without any article in the New Testament. I have given a list in my French New Testament in the preface. Then we have Christ set as man in the place of Lordship. "God has made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Every tongue shall confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." "To us there is one God, the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ." This truth is very distinctly taught. It is not a question of nature, but of a place He has taken. And in this character the church or Christians constantly address Him: "all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, theirs and ours." It is a name of relationship—"theirs." "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me."

The Holy Ghost is the accomplisher of all grace in us. In that sense He carries out the Lordship work in us. It is not a question of the Holy Ghost's nature or being or personality. They that lie to the Holy Ghost, lie to God. He distributes to whom He will; and as thus acting He is practically Lord. Still though He exercises the authority in and over us, yet He refers our hearts to Christ. There are diversities of *operations*, but one Spirit. There are diversities of ministrations, but one Lord. So as to unity—one Spirit, one body, one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Thus in the practical sense the Holy Spirit acts

as Lord. We are led by Him. The Holy Ghost said, "Separate me." But the title as appropriated is Christ's, or Jehovah, or the general divine authority and rule. The action by which Lordship is exercised in grace in us, is by the Spirit, as in 1 Corinthians 12.—distributing; but the title Lord in administration is in Christ. If Christ directs my heart, the Holy Ghost would do it in me.

In Acts 4. it is another matter; it is despotes, not Kurios. I mean in verse 24; as "the Lord that bought them," "the only Lord God"—despot literally—bought them, being the comparison of a master buying a slave. In verse 29 it is general, but if defined refers to Jehovah. "Child" (ver. 30) is servant, Christ as man (exalted) is looked at as not *doulos*, bondsman, but the servant of God.

But though Christ be made Lord and Christ as man, yet through His oneness with the Father and His being the true God, it runs up into a divine title; just as in the case with Son. He is in the place of Son as man, or we could not be with Him. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"; but it cannot be separated from divine and eternal Sonship. As man He becomes and enters into—is in so far as He is a man in—the relationship with the Father as divine and eternal Son. In all the works of God we find this co-operation of the Persons. The Son wrought; yet He could say, "The Father that dwelleth in me, *He* doeth the works"; and, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, the Kingdom of God is come unto you then." I know not that I can add more to make it clear. Definitions here are not man's part; he receives, thanks and worships. . . .

It is not any question of Person or dignity as to the Holy Ghost that hinders His being the object addressed in prayer, but the place He holds in the divine economy. He does govern as we are led by Him, but our communion is with (objectively) the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Answers to Correspondents.

"War with the Saints."—Rev. 13. 7, 8.

A. R. E. asks "If the Church of Christ is not on the earth when Antichrist comes, what is the interpretation of Rev. 13. 7 and 8 and Rev. 17. 6?" Who are the saints referred to in these passages?

The saints referred to in Revelation 13., who are to suffer under the tyranny of the beast—the head of the Roman empire—are not the saints of this church period. The Spirit of God will not cease to work in men when the church is completed. Not only will He awaken multitudes amongst the Jews to earnestly and truly look for their Messiah, but He will also work amongst the heathen nations mightily, and it may be also in Europe *in those who have not heard and rejected the gospel*. These will be God's witnesses on the earth who will refuse to receive the mark of the beast or worship his image.

Verse 8 is helpful. J. N. Darby in his New Translation gives it, "And all who dwell on the earth shall do homage [every one], whose names had not to be written from [the] founding of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain." Notice the expression "*from the founding of the world*." It occurs also in Matthew 25. 31-46. There the nations are gathered before the Son of

Man when His throne is established on earth, and those *nations* that have received Christ's brethren who have gone forth with the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 24. 14) which shall be preached consequent upon the rapture of the church, shall enter into blessing "*prepared for them from the foundation of the earth*" (ver. 34). The saints in these passages are identical. Their blessings are earthly and their place and destiny is on earth. Consequently the choice of them for their inheritance, which the writing in the book indicates (Rev. 13.), and the preparation of the inheritance for them (Matt. 25), are both said to be from the foundation of the world.

The saints of this church period stand on a totally different plane. Their blessings and destiny are outside of earth and time, they belong to heaven and eternity, so they are said to have been chosen in Christ "*before the foundation of the world*" (Eph. 1. 4).

The Church and the Tribulation.

A.P.S. writes that the statement on page 372 of December issue of "Scripture Truth," that "*the church will NOT go through the Great Tribulation*," is largely at variance with the teaching of par. 3 on page 367 of same issue. But our correspondent is quite mistaken in this. The writer of the latter paragraph would strongly uphold the teaching of page 372. He writes of persecution that has taken place already in this land and that may take place again. He neither says nor believes that the church will go through the "*Great Tribulation*"—a specific period of unparalleled suffering which has special

reference to the Jew, but which will also try all that dwell upon the earth.

A.P.S. fails to distinguish between "tribulation" and the "Great Tribulation." The former is as he states, "the heritage of the Lord's people on earth." It was the legacy left to them by the Lord Himself (John 16. 33). It is given to them "in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1. 23).

But the "great tribulation" is something entirely different. It is spoken of as "Jacob's trouble" in Jeremiah 30. 7; "a time of trouble," Daniel 12. 1;

“great tribulation,” Matthew 24. 21; “affliction,” Mark 13. 19. In each of these passages the Jews are specially in view, and there never was such a time as that will be. “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it.” “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” “Such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be.” “In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.” This is no ordinary persecution of the people of God. It is a time of sorrow that shall come upon the Jews under the reign of Antichrist, and which shall only be brought to an end by the appearing of the Lord for the deliverance of those amongst them who look for and fear Him. A careful study of the four passages quoted will make this clear, we believe.

In Revelation 3. 10 and 7. 14 we learn that it will extend beyond the boundaries of the land of the Jews, that it will come “upon all the world,” and in these passages it is “the hour of temptation” and “great tribulation.” In the former there are some who are to be kept, not through, or, in the temptation, but “*from the hour of temptation*”; they are not to enter the hour of it, and if it is to come upon *all the world*, it follows that these must be taken out of the world. Those who are to be thus de-

livered are addressed as those who are loved by Christ, and this surely must apply to the whole blood-bought church. And though the letter which contains this promise was addressed to the angel of a special assembly, the outlook is wider; it looks on to the coming of the Lord, and takes in all who are loved by Him when that event shall take place. It is at His coming that His assembly will be taken out of the world, and the tribulation will not commence until then.

What will make this coming “hour” so terrible is that all the evils of it are directly energized by Satan. He is to be cast down from the heavens, and then will be fulfilled the word of Revelation 12. 12: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” And in this very connection we have the celebration of the salvation from Satan’s malignity of the heavenly saints.

There are those of Israel who are sealed for preservation through this time of trouble (Rev. 7. 1-8); and a great multitude from amongst the nations also, but these are not the church, a careful study of their blessings will make this clear. They are probably the sheep of the right hand of Matthew 25.

Forgiving One Another.

“**S**HALL I forgive my brother seven times?” asks Peter. “I say unto you not seven times, but until seventy times seven,” replies his Master. But how is Peter going to do that? He will surely grow weary of doing that long before he reaches seventy

times seven. No, he won’t if his heart is kept in the sense of the love of Christ and in the knowledge that He had treated him, and was treating him, and always would treat him in that way, because of the unchanging, never-failing, everlasting love that He bore to him.

“Quit you like Men, be Strong.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

To Christian Young Men in the Army and Navy.

WITH most of you life hitherto has been easy, even and protected; the temptations you have endured have not been great; the opposition to your faith has not been violent, and you have probably had the consolation of a Christian home and the help of earnest Christian fellowship as an off-set to your trials. And so you have leaned upon the faith of others and been carried along on a current of godliness without perhaps very great exercise of soul. Now you have been flung into associations and into conditions of living that you would not have chosen; but you are in them, that is the fact that has to be faced, and they are going to test your faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and discover your spiritual mettle. It is more than likely that your whole after-life on earth and your testimony for the Lord will be affected by the way you endure the testing and come out of the crucible. So that now you must be no longer babes, but “quit you like men, be strong.”

It is not the physical dangers of the battlefield or the naval engagement that we fear for you, for your future is all settled and secure, as settled and secure as the infinitely precious blood of Jesus can make it, but the evils of the billets, camp and mess: evils, moral and spiritual, that will assail you mightily, and either mar or make you as thorough-going, out-and-out practical Christians. You may have been engaged in spiritual warfare already, but anything you have known in this way has but been skirmishing of a most desultory sort in comparison with that in which you are involved now. Your enemy—the devil—is terrible and tireless, and the weapons in his armoury are many and varied. If he cannot seduce you he will persecute you; from him you will get no quarter, therefore “BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT.” “RESIST” him, “steadfast in faith, knowing that the same

afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5. 8). Do not be afraid of him or his power; remember that your great Saviour and Lord has already defeated him; that you are safe in Christ, and that

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

The flesh, always on the devil’s side, and now having increased opportunities of gratification, will war against your soul; flee from those things that appeal to it. Remember how strong men have fallen and been utterly broken by the flesh. Remember Samson, David, and Solomon. Remember that “*the minding of the flesh is death*, but the minding of the spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8. 6).

The world, with consummate strategy, will lay snares for you, but “love not the world, neither the things that are in it . . . if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.” Remember its best things are only vanity; seek them not. You are a child of God, heaven’s crowns, gifted by the Saviour’s pierced hand, are for you, then why should you seek after the world’s prizes? Let its preferments, decorations, distinctions, honours, titles be to its own; let them be in your eyes but as a child’s trinkets, and learn, like Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair, to put your fingers in your ears and cry, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” Beset by such foes as these are, “**STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG**” (1 Cor. 16. 13).

You may rest with absolute confidence in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He intercedes for you on high, and He is able to keep you from falling. His grace is as sufficient for you in your new conditions of life as it has been in the home and office and workshop, only

now the need is greater, and so you must cleave to Him with fuller purpose of heart. Trust not your own strength, but **BE STRONG IN THE LORD**. In the secret of your soul, in the inner sanctuary of your life, unentered by any human friend, preserve a place for Him and cultivate His company. Christ the Lord is the base of all your supplies; keep your line of communication with Him intact; guard it well. Learn to speak to Him on the march, at the mess, in the billet, on the battlefield, and in the trenches. Abide with Him.

HOLD TO THE FAITH AND KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE or you will make spiritual shipwreck. Don't be laughed or reasoned out of any truth that you have learnt from God's Word. You may not hitherto have seen the value and use of some of these; they may have been mere doctrines to you; now you will prove their reality if you use them. The Word will be a lamp unto your feet and a light to your path; it will be a shield and sword to you. "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5. 5). The faith is an impregnable fortress; no assault of the devil can encompass its fall. Stand fast in it, quit you like men, be strong. It is equally necessary that you should keep a good conscience, especially before God. You have to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King, as supreme, or to governors . . . for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2. 13-15). But there may be times when you will be called upon to choose between the wishes of men and what you feel to be the will of God. Don't hesitate in such circumstances: obey God rather than men. As regards what may or may not lie before you, commit your soul to God; have faith in Him; tell Him all your fears, but don't anticipate trouble. Your life is a step at a time. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. The Lord, your keeper, will not slumber. He

knows that you desire to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, and He can shape events so that your feet shall tread the most fitting paths and your hands be kept from those things that are objectionable to you. **HAVE FAITH IN GOD**. Prove now that He is greater than all circumstances, and that He shows Himself strong on behalf of those that trust in Him.

Military discipline will test your temper and give you the opportunity of developing meekness of spirit under trial. The hardships and discomforts of a soldier's or sailor's life will prove whether your cheerfulness of spirit has been dependent hitherto upon your circumstances, and whether you can give thanks in all things. But that which will be the greatest trial of all will be the night and day contact with hundreds of careless, maybe utterly godless and perhaps blasphemous men, with few opportunities of withdrawing from them into some secret place of communion with the Lord. Much grace you will need because of this. But all you need is stored up in the Lord for you; His fulness cannot fail. Remember that it was when Paul was a prisoner, as likely as not chained to his jailors, that he wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice."

If the sin and evil that surges about you makes you feel keenly that you belong to another world and spirit it will be well; for you will be more eager when released from your duties to do as God's people did of old—who, "being let go went to their own company" (Acts 4. 23). Make a point of this, seek out Christian fellowship, for much will depend upon how you fill up your leisure time. Temptations such as you have not faced before will be sprung upon you in these leisure hours. Be able to give the answer that a young naval officer used to give to every worldly invitation, "I have no blank evenings." He meant that Christ filled up all his spare hours.

As regards your relations with your fellow-soldiers, you will be wise if you let them know at once that you are Christians. It is notorious that men in both services respect the true and courageous confessor of Christ, but have nothing but scorn for the hypocrite or the fearful. We were told of a young Christian recently who on his first night in his billet took out his Testament and read a few verses from it and then knelt in prayer. The swearing and loud talking ceased until he had finished, and he was unmolested. The next day one of the fourteen men that shared his hut said to him, "We are a fairly hot set in this billet and it's just as well that there's one God-fearing man amongst us; nobody will trouble you." In less than a week the same man said to him, "We've been talking about you, and we'd like to have family prayers every night, and you'll have to do them for us." And so the faithful young soldier had the privilege of reading his verses aloud and of praying with, and for his comrades every day. Your way may not be opened up like that; you may have to go through the fiery furnace of persecution for Christ's sake. Be it so. You can scarcely expect anything else. But He who walked in the fire with the Hebrew youths will walk with you, and you shall glorify Him in the fiery trial.

You will be surrounded by fearful and

hungry hearts, and if you cleave to the Lord you will find openings for the peace-giving and heart-satisfying gospel that you have received. But above all **LET YOUR LIVES TELL**. A man's life can often talk more effectually than his lips. Be always ready, cheerfully and unselfishly, to help others, and to give a reason for the hope that is in you.

You may depend upon the prayers of those who love the Lord Jesus and who love you for His sake and your own. They will remember you in your temptations and exercises of heart when they bow their knees at the throne of grace, and they will make supplication there that you may be more than conquerors through Him that loves you. Remember 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 [and you know well how great that price was], therefore glorify God in your body which is God's" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

Hear again that stirring exhortation, sounding like a bugle call through all the Christian ranks, "*Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*" And remember that never has there been given one word of exhortation in the Book of Truth that God is not able to enable you to carry out. **HE IS ABLE; ARE YOU WILLING?**

"Abide with Me."

ABIDE with me, my Saviour and my King,
To Thee my life with all its fears I bring.
Thou art my Lord, my never-failing Friend,
Thy love is mine and shall be to the end.

When I am far from those who love me well,
And round my life the tides of danger swell,
Lord, be my Shield, and keep me close to Thee,
Thou art my only hope, abide with me.

Abide with me when sin besets my way,
And like a mighty foe my faith would slay;
Preserve my soul, from yielding keep me free,
I must be safe if I abide with Thee.

J. T. M.

Bridal Affection and Brotherly Love. (J. WILSON SMITH).

THERE never was a time when the affections of the church toward the Lord, as Bridegroom, should be more earnestly and diligently cultivated than the present moment.

His coming is drawing, we believe and hope, very near. With a deepening desire "the Spirit and the bride say, Come," as the day of union approaches. The bride bids Him welcome, as moved to do so by the animating Spirit to whom is known the mind of the Bridegroom. The desire is reciprocal; and, if so, how fervently should the affections of the bride flow out to Him who not only loved her and gave Himself for her, but who shall presently come for her in person, and take her to be with Himself where He is for ever—"a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5. 27).

Could anything be more seemly than such affection? Was it not departure from "first love" that originated the gradual fall of the church from days of pristine devotedness and zeal to the present state of Laodicean lukewarmness, worldliness, and widespread infidelity? And shall we not seek, at least individually, a return to that early love for our Lord Himself which at first made everything of Him and His sacred interests, while the world, with its snares and blandishments, was a thing of naught? What but a deep appreciation of the love of Christ made the early church so separate, so holy, so devoted, and the fire of those affections that burned up the attempts of the imitators, and endured the rage of opponents? The spring of love for the Lord was then supreme. He was everything to her—His bride—and she was, and, thank God, still is, everything to Him. He is the same, be the changing years what they may. "He loved them to the end."

And has there not been, for many years now, a gracious rekindling in the hearts of His saints of love for the Lord

Himself? Has there not been a ministry of the Spirit which has had that, the chiefest of all ministry—the love of Christ—for its object, and a preparing of souls, not for an event, however blessed, but for the actual, personal coming of the Lord Himself?

This, I think, is undoubted. It can be traced through every cloud, and should be cherished in face of every opposition.

Let us remember that our Bible closes with the words: "Surely, I come quickly," and that the immediate and glad response is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is a beautiful close! It is the golden promise that was purposely given to cheer the heart of the bride through the, to our experience, long period of the Lord's absence; and not only to cheer her heart, but to test her allegiance and fidelity to Himself. We know, alas! the result, how the church has failed, but how that, spite of all, His love abides unaltered, while His promise is on the very eve of fulfilment. Hence, on these grounds alone our love for Him, our true, holy, and bridal affections should centre increasingly on Himself.

What more comely, more suitable, more sanctifying?

Then, along with the development of such affections, there should be also that of brotherly love.

We need only turn to the First Epistle of John in order to learn the immense place which love to our fellow-Christians holds in the life of the true believer.

In chapter 2. 10 we read that "he that loveth his brother abideth in the light." He is no longer in darkness, for "the light" is in his home, and love to his brother proves that he is there.

Further, in chapter 3. 14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Thus we learn that love to our brethren is an absolutely essential mark of

brotherhood in the divine family. It is the patent proof that we have passed out of death unto life. Not to love your fellow-Christian is, *de facto*, to hate him, as Cain hated and slew his brother, because, spite of his sacrifice, his works were evil and himself the same. He was not right with God, nor therefore with his brother. He stands before us as a fearful beacon. Then, again, in verse 23 of the same chapter we read: "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." Mark the last word. It is His "commandment" that we should love one another. It is therefore our bounden and sacred duty that we should do so. None more binding nor obligatory; it is just as essential as is believing on the Son of God. Do we realize this duty? Do our renewed affections flow out not only to the Lord, our heavenly Bridegroom, but equally to each and all of God's beloved children. We are to love one another, as He has loved us (John 15. 12). If, if only we did so, how soon would our strife and folly and divisions come to an end, or be happily reduced to a minimum.

But more (chap. 4. 7, 8), "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." Two facts: first, such an one is born of God—He possesses the divine nature; and, second, he knows God.

Not to love is not to know God (solemn thought indeed), for God is love. If the blessed God has been made known to the soul at all, He is known as love, and He has proved His love by the gift of His only begotten Son, that we might live through Him; and, yet again, that He might be the propitiation for our sins. How blessed! What pure and undeserved grace! How forceful the conclusion: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

Hence, to love is the proof of being in the light; it is the consciousness of having passed from death unto life; it is the highest obligation of one Christian to another; and it is the reproduction and expression of the nature of that God who is love.

This is brotherly affection! How sacred! How necessary! How essential!

But, mark, in chapter 5. 2 we find the salutary statement: "By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments." Let this be noted: we only, and in truth, love His children when, first, we love God and keep His commandments. Our affections must be governed by the will of God, so that they may be of a nature divine, and not merely human; but all the deeper, purer, and more fervent on that account, as they flow forth to all His children.

May we cultivate all these precious affections in view of the near coming of the Lord, and also of the nature we possess as the children of God.

Dissension and Dissolution.

DISSOLUTION is the daughter of dissension. O, how does the name of Christ and the way of Christ suffer by the discord of the saints! How are many that are entering upon the ways of God hindered and saddened, and the mouths of the wicked opened, and their hearts hardened against God and His ways! Remember this—the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph—and what a sad thing is this, that Christians should give Satan cause to triumph.

Faith is the eye that looks at Jesus, and the fact that you see beauty and attractiveness in Him is the proof that you have faith.

The Model Christian Couple.

(H. P. BARKER).

This paper is intended more especially for those who have lately been married or who purpose taking that step in the near future.

IF a young husband and wife were to look into the Scriptures with the object of finding a record of lives that should serve as a pattern for them to follow in their united pathway of service to the Lord, which couple, do you think, kind reader, would be the most suitable for their purpose? In raising such a question, I take for granted that they intend to make the service of the Lord their supreme interest during the whole of their earthly course. Nothing less than this would be worthy of those who owe so much to Him. Wherever He may place them, whatever it may please Him to do with them, their great ambition should be to "serve the Lord Christ," and to hold themselves and all that they possess at His disposal. Only thus can their lives be truly *Christian* lives.

What couple, then, may we counsel them to take as their model?

Adam and Eve? No, indeed; for Eve was the ringleader in disobedience to God, and involved her husband in consequences of the most disastrous kind.

Abraham and Sarah? No; for Sarah was not the sharer of Abraham's faith. She laughed at the promise of God. And her husband, on her account, suffered himself on one occasion to be beguiled from the path of strict veracity.

Isaac and Rebekah? No; for Isaac in dealing with his sons was influenced by carnal motives, and Rebekah, to thwart her husband, resorted to gross deceit.

Moses and Zipporah? No; for Zipporah set herself to strenuously oppose obedience to God's explicit command, when it entailed suffering for her children.

To the pages of the New Testament we must turn if we would find a man

and wife whose united pathway of service and testimony may serve as a model for Christians to-day. We find them, I believe, in Aquila and Priscilla.

These dear folks are mentioned six times in Scripture, and in three instances Priscilla's name stands first. This shows that she was by no means a nonentity. Though the "weaker vessel," she contributed her part in testimony, in toil, in suffering, in devotion, to the path of faith trodden by the two of them. She was not merely the sympathetic wife of a servant of Christ; she was herself His servant, as we shall see.

The very names of Aquila and Priscilla have their significance. Aquila means "eagle," and suggests the strength, the energy, the boldness that should characterize the *man*. Priscilla means "old-fashioned," and reminds us how acceptably a Christian wife may serve the Lord by the maintenance of good, old-fashioned ways, laughed at, perhaps, by the world, but of great price in the sight of God. It is old-fashioned, for instance, for a wife to obey her husband; for parents to bring up children in the fear of the Lord; to have daily prayer and the reading of the Scriptures in their house, and to do many other things which become those who desire to honour God in all their ways. To maintain these customs may provoke the mirth of those who wish to be considered up-to-date, but we shall do well to remember the exhortation to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein" (Jer. 6. 16).

The first mention of Aquila and Priscilla is in Acts 18. Originally from Pontus, the far eastern province beyond the wild hills of Galatia, they had been sojourning in the city of the Cæsars, but had lately removed to Corinth, in con-

quence of an imperial order expelling all Jews from Rome. It is here, in the busy Greek seaport, that we make their acquaintance.

They were people in humble circumstances, tent-makers by trade. In the Old Testament we find the saints in palaces wearing crowns, like David, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah. Even the prophets were often the equals of kings and were addressed as, "my lord Moses," "my lord Elijah" (Num. 11. 28; 1 Kings 18. 7). The same style was used in approaching the high priests (1 Sam. 1. 26). But in the New Testament we find the people of God, generally speaking, in the humbler walks of life. The apostles themselves were fishermen and the like. And the greatest of all—their Master and Lord—had lived in poverty, with no shelter for His head, and associating with the poor of the land. There is no sphere too humble, no corner too obscure, but that the one who fills it may be a faithful servant of Christ therein.

To the lowly abode of these banished friends came the Apostle Paul. Were they Christians at this time? We are not definitely told, but it is unlikely that Paul would have gone to sojourn beneath the roof of unconverted, Christ-hating Jews. Their first recorded act of service was to receive the Lord's dear servant into their home. Being of the same craft, he abode with them. Probably they were not yet fully established in the truth of Christianity, and they would find a rich reward for their kindness to Paul in the marvellous communications he would make to them. What happy hours would be spent in that quiet workshop, Aquila and Paul stitching the lengths of haircloth together, and conversing meanwhile on the wonderful things of God! No doubt Priscilla, as she went about her household duties, would often drop in to listen to the conversation. Thus husband and wife, thanks to the ministry of their lodger, would grow in grace, and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour,

It is important that the foundations of our lives should be laid in the understanding of the Word of God. No apostle will come to sojourn in our house, but the words of the apostles remain, and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we cherish those words we shall have greater Visitors than Paul. The Father and the Son will make their abode with us (John 14. 23). Communion with the Father and the Son, and an open ear for the communications of the Holy Spirit (recorded on the pages of Scripture), must ever be the inner fount from which all true service and testimony spring.

The next reference to Aquila and Priscilla is in verse 18 of the same chapter (Acts 18.). The time had come for Paul to leave Corinth. His stay there had extended to more than eighteen months, during which time he had preached the gospel and taught the Word of God. Numbers had been turned from darkness to light, and a large assembly had been formed in the gay, luxury-loving city where our two friends had made their temporary home.

During these months Aquila and his wife had doubtless learned much. And their hearts would be greatly attached to the dear servant of Christ whose ministry had meant so much to them. They determined to accompany him on his voyage to Asia. What led them to this decision? It may have been the desire to continue in Paul's company, or the hope of finding a sphere of Christian usefulness in the "regions beyond." We may be sure it was not the sordid object of worldly gain that led them to leave their Greek home. They were now no longer tent-makers who believed in Christ; they were servants of the Lord who made tents. The tent-making was now a part and parcel of their service to Christ. Henceforth His interests were paramount with them, and as we shall learn, there were no lengths of loss and suffering to which they were not prepared to go for His dear name's sake.

The third reference to Aquila and Priscilla is in connection with a very happy service which they were privileged to render (Acts 18. 26). Paul had departed for the east, to visit the saints in various places, particularly those in the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia. His two friends remained at Ephesus, where now we find them.

While there, a most remarkable man arrived in that city. An Egyptian Jew by birth, he had made a profound study of the Sacred Writings. Far from being a mere bookworm, however, he was most earnest in spreading the truth, as far as he knew it. With burning eloquence and an all-consuming fervour, "he spake and taught diligently." He had heard of Christ, and his heart had been bowed in the acknowledgment of the blessed Saviour as Israel's long-expected Messiah. Further than this, his knowledge did not at present go.

On one occasion, when the eloquent southerner was speaking in one of the Ephesian synagogues, among his listeners were Aquila and his wife. Impressed by his manifest earnestness, and no doubt feeling how wonderfully he could serve the Lord if he were better acquainted with the full truth of Christianity, they laid themselves out to help him.

They did not reproach him for his ignorance, nor attribute his earnestness to mere fleshly zeal. We may be certain that they did not utter a syllable that would tend to discourage him. We read that they took him, not only to their hearts, but to their home. For the second time they had a devoted servant of Christ beneath their roof, but now it was not one who could teach them, but one whom they could teach. No doubt it cost them time and labour; no doubt their prayers went up day by day for their new friend, Apollos. But it was all well worth while, for the learner became by their help a teacher, and in the very next place that he visited he greatly helped the believers, and mightily convinced many of his kinsmen after the

flesh that Jesus was indeed the Christ (ver. 28).

We do not read that Aquila ever preached the gospel, or took any part in the public ministry of the Word. But who can over-estimate the value of his service, and that of his beloved wife, to this stranger from Egypt? It was not only that *he* was instructed, but that all to whom he ministered throughout the rest of his life gained benefit from those quiet expositions of the "way of God" in the humble workshop at Ephesus.

Here is an example indeed for any faithful Christian couple, who themselves are established in the truth. There is many a young Apollos to-day, with a heart full of love to the Saviour, and earnestly desiring to serve Him. But how little he knows! What shall be done with him? Shall he be packed off to some seminary, where, amid weary studies of theology and Greek, all zeal and fervour of soul shall be stamped out of him, and where, more likely than not, he may become infected with the poisonous germs of rationalistic thought? How much better, how infinitely better, if some Christian couple, poor, perhaps, in this world's goods, but rich in faith, would do for him what Aquila and Priscilla did for Apollos. If they would invite him to their house once or twice a week, and over the cheery tea-table, or during the quiet evening hours, open their Bibles with him, and out of their riper experience help him to a deeper knowledge of the "way of God"! What a service this would be to the whole church of God, and to all amongst whom their zealous young friend will find his future sphere of labour! A service of great price in the eyes of the Master, to whom both he and they belong. A service, moreover, in which the Priscillas can share, as well as the Aquilas.

Passing now to Romans 16. we meet with our friends for the fourth time, and learn something that greatly increases the esteem in which we hold them. They

had by this time returned to Rome, and were among those to whom Paul sends greeting in his epistle to the saints in that city. No cold, formal greeting does he send, but mentions a circumstance which Aquila and Priscilla had evidently not themselves made known. *True servants of Christ neither parade their sufferings nor boast of their success.* It seems that at some period of their history, either at Corinth or Ephesus, they had LAID DOWN THEIR OWN NECKS for the Apostle's sake (ver. 4).

Behind their love for this dear servant of their Lord lay their love for the Lord Himself. For His dear name's sake they were willing to sacrifice their lives that His chosen servant might be spared to continue his ministry. How our hearts warm towards this dear brother and sister as we read the glowing words! What faith, what courage, what devotion, lie wrapped up in those five monosyllables! And yet would anything less have been worthy of God's saints? Is it not true that "we *ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren"? (1 John 3. 15). This is not a statement of duty that had special reference to the conditions which prevailed in the first century. It is as true to-day as ever it was. During the terrible Boxer outbreak in China many a native brother deliberately laid down his life in order to shield those who had brought him the tidings of grace. And European brethren, labouring in that land, did not shrink from sacrificing their lives for their native fellow-Christians, taught of God, as they were, to love them (1 Thess. 4. 9).

But is there no way of laying down one's life for the brethren save by the knife of the assassin or the savagery of the persecutor? Is it not possible to do it day by day, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year? May we not spend and be spent for those that are dear to Christ? If *He* loves them it is enough; for His dear sake we love them too. And is it not a privilege of the very highest order to serve such in any

possible way, even though it may entail suffering and sacrifice?

No wonder that in the case of Aquila and Priscilla the Apostle adds that the thanks of all the assemblies of the Gentiles were theirs. The whole church of God was their debtor.

The Apostle was himself indebted to them in a special way. They had not only laid down their necks for his sake, but they had so wrought that he calls them his "helpers in Christ Jesus." In what way they helped him we are not told. They would find many an opportunity of assisting him in his labours for the Lord. And such service is surely open to us all. In some way or other we may all be helpers in the work of the gospel. Good, indeed, it is to see a husband and wife laying themselves out for this. Great will be their reward "in that day."

We are informed, moreover, of a very signal service rendered to some of the Lord's people at Rome by our two friends. Paul sends greeting to "the church that is in their house." The assembly in the imperial city, being numerous, all could not meet in one place. To have had a building large enough to accommodate all would have called the attention of the pagan authorities to the spread of Christianity in their midst in an undesirable way, and might have given rise to severe measures of repression. The saints at Rome, as in other cities, held their meetings in various private dwellings. Among those who opened their houses for the purpose were Aquila and Priscilla. And we may be sure that what they sowed in this way they reaped with exceeding joy.

We have known young married couples, in modest circumstances, who could neither do much, nor give much, in connection with the Lord's work. But they have held their humble cottages at His disposal, and from time to time have gathered their neighbours into their parlours or around their cosy kitchen hearths, and have invited some

preacher of the gospel to come and talk to them of the grace of God. What blessing has flowed from such simple, informal meetings! And how often it is possible to get a few Christian friends together for a little Bible-reading in a private house, when they might feel less free to attend a regular service at some hall or meeting-room. Of course this means labour: the rearrangement of furniture, extra cleaning, and in winter, perhaps, extra fires. But it is one of the many ways in which a husband and wife, with hearts devoted to Christ, may serve His interests.

Passing on now to the fifth mention of Aquila and Priscilla, we find them sending greeting to their friends at Corinth by means of the Apostle's letter to the saints in that city (1 Cor. 16. 20). They would remember with much affection the dear brethren among whom they had lived for so many months, and there is an undertone of warmth and true Christian love in the word "much" which is attached to their message. "Aquila and Priscilla greet you MUCH in the Lord." Warmth of affection among the people of God accomplishes much. A hearty grip of the hand, a loving message in a letter, a word of cheer; how much these things may mean! Those who truly love the Lord will be eager to seize every opportunity that presents itself of expressing, in some such little way, their affection towards those that are His.

It was from Ephesus, we believe (in spite of the unwarranted postscript inserted in our Bibles), that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written. Here again we have mention of the "church that is in their house." In this city also, as at Rome later on, Aquila and Priscilla placed their house at the disposal of the brethren, and rejoiced to have it used in the interests of Christ.

We now come to the last passage in which reference is made to the worthy couple whose course we have been following. It is found in 2 Timothy 4. 19. Some sixteen years had elapsed since

Paul had gone to lodge with them at Corinth. Many changes had taken place. The Emperor Claudius had died, and the throne of the Cæsars was occupied by Nero. Rome had been set on fire, and the brethren there had been charged with the crime. Fierce persecution had wrought havoc in their ranks. Many of the beloved saints, so dear to the hearts of Aquila and Priscilla, had been flung to the lions. Others had been seized, covered with pitch, and burned in the Emperor's gardens, to make sport for their cruel owner.

Aquila and his wife had for the second time left Rome and were now once more at Ephesus. Strange things had happened there also. There had been wholesale defection on the part of many of whom better things might have been expected. "All they which are in Asia" (the province of which Ephesus was the capital) had turned away from Paul (2 Tim. 1. 15). False brethren had crept in among the saints, introducing evil doctrines, two of their number even denying the future resurrection. One Alexander had shown himself a bitter enemy of the Apostle.

But among those who stood firm and loyal to the end were Aquila and Priscilla. Paul, writing to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus, sends greeting to them. Amid all the wreckage they remained true, and the last salutation, in the last epistle penned by the Apostle just before his decease, was addressed to these faithful friends.

Continuance in the path of faithfulness is a thing greatly to be desired. Many, like Demas, make a most promising start, only to be overcome, later on, by the love of this present world. May it be ours to "continue in the grace of God" and in the faith (Acts 13. 43; 14. 22), so that at the end we may be able to say: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Thus may Aquila and Priscilla, with their self-sacrificing devotedness, their love to the saints, their zeal and courage, their steadfastness to the end, serve as a shining example to us all.

“Me,” “Me.”

“The love of Jesus—what it is
None but His loved ones know.”

“**T**HE Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20). “He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.” Glorious Lover! The Son of God! Gracious act! He loved! And strange object, whom He loved! ME, unlovely me! But how did He evidence His love? Even by the gift He gave. What did He give? Himself. For *me*, unworthy *me*! Every word hath weight, and every act hath a “Me” in the bosom of it: He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.

“HE loved me.”

O glorious Lover! The Son of God! *He loved me*. Love is grateful to us from any person; but the greater and worthier the person is, the dearer and more grateful must his love be to us. But who so great as He, who is the Son of God, higher than the highest: of equal dignity and greatness with His eternal Father; the King eternal and immortal; without beginning and without end; the first begotten from the dead; the Prince of the kings of the earth; He who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty: He that hath upon His vesture and His thigh this name written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19. 16). This is the Lover, and His love must, of necessity, be greater than other love; for He Himself is the greatest of all.

The quality of the person doth commend His exceeding great love. Who is this King of glory? Who but God manifested in the flesh, and whose going forth was of old, from everlasting. Who is this true God and eternal life? He is the omnipresent God, who hath promised His gracious, powerful presence, saying, “Lo, I am with you.” He is the omniscient God, saying, “I am He

that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.” He is the omnipotent God, “that created the heavens and the earth,” and who is able to save to the uttermost.

He loved; and He loved because He loved. There is no other reason of His love but His love: “Jacob have I loved”; this is all the reason. Love in God, is God Himself loving: and therefore it must have all the qualities that belong to the nature of God; God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable: therefore His love must be a pure and spiritual love, an infinite and boundless love, eternal and unchangeable love.

He loved: O! this act is glorious, like Himself. His love must be an infinitely wise love; for, He is wisdom; a powerful love, able to bring about all His designs. It must be love accompanied with holiness, love accompanied with justice, love accompanied with goodness and truth. He is a true and faithful Lover, and hence *whom He loves, He loves to the end*.

He loved: when did His love commence? Indeed, it is from eternity, and to eternity. He loved in the counsel of peace, and it may be called *a consulting love* about our salvation, before the world began. He loved in the transaction between the Father and Him, and then it was *an undertaking love*. He loved in the publication of this merciful design immediately after the fall; and there we see it *a promising love*. He loved in the manifestation of Himself in flesh, to accomplish the promise, and there we see it *a performing love*. O! this act, *He loved*, hath many wonders in it.

He loved me. *Me*, that am so wicked, so wretched, so unworthy! *Me*, says Paul, that was a blasphemer; *me*, that was a persecutor; *me*, that was in-

jurious; me, that was a vile miscreant! O! that He should love such miserable *me's* as we are; so unworthy of His love; so unlike His love; and in whom He found greater reason to hate than to love! To love us, that were enemies, traitors, rebels, and runaway prodigals, and profligate sinners; He loved *me*, guilty *me*, filthy *me*, weak *me*, wicked *me*. How does God commend His love, and commend it to the highest degree of mercy, when it is extended to those that are in the lowest pit of sin and misery! "God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He that wanted nothing, loved us that had nothing, and who were worse than nothing. "He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19), not only when we could not love Him, but when we would not love Him.

But, say you, I cannot put in that *me*, and say, He loved *me*. Indeed it is no wonder, if many cannot say it, if they have not learned the language by which it is said: it is not the language of earth, but the language of heaven (Rev. 1. 5). "He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood"; and so here is the language of heaven upon earth, He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. But, why can you not speak this language? Why, because it cannot be spoken right but by the mouth of faith. It is not the language of sense, nor of unbelief, but the language of faith: "The life I now live," says the Apostle here, is "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me." The faith by which he lived was the faith by which he spoke this language. The Word says, He came to save sinners; He loved sinners; He loved enemies; He loved rebels, and gave Himself for them. Unbelief, indeed, will put in its objection, saying, "Well, but did He love them all? Did He die for them all? Did He elect them all?" "Away," says faith, "away with these needless disputes of the devil and unbelief; my life and salvation is at stake; I have no time to lose. Let those that have no need of a Saviour, stay and debate these matters

with the devil and their unbelieving hearts. I have present use for this Saviour, for my present and future salvation; and I see He is come to save sinners, and that is my name. He loved enemies, and that is my name. He loved rebels, and received gifts for the rebellious, and that is my name. The Master calls me; He invites me by my name; and therefore, in spite of unbelief, in spite of the devil, in spite of my sin and guilt, I will venture to say, upon the credit of His word, He loved *me*, even guilty *me*, filthy *me*." Here is the language of faith, "He loved me."

"And GAVE Himself for me."

He gave, He was not compelled to die, but "He gave Himself": "I lay down My life for My sheep" (John 10. 18). He that alone gives life to us, gave up His life for us. He gave Himself freely; for, what is freer than a gift? He did not sell Himself, nor let Himself, nor lend Himself, but *gave* Himself. He gave Himself willingly, not constrainedly, but voluntarily. He came saying, "Lo, I come! I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40. 8; Heb. 10. 5-7). There was no necessity lying upon Him but the necessity of love. "Peter," says He, "put up thy sword; I will let none fight for Me, otherwise I could command legions of angels to appear this moment on My side; but I came to give My life a ransom for many, and I am resolved to go on with My work; therefore, I will not suffer an angel from heaven to move from his post on My behalf; nor shall any man on earth hinder Me from this work."

What gave He? Or, whom gave He? Even *Himself*. Not corruptible things, such as silver and gold; nor all the treasures of the world can deliver one soul. Not the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 9. 12). All these sacrifices were but dumb signs of this tragedy. Not any glorious angel: the angels are not fit to mediate between finite offenders and an infinite Judge, nor can they be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Well, when no gift in earth

or heaven could be available, He gave Himself. O wonderful gift! He gave Himself! Greater is the work of redemption than that of creation; there He was a giver, but here He is the Gift. He gave His body a sacrifice; His back to the smiters, and to the whole burden of wrath; His cheeks to them that pulled off the hair; His name, to be a reproach; His hands, and feet, and side, to be pierced; His head, to be crowned with thorns; His blood, to be poured out; His soul, to be an offering for sin.

For whom did He give Himself? For *me*, says Paul, in his own name; and for us, says Paul, in our name (Gal. 1. 4): "Who gave Himself for us" (Titus 2. 14). He gave Himself to the death; for whom? Not for Himself: the Messiah was cut off, but not for Himself (Dan. 9. 26). And as it was not for Himself, so not for angels, "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels." For whom, then? Even for me, says faith.

Faith comes not by hearing that Christ came to save the elect; for particular election cannot be the ground of a general invitation. Nor does the sinner's faith come by hearing that Christ came to save believers; for, as He came not to find them believers, so this limited particular doctrine cannot be the foundation of an unlimited general call; but faith comes by hearing this gospel doctrine that Christ came to save sinners, and gave Himself for them. Let no sinner exclude himself from the benefit of this gospel, by saying either, "I know not if I be an elect"; or, "I know not if I be a believer, and so I know not if Christ died for me, and gave Himself for me in particular." This is to mistake the ground and object of faith; for salvation in God's purpose to the elect is not the ground of faith; and salvation in possession

by the believer is not the ground of faith, but salvation in the word of grace and gospel offer. Christ's death as designed in God's purpose is not the first object of any man's faith; nor His death as applied to believers in particular; but His death as declared in the Word in relation to sinners in general is the gospel-revelation and the glad news that comes to the ears of sinners. The question, then, is not, Are you an elect, or not? Nor is it, Are you a believer, or not? But the question is, Are you a sinner that needs a Saviour? It is not Christ in the decree that you are to look to, while you know that you are elected; this is to go too far back. Nor is it Christ in the heart, or in possession, you are to look to, while you know that you are a believer; this is to go too far forward. But it is Christ in the Word, because you know you are a sinner, and Christ a Saviour held forth to you there, saying, "Look to Me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside Me there is none else." This is the way between the two former; yea, and the way to secure them both, the only safe way.

"He loved Me and gave Himself for Me."

The vast dimensions of Christ's sufferings show the vast dimensions of His love. He loved, and He continues still to love; for, though His sufferings be at an end, yet His sympathy continues; His passion lasts but for a while, but His compassion is everlasting. O! if His love be so kind, that it points you out with a "you"; "you," I loved you, and gave Myself for you; then your faith may be so bold as to come out with a *me, me* :

"He loved me, and gave Himself for me."
Ralph Erskine, 1730.

Justified.

THE divine clearance of the believer is perfect and unqualified. It leaves no unsettled questions behind, and therefore no element of unrest or uncertainty in the soul. "All things" covers the whole sinful history of the one who believes, with every particular detail of that history (Acts 13. 39).

The Everlasting Father.

(E. CROSS).

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9. 6, 7).

ISAIAH is called “The Golden Prophet,” and the title suits him well. The loftiness of his style; the magnificence of his subject; the grandeur of his outlook; the terrific character of his judgments; the glory of his gospel; and the divine majesty in which he pictures the Messiah, render him “facile princeps” among the prophets, peerless among his peers. It is he who tells us that, “Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him” (Isa. 64. 4); and the Apostle adds, “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2. 10). The prophecy he gives us here of the promised Son is worthy both of himself and of his Subject.

In Isaiah 7. 14 the promise of this Son was made to an unbelieving king in supernatural terms—terms transcending all human thought, and calculated to put faith to its utmost test. “A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” The manner of His coming was supernatural, and He who came was so also. Born of a virgin; alike veritable man and true God. Of whom else but He could such an affirmation be made? Such is the One before the prophet’s mind when vainly speaking to the unbelieving king; such is the One on whom he expatiates to the believing remnant for their comfort in the agony of their final trouble. The apostate nation in their distress will “curse their king and their god,” and looking in every direction for relief, will find only “trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they

shall be driven to darkness” (Isa. 8. 21), as they find themselves under pressure from the Assyrian without and the anti-christ within; and then will the great Deliverer appear to save His people from the hands of their enemies.

Notice here how the believing remnant of the people—“a very small remnant” (Isa. 1. 11)—are separated from the unbelieving mass, and from this point of view the Gospel of Luke is highly interesting and instructive. Thus Luke 1. gives us the prophetic remnant, and Luke 2. the godly remnant, with the characteristic marks of each; while the whole Gospel, as also the Acts subsequently in a wider sphere, separates between those who “justified God” in the mission of Christ and those who “rejected the counsel of God as to themselves,” not having answered the Baptist’s call to repentance (Luke 7. 30).

Let us now look a little at the portrait of Christ in these verses, Isaiah 9. 6, 7.

First, He is presented in the reality of His humanity: “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” The humanity of Jesus is the crucial test of faith. To deny His humanity is to lose all, for it is thus that all is revealed. And so the Apostle puts it, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ coming in flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ” (1 John 4. 3; 2 John 7).

It was orthodox to own the outstanding claims of the Messiah to deity, according to prophetic scriptures. To believe in Jesus as so come was quite another thing. And yet all depended on their so receiving Him, for it was so that all their blessing came. Accordingly it is in this way that His incarnation

brings the crucial test to man. Here is a life divine in a Man, whereby man can judge how far he is from it in his own life; while he can see how near God has come to him to win his confidence, and bring him to Himself. It is His deity that brings God indeed to man, in the full light and truth of what God is; it is His humanity that instrumentally accomplishes the purposes of His grace, and effectively brings us to God. His deity is the essential fountain head and source of all; the incarnation becomes the test whether He will be received or not.

“Unto us a Child is born”—*eled*—to procreate, beget, bear as a mother, be born—“unto us a Son is given.” There is no possible question of the reality of His humanity—“a Child is born.” And so the Angel says to Mary, “Thou shalt bring forth a Son,” *τέκνη υἱόν*—“a Son is given,” “He shall be called Son of the Highest, and Jehovah Elohim shall give Him the throne of His father David, and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1. 31-33).

Sentence had been passed on Coniah, the son of Jehoiada, King of Judah, “Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah” (Jer. 22. 30). But now another takes his place, to occupy the throne, and whose kingdom has no end.

“The government is upon His shoulder.” He is no dilettante prince, no “roi fainéant,” who makes his office his amusement, and plays with the responsibilities of his position. He comes to rule, to rule in righteousness, and to rule for God. The government is on His shoulder, and He puts His whole strength to it, and with His power He sustains it, for “He must reign until He put down all enemies under His feet.” . . . And then He will give up the kingdom to the Father, “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). The

object of this mediatorial kingdom is attained in the supremacy of God in the universe thus subjected by Christ to Him!

Great indeed is the glory that accrues to the doer of this great work—great beyond all thought. But this glory is official glory, for the work that He has successfully accomplished. But who is He who has done it? What is His name whereby He can be personally known? And with what qualities is He endowed, to fit Him for so great a task? Listen.

“His name shall be called Wonderful,” marvellous, miraculous, rendered in Judges 13. 18 “Secret”; and surely the secret reserves of grace stored up in Christ are marvellous indeed. Cf. Deuteronomy 29. 29, though here a different word is used, meaning rather, hidden, out of sight.

“Counsellor,” from a word meaning to make firm, establish; hence able to determine with wisdom and resource, so as to ensure success. See what use the Apostle makes of it in his grand apostrophe on the survey of God’s ways from Abraham to the millennium, in Romans 9. 11. “O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counsellor? . . . for of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things; to Him be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11. 33-36).

“The Mighty God,” *le Dieu fort, strong-el*: *el*=essential force, power. “In the beginning El created all things” (Gen. 1. 1); and as He is the beginning, “the Former, or Framer, of all things” (Jer. 10. 16), so likewise is He the end.

“The Everlasting Father,” or, rather, Father of eternity, or, of the everlasting age. He is the author, the fountain head, the producer of it. Decay and death are on all the works of man. Nothing abides where death is stamped on all. “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” is the sentence

passed on human pride, and under this judgment it was impossible that man could give birth to aught that was not transitory. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image," subject to the vanity of his own estate. And so the Psalmist speaks, "Behold, Thou hast made my days an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee; verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity" (Ps. 39. 5). But this Man is "Father of the age eternal."

"The Prince of Peace." *Sar* = captain, ruler, chief; whence our word *sir* (cf. ἀρχηγός; Acts 3. 15; Heb. 2. 10; 12. 2). He is the originator, the founder of it in truth, and He will establish it in righteousness. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32. 17).

This is the forefront of the gospel, the salutation of a risen Christ to His disciples (Isa. 20.), assuring them by His presence that the power of death was broken, and calming all their fears in the peace that He had made.

In the final crisis of Israel's history, when no human hope for them exists, then "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God: and they shall abide: for now shall He be great

unto the ends of the earth. And this Man shall be peace" (Micah 5. 4).

And not only is He peace for Israel in the presence of all their foes, but "also He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9. 10).

While, for the church also, in the presence of foes of a more pertinacious, because of a spiritual kind, "He is our peace" (Eph. 2. 14) likewise.

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever." In terms as nearly as possible the same does the Angel Gabriel announce to Mary the glory of her promised Child (Luke 1. 30-33). Such was to be the kingdom of God established by Him, which in the rolling ages was to increase in blessing, as it extended without limit for ever. Beginning small, like the stone cut out without hands, which smote the great image, and the kingdoms of the nations became like chaff carried away with the wind, and no place was found for them, and the Stone became a great mountain, fixed and stable (Dan. 2.), so the Babe of Bethlehem, cradled in a manger, inherits the glory of the kingdom as "Lord of all."

A Cause of Discord.

THE Lord has promised "that when a man's ways please Him He will make his enemies to be at peace with him." How much more then would God make the children of peace to keep the peace among themselves, if their ways did but please Him. But it is remissness as to this, indifference as to what is pleasing to God that results in strife and bitterness amongst God's children. If all kept peace with God and walked with the God of peace, then would they have peace among themselves.

The Grace of the Lord.

WHEN Cæsar gave one a great reward, "This," said he, "is too great a gift for me to receive." But Cæsar replied, "It is not too great a gift for me to give." So we may feel with regard to the gifts of grace, even the smallest of them, these are too much for us to receive, yet the greatest gifts are not too great for Christ to give.

“The Faith” or Something Else?

(H. J. VINE).

A NOTABLE conversion took place when Gamaliel's zealous disciple turned to the Lord. The news quickly spread amongst the believers, “that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth *the faith* which once he destroyed” (Gal. 1. 23).

Paul himself tells us that though he had profited in religion above others, yet he “persecuted the assembly of God excessively, and wasted it.” Nevertheless, God called him by His grace, and revealed His Son in him.

And the race once entered upon is run till the end; the fight of faith is fought to the finish; then he thankfully takes up his pen, and writes to his “true son in the faith”: “The time of my release is come . . . I have kept the faith.” Happy warrior!

How many keep the faith to-day? Nay; may we not ask, How many truly possess the faith as it was delivered at the beginning? This is a day, alas! of departure from the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

We might have been taken by surprise at the widespread departure of the present day, had we not been told that even in the apostles' days there was a turning away from the faith; and that it would be worse still in the latter days. God foresaw and foreknew all, and wisely foretold what was coming, so that true believers might not be moved.

The root of all evil—the love of money, we are told, accounts for many taking the wrong road; “which some having aspired after, have wandered from the faith, and pierced themselves with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6. 10). Balaam, the clairvoyant, stands out as a type of some. His doctrine, his error, and his way mark them. The love of reward governs them. “The Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall apostatize from the faith,

giving their minds to seducing spirits” (1 Tim. 4. 1).

It is not that *the form* of religion is abandoned; it is *the faith* that is given up, “having a form of piety, but denying the power of it.” There is an imitation of the real thing, just as the magicians imitated Moses up to a point. They failed when life was produced from the dust—from that of which man was made—from that out of which the Saviour rose after being brought “into the dust of death.” They had to own, “This is the Finger of God,” even though Pharaoh's heart was hardened. But the Scriptures tell us the truth about such imitators, whatever they may profess. They are “men corrupted in mind, found worthless as regards the faith” (2 Tim. 3. 8); and eventually “their folly shall be completely manifest.” On all sides men are departing from the faith; not necessarily from religion.

Having been told these things beforehand, the true believer need neither be dismayed nor discouraged; but rejoice rather in the God of his salvation, who, in His perfect omniscience and wisdom, foresaw all, and forewarned him, so that he might be forearmed; and being stirred up to see that he himself is in the possession of the faith which God has delivered to us, he might be found faithfully keeping it in the face of all that is contrary.

This is the important matter for us. The faith has been revealed once and for all. We are to possess it; and to keep it. There can be no advance upon it; no development or evolution in connection with it, for it is always up to date. Surely no one would question the ability of God to fully and finally reveal the faith! It is just this that He did nearly two thousand years ago. The question to be raised is rather, How far have we apprehended that revelation? In itself it is perfect; though our appre-

hension of it is imperfect; and our practice of it also.

The last epistle in the Bible speaks much of the corrupters of the faith, but exhorts those who are called by grace, beloved in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, to "CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS" (Jude 3).

Mark, the faith is not a development of something else, as we have said—it was "once delivered"! Some speak of it as *Christianity*. It would be safer and healthier, and preserve from misunderstanding, if we used the Spirit-given word. For "the faith" we are absolutely dependent upon the blessed God—upon His making it known. It is not a human production; but, from God, it was "once delivered to the saints."

Notice again, it is not a faith delivered to the world. It was delivered to *the saints* who were still in the world; and the world might be benefited by it through them. It has been so in a great measure. And then, many have imitated it; worldly religionists have professed it, without possessing it, having personal profit and advantage in view. Nevertheless, mark it well. It was delivered "to the saints"! It is for them to have and to hold faithfully. It is for those who are "not of the world," even as our Lord Jesus Christ is not of the world, to possess, to practise, to preach, and to keep till the end. There is but this "one faith," even as Scripture tells us.

Unlike Judaism in the past—which had an outward religious organization with a *visible centre*, as ordained of God—the centre of the faith is invisible to nature's eye. And unlike the kingdom, in its millennial splendour in the future, which will again be marked by a *visible centre* of glory and administration, the faith finds its centre and Head in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is hidden from sight in the heavens. He is there—the

exalted Head of all things, and Lord over all, and the present "administration of God is in faith" (1 Tim. i. 4, N.T.). Therefore, those who walk rightly before God to-day "walk by faith and not by sight."

If we think of believers walking through this world as Israel walked through the wilderness, their faith embraces the one and only High Priest raised up of God for them. He has "passed into the heavens," having first put away our sins by His sacrifice on the cross, and having secured eternal salvation for us. If we think of them as children of God, their faith embraces an unseen Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. If we think of them as of the assembly, members of the body of Christ, they are livingly linked up with Him, their unseen Head in heavenly glory. These, and other important verities of the faith, involve a present practical walk in accordance with them. To walk in another priestly system is manifestly inconsistent. To acknowledge any other Mediator or Advocate is clearly to transgress the truth that Jesus is the only Mediator and Advocate for us. To hold any other Head of the assembly than Christ is necessarily to dishonour Him. Is it the faith or something else that holds us? How are we walking before God?

In contrast to those of whom Jude speaks, who turn "the grace of God into dissoluteness," we are told that "the faith of God's elect, and knowledge of the truth" is "*according to piety.*" Godly practice is the outcome of it. Where that fruit is not found, the tree is wanting altogether. If the religious systems of the world produce other fruits than true piety, it is because they do not possess the faith of God's elect. By their fruits ye shall know them.

Moreover, the ascended Head of the assembly has given gifts to men. Their work is in view of the edifying of the body of Christ, the members of which are embraced in a unity called "*the*

unity of the Spirit'' (Eph. 4. 3). But the ministry of these gifts has been going on, and is going on, under the direction of the unseen Head of the assembly, "until we all arrive at *the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*'' (ver. 13). Nor will this blessed work fail to reach its desired end. It is, however, of immediate importance for each one to ask himself how he stands in relation to it. To drift is a serious matter at a time like the present. Energy is needed. And true believers have this. It is seen in their earnestness in regard to the faith once delivered to the saints. Soon the fight of faith will be over, and all will be presented in glory with exceeding joy; for such will

abide in the faith founded and firm, and not be "moved away from the hope of the gospel." A bright and blessed prospect lies before us!

Wherefore, "beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God," looking for Him to come, whom, having not seen, we love. To Him be glory and majesty and power for ever! The faith is enough! we do not need additions or imitations!

"And till we reach our rest where war is heard no more,
The flag of faith shall cheer us on! The Lord is gone before!"

TO objects who deserve Thy wrath
Thy boundless love extends;
Thou'rt tenderer to Thine enemies
Than men are to their friends.

The Cause of Much Murmuring.

FULL vessels will bear many a knock, many a stroke, and yet make no noise. So Christians who are full of Christ, full of the Spirit, will bear many a blow, many a stroke without murmuring. It is when grace gets low in the soul, and the vanity of self-importance takes the place that Christ should occupy, that we become so sensitive to offence, and cry out at every imaginary affront, and murmur and repine at God's ways with us.

Press On.

DON'T be discouraged if you are not able to attain to that which you desire to be in a day. *Press on.*

Don't be depressed if you feel how little you are able to help those who are sad and lonely and down, and that your shining for the Saviour in this dark world is very dimly done. *Just keep on.*

I was greatly heartened the other day by a simple nursery rhyme. It was—

"One foot up and one foot down,
That's the way to London Town."

Is there not a world of wisdom in that simple rhyme? There is, surely. It is by a step at a time that we attain our goal.

"Let no one think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done."

Yes, but if we keep at it steadily and persistently,

"Filling the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,"

we shall fill full our day, and fulfil our Lord's purpose for our life below, and our labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

(J. T. M.)

Lessons from the Tabernacle.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

No. III. Typical Meaning of the Materials Used.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so ye shall make it" (Exod. 25, 1-9).

WE must begin by making a frank assertion. We can and must be *dogmatic* as to the revealed essentials of the Christian faith. The being of the Godhead, His creatorial work, the incarnation of the Son of God, the atoning character of His death, the glorious meaning of His resurrection and ascension, the place and portion of the believer in Christ, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the saints thereat, the full inspiration of Holy Scripture, the resurrection of the wicked dead, and their eternal judgment—all these we must affirm with emphasis and resolve.

But the teaching of the types does not lend itself to dogmatic assertion, but is one that must appeal by its fitness to the spiritual mind. So much is clear to the writer's own mind, and it will be his deep pleasure to present his thoughts, in prayerful dependence, to the readers of *Scripture Truth*, believing that they will be acceptable. Where the typical meaning is not clear to the writer he will refrain from speculation or guesswork, and when he does seek to indicate the typical meaning he will adduce the reasons that have guided him in his judgment.

It is obvious, too, that his presentation of these teachings will be substantially the same as that of other writers, to whom we are all indebted for help in these matters.

Let us now address ourselves to the task.

Of the materials used in the construction of the actual tabernacle it will be noticed there are four materials employed:

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. Metals. | 3. Dyes. |
| 2. Textiles. | 4. Wood. |

These all speak to the loyal heart of Christ. In Him are all our blessings and hopes. He has made God known, to know whom is the only pure blessedness the creature can experience.

The Lord Jesus has endeared Himself to His own by a thousand tender ties. We have seen Him in His manger-cradle at Bethlehem with delight. We have traced His wondrous life. We have gazed at Him, the holy Sufferer on the cross, till the sight endeared Him to our hearts beyond all words. We have seen Him rise from the dead, and ascend up to heaven. We know Him in the power of the Holy Spirit as our Redeemer, our Shepherd, our Friend, our Lord, our High Priest, our Advocate, our Rock, our Shield, our All-in-All. Surely these types, if they speak of Him, must be of absorbing interest. In this spirit let us examine them.

It will be like the spectrum, which breaks up pure light into its component parts. We get the full truth of Christ's person presented in the Gospels and Epistles, and the types help to break up the truth into its component parts, so that we may learn this aspect and that aspect of His person and work, and then reverently putting all these aspects together, we get a fuller idea of His

glories and perfection. Thus patiently does the Spirit of God seek to teach us, line upon line, precept upon precept.

Gold and Shittim Wood.

It will be noticed that of the materials used in the making of the actual tabernacle the first mentioned is gold, and the last mentioned is shittim wood. Seeing that the ark, the table of shewbread, the boards and bars, and the golden altar of incense were made of shittim wood overlaid with gold, we are justified in considering them together. God's Spirit puts them together typically, and we may well inquire the reason.

Gold is the heaviest and most valuable (in relation to the quantities found) of all the metals.

Shittim wood, that of the acacia of the desert, is a dry, imperishable wood.

What, then, is the meaning of the conjunction of the two so largely used in the construction of the tabernacle?

It will be clearly seen, as we proceed, that the ark, the shewbread table, and the golden altar of incense all speak of Christ Himself. That being so, there immediately comes to the mind the thought that in order to bring sinners nigh to God, and constitute them saints, in whose midst God can find a sanctuary—a dwelling-place—it could only be possible through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. That again brings us face to face with the great mystery of the adorable person of our blessed Lord—God and man in one blessed Person, for He who was God from all eternity, became a man in order to die upon the cross for us.

Gold, then, in this connection typifies the deity of the Lord Jesus.

Shittim wood typifies His holy, spotless humanity.

Here we are brought into touch with a vital fundamental truth of God's Word—the supreme test of everything: "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in

the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

We must take our stand firmly on the truth of the full unalloyed deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is none before Him in point of time. There is none above Him in pre-eminence. He is the uncreated God, who created all things; the unsustained, sustaining all things. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1. 1, 14). Magnificent language, simple yet profound, easily understood, yet unfathomable in its infinite depths of meaning.

And yet this glorious Being, to whom everybody and everything owe their existence and sustainment, came to this little planet, circling round our sun, and our sun only one of millions, and became a man. "The Word was made flesh." Can we understand the mystery of this? Impossible. His own words are, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27).

This pregnant statement is the "thus far and no farther" of the revelation made of the Lord Jesus Christ. Untold trouble has disturbed the church, frightful heresies have rent it in twain again and again, and practically all of them have been produced by man allowing his mind to work on this holy subject, and trespassing upon the "thus far and no farther" of the Lord.

We can and must believe the great facts of the twofold nature of our adorable Lord and Master. They are stated clearly in God's Word. He is very God, He is very man, yet one Person. No wonder the Apostle Paul could burst forth, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16).

We know *Him* surely. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3). But we know not the mystery, the inscrutability of His holy Person.

We can take the language of the quondam infidel on our lips,

"'Tis darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart."

Gold, then, in types connected with Christ, typifies the divine nature, but we shall have to show, when it is used in connection with the believer, that it symbolizes divine righteousness, in which the believer stands before God; but of that we shall say more later on.

Silver.

One or two thoughts connected with this metal will prove that it signifies *redemption*.

Reading Exodus 30. 11-17 you will find it constituted the atonement money, and that it was to be used in the service of the sanctuary. Each Israelite was to furnish half a shekel when the people were numbered. There could be no recognition of them by God save as on the ground of redemption. Half a shekel was the amount specified for each to give. However rich, none could give more; however poor, none must offer less; thus teaching that all are on a level before God, and that there is only one way of approach to Him. The sum was equivalent to about 1s. 3d. in English money. Small as this sum was, it affords a contrast to the gospel of the grace of God, which is free—"without money and without price," but which rich and poor must alike avail themselves of, if salvation is to be theirs.

Then the use of the silver, as we shall see in more detail later, signified redemption. The boards of the tabernacle were set up in sockets of silver; thus illustrating how the believer stands before God on the ground of a finished redemption.

Brass.

Brass does not come in in connection with the construction of the actual tabernacle. Gold was used in connection with that. But brass was used *outside* the tabernacle in connection with articles typifying man's approach to God. We shall look at it in greater detail later on.

Let it suffice for present purposes to say that it was used in the brazen altar, which stood just inside the outer court of the tabernacle, and again in the brazen laver.

The brazen altar was connected with sacrifice, and cleansing, and approach by blood.

The brazen laver was connected with the purification of the priest, who went into the holy place—purification by water.

Now brass is a very strong metal, resisting the action of fire to a marked degree.

It seems to be clear, from the connection in which it is found, that it typifies righteousness as meeting the need of man in sacrifice, and in purification.

In the brazen altar it symbolizes the demand of righteousness in connection with God's holiness as to the question of sin.

In the brazen laver it is the demand of righteousness in connection with God's holiness in relation to worship. Holiness is founded on righteousness. No worshipper could be called to holiness, unless first as a sinner he had been called to righteousness.

Further study will confirm this when we come to details in connection with our examination of the typical meaning of these articles.

We will reserve our study of the textiles and dyes for our next article.

Comments and Communications.

(EDITOR).

WE have received the following letter from one of the Lord's labourers in China, and we feel that it is due both to our correspondent and our contributors to publish it:

"The magazine, "Scripture Truth," has long proved a real cheer and stimulus to us while visiting amongst our six hundred Christians in this district.

"These believers live mostly in country towns and villages. The greatest number we can get together once or twice a year for conference and instruction is twelve hundred. The rest have to be visited in their scattered centres, and there encouraged to a bold confession of their faith in Jesus Christ. It is at such times and journeyings that the magazine is found to be a most helpful companion and friend, with its uplifting suggestions and refreshing testimony to the glorious truths of God's most holy Word.

"I would like to say 'Thank you' to each one of the contributors. In passing on much of their helpful instruction to our Chinese brethren they become co-partners in our service for the Master.

"Again thanking you and the kind donors who make it possible for the lone and distant worker to receive the cheering messages of Scripture."

The Need for Labourers.

The cry in that vast Eastern field, as in every other, is for labourers; the fields are ready for the harvesters, but where are they? Our correspondent continues:

"It is a pleasure to say that His word and work are prospering in this district. . . . Enquirers and interested attendants number hundreds. The demands of the work are trying often beyond our strength. For helpers we

have a loyal band of native brethren, thank God for them, but leaders and teachers are far too few. The opportunity is unprecedented, the multitudes wait for God's message of pardon and life. The harvest waits for the reapers to gather the ripening grain, and while waiting is wasting. New temples are being built. Old ones are being repaired, and idols are being set up everywhere with a general revival of idolatry. The enemy of God and man seems working feverishly in all directions to strengthen the bonds of superstition that keep this people bond-slaves in his kingdom of darkness. We need a trumpet blast to ring out over the company of the Lord's people to arouse them to the present special need and to obey the commands, 'Pray ye,' and 'Go ye.'"

We wonder if amongst the many young Christians who read our pages there are any who have heard the Lord's call to His service in some distant field, and yet are holding back, putting, it may be, personal advantages first, or allowing love of home or friends or ease to keep them from the work that their Master would have them do. If so, what losers they are—losers now of the privilege that angels might well covet of carrying the tidings of redeeming love to the dark places of the earth; losers of the joy that obedience to the will of the Lord yields, and of being serviceable and pleasurable to Him at a cost to themselves; losers of the "hundredfold more in this present time" that He gives to all those who make any sacrifice for His sake and the gospel's, which "hundredfold more" is the blessedness of His own company. And what losers they will be when the day for labour has reached its close—losers, then, of the joy of harvest that those know who sow in tears, and of the "Well done, good and faithful servant," from the lips of that gracious

Master who has given the "talents" and the "pound."

Or it may be there are some who would have heard the Lord's call if their ears had been more attent to His voice and their hearts more ready to respond to it. But the world and its vain things have held them. May these stirring days result in such being shaken out of their indifference, separated from evil, and prepared as vessels meet for the Master's use.

What an example and a rebuke has been given to Christians who have become careless of the Lord's interests and the spread of the kingdom of God, by the young manhood of the British Empire. We see millions answering the call of king and country, abandoning comforts, prospects, friends, and home, and facing hardships, sickness, wounds, and death, because they believe it to be their duty to do so. And those who have held back are "slackers" and "shirkers" in the eyes of the nation. Oh! that a wave of heavenly patriotism might sweep through the ranks of those who own Christ as their Lord; that we might all awake to our responsibilities as belonging to the Kingdom of God; that we might be ready to make sacrifices for His honour and for the spread of His fame; that the "shirkers" might shake off their lethargy, and that many, unashamed of the testimony of the Lord, and strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, might go forth, not to destroy men's lives, but to carry those matchless words of salvation concerning JESUS to far-off lands, and gather in the "other sheep" upon which the heart of the good and great Shepherd is set.

What is Idolatry?

But it is well for those who labour amongst the heathen, and for those, too, who pray for them at home, to know with what they have to grapple, for there has been of late years much deceptive teaching as to the condition of idolators and the meaning of the idol.

We were greatly pained on reading in

the "Mundesley Bible Conference, 1915, Report" the following statement as to this, especially so, as from such a quarter we had looked for sounder teaching. The chief lecturer there stated:

"Man has not seen God at any time, but man has been always trying to represent God; and the whole history of idolatry is the history of man's passionate desire to see and know God. We should always respect an idol. The work of the missionary is never to break down the idol, but to make it unnecessary by substituting the fact for which the man who made the idol was feeling when he erected it. All idolatry is based on the human subconscious sense of God that hungers to find Him and attempts to express Him. I am inclined to go further than that, and say that every attempt has somehow been warranted in the inherent dignity and glory of humanity. 'They made a golden calf.' Study the story carefully and remember that when they set up the golden calf they were not setting up another god; that was not their intention at all. They were trying to express God. We talk about a golden calf. I would like to substitute the word ox—it was a golden ox—and immediately we are back in the realms of Eastern symbolism. The ox is the symbol of strength, and strength expressed in service and sacrifice. These people had seen something of this in God. Their error was that they tried to express it, but underneath the error lay the passionate desire for some external expression of God. So all idolatry in its highest form has been the attempt to express God by the projection of human personality into immensity."

How contradictory is this teaching to the plain statements of the Word of God. And, coming as it does from a Bible teacher of repute, how calculated to put missionaries and those interested in their labours upon a totally wrong track. We fear that underlying it there is that implacable antagonism of the human heart against the unpalatable but wholesome doctrine of the total depravity of man, and consequently against the great central truth of all truth—the absolute necessity for the only-begotten Son of God to become incarnate—to come "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," that in Him as a sacrifice for sin God might condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8. 3). If that truth soaks into our souls we shall not be deceived into believing that man "passionately desires to see

God," instead we shall accept without question the solemn and humiliating fact that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 7, 8). Instead of men hungering to find God, as this teacher would lead us to believe, Old and New Testaments alike declare that "there is none that seeketh after God" (Ps. 14. 2; Rom. 3. 11). And of the heathen grovelling in the darkness and shame of their idolatry it is said, "And even as *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." And "they are without excuse," "because that which may be known of God is manifest to them (marg.); *for God hath shewed it unto them.*" "But when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . . And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things" (Rom. 1. 18-32).

The whole history of idolatry is not "man's passionate desire to see and express God." It is exactly the opposite, and is given to us by the Holy Spirit in Romans 1. 18-32. That history began with man's refusal to be thankful to a beneficent Creator; its terrible chapters record his liking not to retain God in his thoughts, and how he has followed his own devices into the very abyss of moral degradation, and the last pages of it have yet to be written and its history closed up by "the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

"We should always respect an idol." How strange this sounds to those who have read, "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice *they sacrifice to devils, and not to God*; and I would not that ye should

have fellowship with devils" (1 Cor. 10. 19, 20). The idol expresses a demon and not God at all.

The sad story of the "golden calf" is divinely recorded in Exodus 32., and our readers may there "study the story carefully," as advised by the lecturer, and if they do we have no doubt but that they will come to the conclusion that instead of Israel's action being "warranted in the inherent dignity and glory of humanity," their sinful folly brought them into "shame among their enemies," and instead of merely committing an "error" they sinned "a great sin," as Moses describes their act, which, but for the intercession of Moses and the mercy of God would have been visited by exterminating judgment.

The servant of the Lord who goes to the heathen does not go to a people "hungering after God," but he goes to regions where the powers of darkness have entrenched themselves; to the veritable strongholds of demons, and to men who prefer the darkness in which they dwell to the light that the missionary brings. Consequently his whole hope and faith must be in God, and not in any fancied germ of goodness or desires after God in those to whom he goes, and he must go in the power of the Holy Ghost, if his work is to be effective; not with carnal weapons, but weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, "and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing in captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 3-5).

As the progress of British arms in any part of the world is followed with interest and hope by the whole Empire, so should the work of the missionary be the subject of interest and matter for earnest prayer by all who are truly of God's kingdom. May we be deeply stirred as to these things, and may we repel indignantly any attempt of the enemy to make us believe that idolatry is not such a bad thing after all.

Christ, Who is Our Life.

(JAMES GREEN).

THERE are two distinct lines running through the whole of Scripture. One is the history of man in flesh, the line of the first Adam; connected with which are sin, condemnation and death, consequent upon the complete failure of man in responsibility before God. The other line is that of God's counsels in Christ, the last Adam, with which are connected grace, righteousness, and life.

In reading the books of the Old Testament we see the dark clouds of judgment continually rolling up over the responsible condition of the people, until long patience is exhausted and the thunder of Divine judgment grows louder and louder. Prophet after prophet in scathing words lays bare the sin and departure from God of a people upon whom He had lavished His love and care. But ever and again the sunshine of purpose and unchangeable love breaks through the dark clouds, and promises of restoration and blessing shine in all their beauty. Then along with this the deeper secret is revealed, of the means God would employ, in order that the desires of His heart might be made good to those whom in righteousness He had to judge and condemn. This is set forth typically in the whole order of the sacrifices, and in the more distinct utterances of the prophets concerning the sufferings of Christ. This prophetic strain reaches its deepest note in such passages as Psalm 22. and Isaiah 53.: "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Happy shall Israel be when they pass by the way of the cross from their sinful condition into the blessing of God purposed for them on earth: far happier the soul who now realizes that every word of judgment regarding itself is true, and finds that Christ has opened through His death a new and living way into that sphere of purpose and

love expressed in the words, "in Christ." Yea, happy those who can so take account of His finished work, that they reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Through His death and resurrection such have passed in faith from Adam to Christ.

But the light of this was not revealed in the Old Testament, where we see only the two lines running side by side, until they meet in the cross. Then it was that the Son of God bore the full measure of God's wrath against sin, and in His dying ended the responsible history of man in flesh. No longer could blessing be obtained on such ground, and neither would fruit for God be looked for from that tree henceforward for ever.

But although the crucifixion of Christ affixed the seal to man's doom, yet grace wrought, and in the power of life Christ was raised from the dead in a life beyond death and judgment, and by the operation of God this life, with all its blessed relationships of love, is imparted to those who believe on His name. Now it is of all importance for the believer to accept the fact that the risen life of Christ has been given to him by the free gift of God. He has not to search for it, he has not to obtain it, it is his. Apart from this fact, there would be no material for the Spirit of God to use, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh. This has been proved by the cross to be as insensible to the light of God as a mere piece of glass in a photographic camera is to the rays of the sun. Life, however, the life of Christ risen has given to the soul a sensitiveness to the revelation of God in Him, and consequent upon this the Spirit of God identifies Himself with the new life given, so that Christ may be formed in those who are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

There are two things that must go on together, if the life of Christ is to be

developed in those that are His. One is the work of the Spirit, the other the need on the part of the subjects of that work of having the eye single to the light. Let none rest content with the fact that life, eternal life, is theirs. For with life is ever connected growth and development; and for the proper unfolding of this, exercise, and the supply of things that nourish and support are needed. Much time has been spent in the discussion of what life is, but there is a danger in doing this, lest we forget that life is only known in living. There can be no question that God is loudly calling to-day upon His people to live. Doubtless by these present sorrows He is calling to repentance a godless world, soon to be involved in the judgments of the closing days; but the message to those whom He has called out of the world, is to live the life He has made theirs. To live out the life of Christ in the scene where He has been rejected, before they are translated into His presence above, where life shall find its true home. It is indeed of the greatest importance to have the vision of the soul sharply focused upon Christ, for as we behold the glory of the Lord, the Holy Spirit will bring about the transformation into His image from glory to glory.

It may help to consider, very briefly, for the subject is infinite, the way in which the life of Christ expressed itself in this lower scene. 1st, as to the world; 2nd, in connection with those whom the Father had given Him; 3rd, in relationship with the Father. Regarding the world: His life was the outshining of God to men. In a world where man was all wrong in his thoughts of God, Christ presented in His life a true picture of the true God. God was manifested in flesh in the humanity of our blessed Lord. His acts of mercy, His tender compassion, His sympathy with suffering and sorrow, His immediate answer to every need, told to a world, alas, too deaf to hear, that God was love. Not at a distance, but near; not by writing books, but by living acts, His life amongst men was the revelation of

God. The life was the light, and the light was the life. But the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. Death reigned. But we have in quickening grace received the life which can appreciate the glory of that revelation, and become the expression of it in the world that He has left. Therefore, what gospel preachers there should be not only in word but in life, and here where He, the light of the world, has been rejected; and where those who have His life are unknown, because He was unknown, we should shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

The words that are not the expression of life are worthless; with our Lord they ever told what He was, He was altogether that which He said. Let us live, then, that we may set forth in workshop, office or home, whether we sit in the house or whether we walk by the way, God our Saviour, who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now let us consider the life of our Lord, expressed in another circle, amongst those whose hearts had been touched by Divine grace, and whose eyes had been opened to contemplate the Word of life. They heard, they handled, they looked upon the manifested life, the eternal life which was revealed in the Son of God. Here in this circle deeper things were unfolded than could be presented to the outside world. The glory they contemplated was that of an only-begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth. In these surroundings the Lord was free to speak of the Father's thoughts. "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." What things they were He told them: the Father's love, the source of all, the desire of the Father that they should know the children's place in that love, the counsels of the Father respecting the Son, the cross not so much on the side of man's need but for the glory of God, the coming of the Comforter, and the deep resources and provision of grace. He lived in the

Father's world, and revealed it in His life. So that to Philip He returned answer by the question, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Just as among men love is best taught by acts, just as a child learns its mother's character by her life, so the Lord set forth by His way of living the character of His relationship to the Father. They saw it in His seasons of prayer, His patience, His joy amidst sorrow, His calm and peaceful dependence, His love and obedience, and by these things they learned how deep and blessed the communion of His life. As yet they had not been brought into it, but it was before their eyes as the glory that excelleth. The work of the cross done, we now, in common with them, have received of His own life, His Father our Father, His God our God. This has brought us into the circle of His brethren, where His own new commandment has place: "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Sad, sad is the spectacle presented in the history of the church. We need not speak of those who belong to it only in name, but, alas! with those who are truly His, the dissensions, the disputes, the scatterings, have only too plainly declared that His saints, while possessors of life, have forgotten how to live. What would have preserved in the bond of peace the unity the Lord desired so much? Not outward forms or folds or laws, no, but the knowledge of the Father, begetting lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance. And what is the remedy to-day? Only this, that we live His life amongst His own. That we seek not to establish anything nor seek to restore anything which having been susceptible of breakage and cleavage must pass away; but in the acknowledgment of that which exists unbroken, because it is living in the power of the Spirit, to seek to nurture the life of Christ in those truly His.

The power of life, if it is allowed to have its full out-working, will expand in

affection for Christ and for all saints, and in happy intercourse concerning the things of the Father's love brethren will be drawn together without effort, because of the glory of the object that fills their hearts. It was so that the Lord kept the oneness of His own. He kept them in the Father's name. It was so that Paul sought to heal the moral evil and sectarian strife in the Corinthian church, by determining to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He would not even perpetuate the names of the parties that divided them, transferring these in a figure to himself and Apollos, that he might win their hearts by the unsearchable love that brought their Lord so low. There would they learn the end of every name of pride, and glory alone in Him whose name is above every name.

In the third aspect of our Lord's life, the inner secret of holy intimacy expressed by His words, "The Son of man which is in the bosom of the Father," is revealed His deep resource. This made Him a man of joy amidst surrounding sorrows, a man of peace in the presence of unrest and turmoil. Here was the sanctuary to which He ever resorted, here the holiest where the incense of true worship ascended in fragrance, bringing forth the answer from the excellent glory, "Thou art My beloved Son." When the path of sorrow was closing in, as the shadows deepened upon His soul, that intimacy shone forth with greater intensity. All forsake Him, but He is not alone: "The Father is with Me." The traitor has gone forth to betray, the hour of man and the power of darkness is at hand, but on the very road to Gethsemane we hear the prayer of John 17. Beyond the cross with all its gloom He sees the glorious light of the path of life, to be shared with those for whom He would die. Life eternal, a life of knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ His Sent One. A life of adoration and worship, He the leader of the praises, the first-born amongst many brethren. Soon to be known in all its fulness, that life is ours; the Spirit

its power in us, a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life. The highest and most blessed occupation of eternity will be to hold blessed communion with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the relationship that belongs to the Son, holy and without blame for ever before Him in love. To cast our crowns at His feet, and praise the glory of the grace that has made us accepted in the Beloved. With such a hope how bright is the coming of our Lord as the Morning Star, and how earnest is the longing bridal cry,

“Lord Jesus, come.” And come He will to receive us to Himself, that where He is we may be also. Then shall be manifest in glory the reality of the life that is ours, now hidden with Christ in God. Then shall the world know that which it has long refused to believe, that the Father sent the Son, and has loved His own as He loves the Son. These things, having their true place in our hearts, will produce that holy separation, true devotion, and service, which is alone consistent with a calling so high, for His name’s sake.

Buying and Selling.

(T. OLIVER,
Galashiels).

THE Apostle James, in warning his readers against making arrangements about going to a city and continuing there a year and buying and selling and getting gain (chap. 4. 13), uses a very unique word, “ἐμπορευσόμεθα” (emporeusometha), to convey his meaning. It only finds one other usage in Scripture, and that is in 2 Peter 2. 3, where “false teachers through covetousness shall with feigned words seek to make merchandise of you.”

The fault is not in buying and selling, but in the exercise of self-will which would seek to do things, completely ignoring the Lord and the declaration of His will. And this disregard of the Lord’s will leads naturally and immediately to the disregard of the good and rights of others. The meaning of the word is to make great efforts to do business, that is, to start an emporium, or to become a universal provider to get gain, “κερδησωμεν” (kerdesomen), literally, to do so craftily, as the fox snatches his prey.

In the ancient world the tip-top exercise of self-will in defiance of God’s will was evinced in the erection of the Tower of Babel, and now the chief mark of the times in which we live is that used as descriptive of the Laodicean church, “rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing.” That does not necessarily mean what the world calls rich. A very poor man may answer the description very well.

These conditions are heading up for the time when no one will be allowed to buy and sell but those who have the mark of the beast (Rev. 13.). It is instructive to see that the latter, buying, “αγορασαι” (agorasai), and selling, “πωλησαι” (polesai), have a different shade of meaning. These touch the very rudimentary conditions of civilized society. The first word literally means “to buy in the market place,” while the second is “to hawk with a horse from door to door,” so that those who have not the licence of the religious commercial syndicate symbolized by the “beast” will be denied the basal privileges of humanity.

It is, however, comforting to know that before the private trader shall have been entirely eliminated the Lord will have come and snatched up His saints out of the world. Meanwhile we do well not to seek to emulate the universal provider, the consummate product of self-will in the commerce of man’s day.

The worldly trader who shuts God out of His reckoning in getting gain, but illustrates one phase of defiance in material things; it is, however, worse still to make “merchandise” of the saints in spiritual things.

The final climax of enriching oneself at the expense of the will of God is exhibited in the final rebellion of man, which will forbid even commonplace trading to get the means of subsistence.

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book. (C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 109., 110.

THESE two Psalms have for their subject, as already remarked, the ways and purposes of God in connection with Messiah, presenting Him in a way not hitherto taken up in the Psalter; this gives them a special interest. Psalm 109. is from the pen of David, its historical occasion may have been the rebellion headed by Absalom and Ahitophel, in which there was, on the one side, all the love of a too indulgent father; on the other the malice and hatred of selfish ambition. We have seen before (Ps. 41. 9) how Ahitophel prefigures Judas, to whom Peter applies verse 8 of our Psalm. Upon this outline the spirit of prophecy weaves a description of the perfect grace of Christ, in verses 1-5, and in what follows the righteous reward of a hatred which no manifestation of love could remove. The contrast in these two portions of one Psalm makes the imprecations all the more conspicuous, and we may learn how unlike they are to the utterance of Christ personally from His own words when suffering: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They are the demand of righteous government for an exact retribution on implacable enemies, by no means limited to Judas, but finding an application in any synagogue of Satan which rises up to oppose the purposes of God, in Christ or in His saints (see ver. 20 and Matt. 23, 31, etc.).

Attempts have been made to soften the harshness of verses 6-20. Some would render the verbs in the future tense, "Thou shalt set a wicked man over him," etc., thus making the words predictive of disaster. As to this Perowne remarks, "The Hebrew optative, which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient." Again, verse 20 has been taken to refer back to the previous verses as the award of the sufferer from

his adversaries, "These curses have they sought from Jehovah for me."

Nearly all students will feel that the solution of the difficulty does not lie in any such device, but in understanding the character of the former dispensation, which revealed God in government, not in grace, and hence was but a partial revelation, not untrue, but defective. Righteous government applies retribution exactly, according to the measure of the offence; in this case, what the adversary sought to bring upon the faithful one is returned upon himself: "As he loved cursing, so it came to him, and he had no delight in blessing, and it was far from him." Of such retribution none can complain.

That Christ never uttered such words, but rather "when He was reviled, reviled not again," shows Him to be the vessel of a fuller revelation, not that the words of this Psalm are unrighteous. Against Him all the hatred of man's heart was told out, after all that could have elicited the desired response had been perfectly displayed, "They have requited me also evil for good and hatred for My love." This makes the case of the enemy so entirely hopeless, for love expressing itself in perfect goodness is answered by hatred. If grace is thus refused and cast back in the face of Him who brings it, judgment necessarily follows on those who are not only guilty but ungrateful, and this is revealed quite as plainly in the New Testament as in the Old, though such dealing may be deferred until grace has had its fullest manifestation: "Because they would not have the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them the working of error, that they might believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2.).

In verses 21-23 the afflicted one presents three reasons that Jehovah Adonai should act in his favour: first for His own Name's sake, for His loving-kindness is good; then because of what he is himself enduring, poor and distressed, weak and dying; thirdly for the sake of other faithful ones, "Let them know that this is Thy hand, that Thou, Jehovah, hast done it" (cf. Zech. 11. 11). This care that others should not be stumbled by his apparent abandonment to the evil will of his enemies was perfectly witnessed in our Saviour, and is a touching evidence of His love for His followers. In the assurance that Jehovah will answer the curses of his foes by blessing, he looks forward to a time when, in the presence of many witnesses, he will give thanks and praise to Him. The last verse should be contrasted with verse 6, where an adversary, perhaps Satan is meant, stands at the right hand of the wicked to oppose his intercession, while here Jehovah stands at the right of the poor man to save him from his enemies, who are seen clothed with shame and confusion.

In connection with this Psalm it is interesting to read Jeremiah 18., verses 18-23. It seems evident that when the prophet turns to cursing his adversaries, he descends to a lower level; better would it have been had he continued in the excellence of his previous ministry of intercession for them (ver. 20).

PSALM 110. In view of the teaching in the Gospels (Matt. 22.; Mark 12.; Luke 20.), it will not be necessary to add anything to prove the reference to Messiah in verse 1. He is addressed in His humiliation and bidden to sit on the right hand of Jehovah, a place new to Him in the manhood He had taken, until His foes are made His footstool. This affords a glorious answer by divine power to the petition in the preceding Psalm, that the faithful "may know that this is Thy hand, that Thou, Jehovah, hast done it." The enemies of Messiah having been subjected to Him, a change in the administration of

the throne takes place, and the sceptre of His power issues from Zion, not from heaven. Herein is a difference from Psalm 8., in which the Son of Man is taken from His place of humiliation, and having been crowned with glory and honour, His world-wide sway (extended in the New Testament to "all things in heaven") goes forth from above. In the mention of the reign in Zion our Psalm agrees more with Psalm 2.

During the session of Messiah at the right hand of Jehovah, the present dispensation of the Spirit is introduced: a Man is in heaven in the Person of the incarnate Son, while at the same time God is on earth in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Such conditions have never obtained before and will never occur again. The associated privileges are also unique; the co-heirs of the future inheritance are being gathered out from Jew and Gentile, to form "one body," of which Christ in heaven is Head; and the desire of the Spirit for them is that they might have the conscious knowledge of the power working towards them, which has already displayed itself in transferring Christ from the dust of death, where His love for the church took Him, to the highest place in heavenly glory, where the first verse of our Psalm views Him. Of the union of the church with her Head, the Psalm knows nothing; it is the Mystery hidden in God during previous ages, but now revealed to His saints in the prophetic scriptures of the New Testament (Rom. 16. 26; Eph. 3. 5, etc.; Col. 1. 26). For us, that we might have the knowledge of this mystery, the Apostle strives earnestly in prayer (Col. 2.), discerning that in the possession of this knowledge is our safeguard against the snares of the enemy.

In verse 2 Messiah is addressed, and the Spirit proclaims that Jehovah will send the sceptre of His might out of Zion, in contrast to the previous period when He was hidden in the heavens. When this display of power takes place,

His people will be willing, as they were not in the day of His humiliation, and the holy vestments of the priesthood will be theirs. The next sentence has caused much difficulty to commentators, and there are variations in the MSS. and ancient versions pointing to the desire of translators to make an intelligible rendering which the text did not suggest. But these conjectural emendations merely evade the difficulty, and do not solve it. Almost all writers agree in understanding "Thy youth" to mean the young men who in the power of blessing from on high (the dew) attach themselves to Messiah, and these are regarded as the offspring of the new day now dawning (Ps. 45. 26). This interpretation suits the first part of the verse, and supplies a definite meaning to the whole.

Verse 4 is the central verse of the Psalm, and is an entirely new revelation. The same power that placed Christ at the right hand of Jehovah in heaven, and sends the sceptre of His might out of Zion, proclaims with an oath, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec"; this is further emphasized by the added words, "and will not repent." This royal priesthood is evidently in view of the future day to which the Psalm looks forward, when, as King and Priest, Christ will come forth to bless His people after the defeat of their foes (Heb. 7. 1; Zech. 10. 3, etc.).

Subsequently He will reign as Priest on His throne, and build the temple in peace, according to Zechariah 6. 12, 13. It should be noticed that Melchizedec both blesses Abraham and praises God, in His kingdom title of "Most High, possessor of heaven and earth." This differs from the order of priestly service and worship revealed in the Epistle to the Hebrews; according to which, while receiving mercy and grace to help us in our earthly circumstances, we are led by Christ as "Minister of the sanctuary" into His own sphere, where our blessings are realized.

The rest of the Psalm is simple, being evidently the result of the foes of David's Lord having been placed under His feet. In verse 5 the spirit of prophecy addresses Jehovah announcing what Adonai will do in the time of His victory. The last line of verse 6 should read, "He will crush the head over a wide country," referring probably to the invasion of the land by Gog described in Ezekiel 38. and 39. The last verse perhaps contains a reference to the manner of Gideon's three hundred, who merely lapped the water by the way and were not detained, on their victorious career, by any self-gratification in creature mercies. Many understand the reference to be to our Saviour's earthly pathway of dependence on the Father's will. What I have suggested seems more in accord with the context.

The Profitable Prayer Meeting.

A correspondent writes: "You will be pleased to know that a friend of mine, as a result of reading the article, "Do we realize?" in January issue, has opened his house for prayer one night a week, commencing to-morrow. I

hope many will take advantage of this." This certainly is as we would desire it, and such gatherings are sure to be profitable. May their number be greatly increased.

He gained the victory alone,
We in His triumph share;
He wore thorns, that we with Him
Might crowns of glory wear.

Holy and rev'rend is His name,
How gracious and how sweet!
All greatness, and all goodness too,
In th' name of JESUS meet.

“Woman, Why Weepest Thou?”

J. T. MAWSON

To Those in Sorrow.

THE blight of death has fallen upon your life, and you stand bereaved among the tombs with sorrow gripping your heart with a ruthless and iron hand. What is the world to you now, or life, since the sun of your hopes has set so suddenly, and the one who filled your heart has been torn from it, leaving a void that seems to challenge any power to ease its aching! You have sometimes in the past thought of the approach of death; in the still night, it may be, the possibility of a loved one being snatched from your side has made your heart cry out and the blood run cold in your veins; but now that the dreaded thing has come and cast its black and hateful shadow upon you—a shadow to you so tangible and dense that you have sought in your agony to lay hold upon it and tear it asunder—what will you do, and where will you look? Ah! in this poor earth, that has grown grey in its sin and sweat and sorrow, there are thousands, yea, tens of thousands, like you.

In deepest sympathy with you in this hour of darkness, and only intruding upon your sorrow in order to introduce you to true and lasting comfort, we would invite you to accompany us to a spot where the dead were laid of old, that we may show you how the tears of one were dried whose heart was broken.

Mary of Magdala stands in the garden where the mournful cypress cast their shadows and sigh in the freshening breezes o'er the tombs of the dead. The morning sun breaking over the eastern Olivet has not reached the deep grove where she weeps, and if it had its rays hold no power that can dispel the gloom of her soul, for she has lost the One in whom her life was centred, and she knows not where to find Him. The disciples, her friends, have homes and duties and distrac-

tions, but *earth* has no comfort for her as she stands beside that sepulchre where all that she loved had lain. Neither can *heaven* yield her consolation, she feels, for though “angels in white” appear and speak to her, she turns from them as though they were intruders, unable to understand or ease her grief. Behold her as she weeps, darkness above, darkness around, darkness within, and listen to her broken cry, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” Is your case comparable with hers?

Yes, there is much in common between Mary and you, for your soul is searching among the shadows, searching alone, perhaps, for something, you know not what. We know what you need, and can tell you that there is a balm for your sickness of sorrow. Mary found one and much more in that erstwhile mournful garden, and so may you.

Among the shadows He waits for her—her risen Lord, and when she turns herself back and stands face to face with Him, He speaks to her, asking the cause of her grief. But she supposes Him to be the gardener, and of what use can a gardener be to her? He labours upon beautiful things that have neither sorrows nor souls—she has both, things that grow and shed their sweetness for a day, then die and are forgotten—she is full of bitterness and cannot forget—she seeks not flowers, but “Him”—who can heal the broken-hearted, who Himself is called the “Man of Sorrows.” Marvellous designation for Jehovah’s fellow! The gardener may work among the graves and endeavour to cover with the beauty of nature the stark nakedness of death, but a flower-strawed grave remains a grave, and the flowers fade, but the sorrow lives to drain the red heart white, unless a hand other than a

gardener's intervenes. She does not want a gardener to garnish a grave, she wants her Lord to heal and satisfy her soul. And Mary's want is yours.

But if Mary knows not Jesus, He knows her and calls her by name in accents that throb with infinite love. He commands the morning for her and turns the shadow of death into joy. The darkness flies away from her soul and the dirge gives place to the triumph song within her heart as she sees Him, recognises Him, and responds to His voice to her in that one word, "Rabboni." Here is a glorious deliverance from the bondage of a hopeless sorrow. **THE LORD IS RISEN IN-DEED.** He calls her by her name, and His presence and His voice change her outlook at once and for ever.

In this, O sorrow-burdened soul, there is everlasting consolation and good hope. Death has met his conqueror; his stronghold has been stormed and taken, and the dark King of Terrors dethroned. Christ is risen, He is Victor.

In no other way could the gates of death be open for us than by His resurrection from the dead. He has opened them, and holds the keys of them, as He that liveth for ever more. To all who put their faith in Him He says, "Fear not." He has flooded the darkness of death with the light of hope and love, and you may look forward with confidence to the day when "shall be brought to pass that saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And the tenderness of His grace is as great as the triumph of His might; as it was for Mary in that distant day, so it is for you in this, and amid the shadow of your sorrow He waits, as He waited then for her, to speak to your heart, and to lead you out of darkness into the light of His victory and love.

The words of your friends reach your ears, and perhaps leave you more hopeless and bewildered than before. His words will reach your soul and give you divine support for human props, and a comfort and peace that death cannot destroy, for His words reveal Himself, and He is more than all you need. Turn yourself about to Him; lift your tear-filled eyes to His; hide not your broken heart from His touch; tell Him the cause of your grief.

"His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end."

Do you now understand what it is we would bring you to? There was only one Mary Magdalene on earth, and her heart alone knew its *own* bitterness. There is only one YOU, and your sorrow is your own. To that one Mary Jesus revealed Himself, knowing every pang of her heart, and in such a way that she could respond and call Him "MY MASTER." This is where and how He will meet you, so that you may say, "I have not heard about Him only, I HAVE HEARD HIM. I know Him. Into the secret chambers of my soul that were possessed by a great sorrow, He has come. I have welcomed Him. I am His, He has called me by name, and He is mine—RABBONI."

It is this *personal* link with the living Saviour that each soul that knows Him has for itself that sweetens the most bitter cup, silences the most rebellious questions, and satisfies the deepest longings of the heart. And it is in the knowledge of His personal interest in and everlasting love for each individual sheep in His flock as though each were His only one that enables each to sing:

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

You will say "It is well" when you can say "RABBONI."

Who is He ?

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

MUCH depends on *how* we ask a question. We shall do well to remember this in our inquiry as to who the Lord Jesus Christ really is. If, like Pharaoh, we ask arrogantly and incredulously: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" it is not likely that we shall receive a helpful answer. If, on the other hand, with a contrite heart, astonished at our own perverseness and the greatness of the grace that has been shown us, we ask, like Saul of Tarsus: "Who art Thou, Lord?" we may count on the help of God that our question may find an answer that shall fill us with wonder, and cause us to worship.

Incomparably more important is our inquiry than if it concerned a mere man. "Who, then, is Paul? And who is Apollos?" cried the Apostle; and the very manner of his question suggests the only answer, "Nobody!" Paul, Apollos, and all the most shining saints that have ever lived, all the most heroic and self-sacrificing servants of God that have ever laboured, and suffered, and died, are *nobodies* in comparison with HIM of whom we write.

To know who Jesus is is of special importance to those who desire to trust Him as their Saviour. When He asked the once blind beggar, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" the man naturally enough replied, "*Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?*" Instinctively he felt that he could not place his confidence in a person of whom he knew nothing. He must be instructed as to who this Son of God was before he could make Him the object of his faith.

How often have people had to rue their folly in trusting those of whom they have no certain knowledge! A young friend of the writer's was travelling from Jamaica to England. It was his first ocean voyage, and he was not sufficiently on his guard against imposition by designing persons. One of his fellow-passengers informed him that

he was a merchant, bringing a cargo of sponges to this country, but had not sufficient English money to pay the customs charges. Could my young friend accommodate him with a few pounds? It would only be a matter of minutes; he would almost immediately get his colonial notes changed and return the money. Confidingly Mr. — handed over the amount asked for to the stranger. Needless to say, he never saw him again, and was to chide himself for being so foolish as to trust the word of one of whose probity he had no proof. An illustration, this, of the importance of arriving at a satisfactory answer to our question, "Who is He?"

"A Good Man."

There are some who will reply to the inquiry thus. They will affirm that Jesus of Nazareth was a good man, the best of men. Further than that they will not go. Their answer is not a new one. In the days when Christ was on earth there were Jews who contended that He was a good man, in the face of others who declared Him to be an impostor (John 7. 12).

But is it possible for Him to be a *good* man if He be not more than a man? He went about doing kindly acts; He fed the hungry, cured the sick, comforted the sorrowing; He lived a life of self-sacrificing love to others. But all this would not be sufficient to establish His goodness if He were proved to have advanced claims that had no foundation in fact. *He claimed to be equal with God.* Those who listened to His words, even if they did not admit His claims, were under no illusion as to what they meant (John 10. 33). "Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God!" was their exclamation of shocked surprise.

Now if a man claims to be what he knows he is not, is he a good man? Suppose you hear that a strange aeroplane has alighted on the outskirts

of the town where you live. Along with a crowd of others, you make your way to the spot, and you find a tall, good-looking man, in unfamiliar uniform, giving directions for the disposal of the machine.

"Who is he?" you ask. "Oh!" replies someone, "have you not heard? He has just informed the police sergeant that he is the King of the Belgians!"

Hearing this, you look with profound respect upon the visitor, glad to have the opportunity of seeing the young herom monarch. Others come running up. "Where is King Albert?" they ask, and you point out to them the object of their curiosity.

As the day wears on, however, strange rumours begin to circulate. It appears that a great imposture has been practised upon the credulous crowd. The newly arrived airman is no king, but just plain James Robinson, the son of the blacksmith in the neighbouring market town.

Now pray let no one tell me that this James Robinson is a good man. He may be a kind husband to his wife, an affectionate father to his children, a liberal benefactor to the poor, but what weighs against all that is the fact that he has made a false claim. He has untruthfully declared himself to be what he is not. By unblushing deception he gained temporary honour, and a respect to which he had no right. I affirm that whatever such a man may be, *he is not a good man.*

Do you follow the argument? Do you agree with me that unless the Lord Jesus Christ is all that He claims to be, He has no title to be considered even a good man. He claimed to be the Son of the Father, existing with Him before the world's foundation (John 17. 5). If He was not this, His traducers were right when they said: "Nay; but He deceiveth the people."

The Officers Convinced.

When men, whose repute and self-interest depend upon their taking an

opposite view, are honest enough to bear witness to the truth, their testimony is of exceptional value. We have such men in the officers sent to lay hands on the Lord Jesus (John 7. 46). They returned to those that had sent them, convinced that no mere man had spoken the words to which they had listened.

In a sermon entitled, "Jesus speaks as only God can," Mr. Archibald Brown deals with this incident. He says:

"Why were these men sent to arrest our Lord? They were sent because the Pharisees heard that the people were saying: 'He is *more* than man!' The people were beginning to say, 'He is the Christ; He is the sent of God.' When these officials come back, what is it that they say? Now let us put the emphasis on the right word. 'Never MAN so spake.' Now I can understand the retort of the Pharisees, 'Are ye also deceived?' You will see that that sentence, 'Are ye also deceived?' has all the meaning knocked out of it by the general interpretation, It is, 'Are YE also deceived? We sent you because the people were beginning to say, "He is more than man," and now you come back and tell us that no MAN ever spake as He does. What! Have you, our servants, also dropped into the very idea which we sent you to crush?"

"Our subject, you will see, is a somewhat deep one, and it is this: THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT SIMPLY A PEERLESS SPEAKER AMONG MEN, BUT HE SPOKE AS NO MAN COULD SPEAK, OUGHT TO SPEAK, OR WOULD DARE TO SPEAK. The unprejudiced verdict of the men sent to arrest Him is 'He is more than man.' 'No man,' as the Revised Version puts it, 'so spake.' I am very glad that Dr. Weymouth, in his translation . . . brings this point out even more clearly, when he makes the officials say, 'Never has a mere man spoken as this Man speaks.' Jesus spake as no mere man ought to speak, and therefore you must believe in His deity to save His earthly character."

But let us turn to a few Scriptures, out of the many that there are, which bear direct and emphatic testimony to the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE OLD TESTAMENT. In a wonderful passage (Isaiah 9. 6) we read of One who was born a child, but whose name was The Mighty God; of One who was given as a Son to Israel, but who was none the less the Everlasting Father, or Father of Eternity. He is the great Immanuel of the preceding chapters (7. 14 and 8. 10), born of a virgin, yet "God with us." Can we understand it? Nay, His very Name is Wonderful. In His Person there are depths of mystery and heights of glory which no creature thought can compass. But there is one thing we may do: we may *believe*, and worship.

In Psalm 45. One comes before us who is "fairer than the children of men." He has His "fellows," or companions, but is anointed with the oil of gladness above them. He is the mighty Upholder of truth, the Rewarder of meekness, the Vindicator of righteousness. But He is more. He is addressed as "O God!" The New Testament leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of this glorious Person. Far surpassing the angels in dignity, He is *the Son!* "Unto the Son, He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever" (Heb. 1. 8).

In Micah 5. the expected Messiah of Israel is referred to and His rejection foretold. He is the rightful Ruler, but smitten with a rod upon the cheek. From Bethlehem shall He arise, yet His goings forth have been from everlasting, "from the days of eternity" (Darby).

Ample testimony is thus found in the pages of the inspired prophets as to the infinite greatness and divine glory of Him whom we know in the New Testament as the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us now turn to this second section of the Scriptures.

The New Testament.

The Gospel of John presents to us the Word made flesh. But it affirms in its

opening verse that the Word was God. It shows us, towards its close, Thomas, stripped at last of his unbelief, saying, "My Lord and my God."

Now when the people of Lystra took Barnabas and Paul to be gods, and prepared to render them divine honours, they rent their clothes in energetic protest, and cried, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men." Peter, on a somewhat similar occasion, refused to allow a Roman officer to worship him, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." Even an angel, when John fell down to worship at his feet, forbade him, and said, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant" (Rev. 22. 9).

If it was right for the apostles, if it was right for an angel to refuse worship, why did the Lord Jesus receive it from Thomas and others? (Luke 24. 52). Because He was greater than men and angels; their Creator, their God. Worship is His due.

Take another passage: "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5).

"But," says an objector, "it may be a wrong version." No, all the old versions agree. Whichever you turn to, it is the same.

"But," says another, "the word *God* may be used in a secondary sense; it may mean a god of an inferior kind." No, for it distinctly says, "God OVER ALL." That means supreme.

"But may it not be God the Father that is referred to?" No, for it says, "*Christ* . . . who is over all, God."

How true is the confession of an American writer about this verse. He says:

"Whichever way I take it, and when I turn it upside down, and when I try to read it in every possible shape, I am compelled to leave it, as all have been compelled to leave it who have gone before me, an incontrovertible proof of the eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ."

To the foregoing passage we add one more. After speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of his first epistle, John adds: "*This is the* true God and eternal life.*" What could be clearer? He who is the eternal life, and who gives that life to His sheep, is none other than the true God Himself. These various quotations are surely more than enough to show what the witness of the Scriptures is as to the deity of Christ.

Indirect Evidence.

The indirect evidence as to this great fundamental truth is as convincing as the more direct testimony of the passages which we have quoted. There is, for instance, the fact of the work of *creation* being attributed again and again to the Son. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Could such words be used of any one who was not God? Could it be said of even the best of men that "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth . . . and by Him all things consist"? Was it merely a wonderful Galilean prophet by whom the worlds were made and who is the Upholder of all things? (see John 1; Col. 1.; Heb. 1.). Surely if, with Scripture, and not a creed, as our guide, we look up into the face of Christ, and say: "I believe in God *the Son*, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," we are but confessing the truth.

Another fact which bears witness to the Godhead of the Lord Jesus is that He alone among men could say such a thing as "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Others can say, "Come to *Him*," but who could rightly say "Come to Me," but God Himself? Who else could undertake to give rest to the labouring and heavy-laden souls of men?

Further, of what value would such a statement as "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there

am I in the midst of them" be, unless the Person whose words they are is able to be present in a thousand places at once? But that these gracious words are no mere sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, multitudes can testify. The writer has sat at the Lord's Supper with others gathered together in His name, in many different climes and countries: under the tropic sun of the West Indies, with noisy pelicans gorging themselves with fish refuse a hundred yards away; amid the northern snows of Canada, when the only way of getting to the meeting was by means of sledges; amid the dust-laden atmosphere of Transvaal towns, and amid the arctic breezes of a Norwegian winter; among the mahogany-clad highlands of Central America, and among the chestnut and cork forests of Spain; and in all these widely differing localities he has realized the presence of the Lord in the midst of the "two or three," according to the pledge of Matthew 18. 20. To make such a pledge, *and to fulfil it*, Jesus must be God.

Take another passage, that in John 5. 23, where it is decreed "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

The Emperor Theodosius had become a pervert to Arianism, which is a denial of the deity of Christ. After occupying the imperial throne for some years, he determined to make his son Arcadius, a boy of sixteen, a partner with himself in the government of the empire. The nobles and great men of the day assembled to congratulate the new wearer of the imperial purple. Among them came a certain bishop, named Amphilocus. He made a handsome address to the Emperor, and was about to take his leave, when Theodosius exclaimed: "What! do you take no notice of my son? Do you not know that I have made him my partner in the empire?"

Upon this, the good old man went up to the young Arcadius, and, putting his hand upon his head, said: "The Lord bless thee, my son!"

* "He is the true God" (Darby).

"This One is the true God" (Young).

The Emperor, roused to fury by this slight, exclaimed: "What! is this all the respect you pay to a prince that I have made of equal dignity with myself?"

Upon this, Amphilocus, looking the Emperor full in the face, with an indignant tone of voice, said:

"Sire, do you so highly resent my apparent neglect of your son, because I do not give him equal honours with yourself? Then what must the eternal God think of you when you degrade His co-equal and co-eternal Son to the level of one of His creatures?"

"These words," says the historian, "were like a thousand daggers plunged into the Emperor's heart, who held the reproof to be just."

God has ordained that equal honour should be given to the Son *because it is His due*. He is indeed co-equal with the Father in power, and glory, and every attribute of the Godhead.

Moreover, the work of future judgment is committed to His hand. This, we are told, is *because He is the Son of man* (John 5. 27). But is He no more than any other "son of man"? Unless He were also God, could He be entrusted with the weighing of every word and deed, the judging of every thought and motive? Would any human being be equal to such a task? When the strong angel in Revelation 4. inquires for one worthy to open the book (the book of *temporal* judgments) not one in heaven or earth is found. Much less could one be found able to hold the scales of *eternal* judgment, and wisely to adjudicate upon the actions of all mankind. The Judge who sits upon the white throne of the great final assize is indeed Man, but He is more. He is GOD.

And thus we might go on, *ad infinitum*. But this is a magazine article, and not a book, and must not be unduly prolonged. Of the importance of the subject there can be no doubt. On the late W. E. Gladstone's memorial at

Hawarden there is an inscription consisting of some words of his own:

"All I think, all I write, all I am, is based on the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the central hope of our poor, wayward race."

It is this indeed, our central hope. Without it the whole fabric of Christianity falls to the ground, and leaves us without the glimmer of a hope.

Wherein lies the Value of the Atonement.

What *atonement* could there be if the death of Christ were that of a mere martyr? What cleansing value would there be in His precious blood if it were not for the greatness of His Person?

A lady was endeavouring to instil the rudiments of the gospel to a deaf and dumb boy. She drew upon a piece of paper the picture of a great crowd of people, old and young, standing near a wide, deep pit, out of which smoke and flames were issuing. She then drew a figure to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and explained to the boy that He asked God that the people might be delivered from the pit, since He Himself would die in their stead. The deaf and dumb lad wondered much; and made signs that the Person who promised to die for the others was but *one*, and the crowd very many. How could God be content to take one for so many? The lady took off her gold ring and put it beside a great heap of withered leaves from the garden. She asked the boy which was the best, the one gold ring or the many dry leaves. Clapping his hands with delighted intelligence, he spelt out his answer, "*One!*"

Here indeed lies the secret of the atonement. Jesus, being who and what He is, could give Himself a ransom for many. And the ransom is sufficient, for He who made the sacrifice and paid the penalty of our sins was of infinite worth. The greatness of His person gives its infinite value to His atoning work.

"Jesus the Son of God."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THESSE words stand out bold and clear as a statement of the Spirit of God which allows no kind of qualification. They bind together the humanity and the deity of our Lord. They present, in blessed union, His lowly name as Man and His divine title as God.

Their setting is exquisite. We read in Hebrews 4. 14: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, which is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

The enormous difficulty of maintaining the Christian profession, in power, is only too well known by the true believer. He has a profound sense of his own spiritual weakness and tendency to yield to the foe, so that he values, all the more, the care and support, the sympathy and succour of our Great High Priest, who has left us in an adverse world, has passed through the heavens, where, none the less, He sustains us in the path of faith, and who comforts us in all the tribulation of our heavenward journey. He is possessed of all power. We are to make a constant use of the throne of grace, in order to receive, thence, the grace and mercy needed for each and every exigency and trial. We may connect the mercy with the name of Jesus and the power with the Son of God.

A wonderful combination of words are these: "Jesus the Son of God"! It is not "Jesus the Saviour of sinners," nor "Jesus the Christ," nor "Jesus the Head of His body the church," but "Jesus the Son of God." He comes before us in Deity.

But this dignity had already been noted of Him in the first chapter of this epistle. There we read that God has spoken to us by the Son (in Son); that He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; that He upholds all things; that He made expiation by Himself, and then sat down on high; that He receives the worship of angels; that He is saluted as God; that He created all things, and

will, by and by, cause them to pass away, while He remains the same. He is God the Son as well as Son of God, Creator and Sustainer of all things. This prepares us for our Spirit-given phrase: "Jesus the Son of God."

How glorious His priesthood! How able is He to carry His people through, and how full of encouragement to them to hold fast their profession. He met their sins by expiation; He meets their infirmities by priesthood; but, whether in the work of expiation or in the execution of priesthood, it is in each case "Jesus the Son of God." For God He always was and God and Man He ever remains.

I need hardly say, however, that this Epistle to the Hebrews is not the only scripture which, in definite terms, declares His deity. If, in an ordinary biography, the writer happened to state, but once, that his subject was a scion of nobility, the reader would unquestionably accord him that distinction; but if the writer repeated the same statement and gave, at the same time, varied and incidental proofs of it, all uncertainty would be removed from the mind of the reader.

Further, if other and separate biographers, who, on account of the distance of time could not possibly have written their different books together, stated the same fact, then, surely, there could be no room for disbelief. "At the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

First, in the very earliest chapter of Genesis we have an intimation of the plurality of the Persons in the Godhead. "Let us," we read, "make man in our image, after our likeness." The statement is significant even though we are not given anything beyond the fact of plurality. But, here and there in the Old Testament, which rather teaches the unity of the Godhead than its trinity, we discover the existence of those three divine Persons who are

explicitly and purposely and fully revealed to us in the New Testament.

If we turn to Psalm 110., spoken "by the Holy Ghost" (Mark 12. 36), we find the words: "The *Lord* said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand"; in Micah 5. 2: "A Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting"; in Zechariah 13. 7: "My Shepherd . . . My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts."

In the pages of the New Testament the declaration is full. To acknowledge it is highest bliss; to deny it is fearful sin; only how necessary it is to apprehend the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, as indeed His manhood in its essential sinlessness, in a spirit of becoming reverence and lowly grace. Controversy thereon should be eschewed, and the simple and yet majestic truth accepted. Reason is beggared here. Revelation is worthy of the highest exercise of reason, and that is faith in what God has declared. For nothing is so rational as faith in God. "Jesus the Son of God" must be allowed to stand before the bowed and adoring heart, in all the dignity, glory, majesty, and deity, and His Person as "God manifest in flesh."

In the close of the Gospel by Matthew we have the formula of Christian baptism. It is to be in the name of "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"—the Godhead in Trinity, and each Person is to receive equal honour in this initial rite. The dignity of Each is the same, as is the honour to be accorded. It will be remembered that, in the synoptic Gospels, the accounts of the baptism of Jesus are practically similar. "My beloved Son" is the salutation of the Father in each. In the Son the Father had found His pleasure. So in the Transfiguration, He was again spoken of as the beloved Son, and was to be heard as such. It is still "Jesus the Son of God."

The fourth Gospel introduces Him in deity—"The Word was God"! But the same Word "became flesh"—a brief, decisive statement of what we

call the "Incarnation"—and, as such, He dwelt among us "full," thank God, "of grace and truth"; and, as "the only-begotten Son, which is (mark the word—it signifies subsisting there ever, and that as Son) in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." How complete! Who but the Son of that bosom could adequately declare or express the Father? None but He! And so, in chapter 10., He affirmed that He and the Father were one. In chapter 8. He pronounced the eternity of His existence in saying: "Before Abraham was I am." Later on, Thomas confessed Him as both Lord and God.

Passing on to Paul, once the inveterate hater of the name of Jesus, the very first thing he did after conversion was to preach in the synagogues: "Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (R.V., Acts 9. 20), and this initial text was only developed and emphasized during the course of his Christian ministry; for the Christ he ministered as Saviour, Lord, and Head of the church was also "the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him"—"God manifest in flesh"—"over all, God blessed for ever." His highest theme was the deity of Jesus.

Then Peter in his second epistle tells how he had been an eye-witness of the magnificence (is the word) of the Lord Jesus as seen on the holy mount, when he actually heard the voice of God the Father saying: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Hence, to him, after such a vision, the glory of Christ, and His coming kingdom, was no "cunningly devised fable." It was a mighty and all-controlling fact.

Finally, John, in closing his general epistle, says: "We know that the Son of God is come . . . and we are in Him that is true. This is the true God and eternal life."

Thus the deity of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is abundantly confirmed throughout the length and breadth of the Word of God. Such is the Great High Priest of our profession.

The Christ.

(E. CROSS).

THE Psalms are the song-book of the Sanctuary. The subject matter of them is the Messiah in His various relationships to God and to Israel, as the instrument for the accomplishment of divine purpose in the calling of a people on earth, and the maintenance of their relationship with God through all the vicissitudes of their history, until their faith is realized in the glorious future that is before them. Along this pathway, as the great "Shepherd of Israel," He goes before them to direct them by His Spirit, to shelter them by His protection, to voice for them their distress and their deliverance, to turn their bitterness into blessing, to light up the valley of the shadow of death with the assurance of resurrection glory, and to make all their experiences eventuate in overflowing joy, as their loud praises reverberate in the distance over the everlasting hills of increasing delight.

The great mystery of His person is fully announced in this unfathomable book. As the Messiah He is necessarily a man. As the Messiah He is necessarily God. His humanity is the instrument for the accomplishment of His divine purposes. His deity is the essential spring, the fountain-head of all. This mystery is great. It is the mystery of piety. "God has been manifested in flesh." [The various reading here, "He who has been manifested," does not alter the meaning of the passage.] Apart from this, piety would take its spring from what was merely human, and it could not therefore rise in its character beyond its source; the divine would be lacking to it.

Job was fully alive to his need of a daysman (yakach—an umpire between two, a demonstrator, to show what is right), one to take up the cause between God and man, when he says, "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay

his hand upon us both" (Job 9. 32, 33)—no one who could reach up to God above in all that belongs to Him, and down to man in all his need. Such an one was Elihu, "God is he," as he says, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. . . . Behold, I am according to your wish in God's stead: I am also formed out of the clay" (Job 33. 4, 6). What more distinct and perspicuous foreshadowing of Christ could there be, answering in every respect to His nature at once divine and human, as the Mediator between God and man, the Adjuster of the difficulties that none but He could solve? And in speaking of a Mediator we must understand, as we shall see more fully further on, that the mediatorial work of Christ is not confined to His intercession for sinners merely, but that it includes the undertaking of every office and every part of the work, that has for its object the putting God in His rightful place of supremacy in the universe, and man, the head of all intelligences, in his proper place of subjection to Him (1 Cor. 15.).

Among the various aspects in which the Messiah is presented in the Book of Psalms three titles stand out in striking prominence, viz. "Son of God" (Ps. 2.), "Son of man" (Ps. 8.), and "God" the Son (Ps. 45., Heb. 1.).

Psalms 1. and 2. give the thesis of the whole book.

In Psalm 1. we have described "the blessed man." This ideal picture is realized in Christ, and the traits so set forth are reproduced by His Spirit in the godly at all times.

In Psalm 2. we find the King, "set"—or, as the margin, apparently more correctly reads, anointed—by God "upon His holy hill of Zion." Accordingly He announces at once the title—the immutable decree—by which He takes the throne: "I will declare the decree; Jehovah said unto Me,

Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." And thus, in this wholly supernatural way, it came to pass, that He who was called "Son of the Highest," came of the virgin Mary. "Wherefore also," said the Angel to her, "the holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1. 31, 35).

Notice how, at the start, He is called "the holy thing"; how, in the Magnificat, Mary says of the Mighty One "and holy is His name" (ver. 49); how Zacharias speaks of His prophets as "holy" (ver. 70), and His covenant as "holy" (ver. 73), and, as the outcome of the Messiah's kingdom, "that we might serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days" (ver. 75); while the Spirit whereby all this is accomplished is spoken of throughout the chapter as the "Holy Spirit" (vers. 15, 35, 41, 67); and notice again how, in the prayer of the disciples, (Acts 4. 24-30), they speak of Him twice over as "thy holy child (or servant) Jesus" (vers. 27, 30); and then connect all this with Psalm 2. 6, "As for me, I have anointed my King upon Zion, my holy mountain."

Sin had planted revolt against God and rebellion in the heart of man; and as men increased in the world, and nations were formed, this unholy seed extended in increasing disorder. The throne of God was in protest against this impiety; and the first step in the re-establishment of order was to "find a man" (1 Sam. 16. 1, 12; Ps. 89. 20), holy in his nature, and separate to God, in whose hands could be intrusted universal rule. He must be a man; but, where every man had failed, he must be more than man. All else on earth is corruptible but the divine nature. Therefore it is of all importance to promise it here, as the opening thesis of the Book of Psalms, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."

This is the terrestrial kingdom of the Messiah, with Jerusalem as the centre, embracing in its rule all nations, and extending to the ends of the earth. But

while limited in the sphere of its operations, it is the prelude of a vaster and universal range of mediatorial power (Ps. 8.), as it again gives place to a kingdom, which is at once divine and eternal (Ps. 45.).

"Jehovah, our Adon, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy majesty above the heavens." Such is the subject of Psalm 8. The excellency of His name on earth! who can celebrate it? Whose majesty transcends the universe! who can set it forth? Plainly there is but one equal to the task—Enosh ben-Adam—Christ risen from the dead, exalted to this place of supreme and universal power, that He might subject everything to the will of God.

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast founded strength because of Thine adversaries, to still the enemy and the avenger."

"Adversary," or "oppressor," of the remnant from within, the antichrist; "Enemy and avenger," the hostile nation without, the avenging rod of God for Israel's sin.

Whatever application this psalm may have now, its fulfilment awaits the latter days.

"The universal Adamic and the Jehovah government in Israel are united in this psalm, while it reaches far wider still, because they are established in the person of the Lord, the Son of God." (J.N.D.)

For the import of the title "Son of man" and the extent of his authority as "Lord of all" we must refer to the primal place assigned to Man in the scheme of creation (Gen. 1. 26, etc.).

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over . . . the sea . . . the air . . . the earth." This marks him out at once as the visible representative of God in the world and betokens the extent of his domain.

“ So God created man in His image . . . male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it (kabash): and have dominion (radah) over the . . . sea . . . the air . . . the earth.”

kabash = to subdue, conquer.

radah = to have dominion, tread down, overthrow.

In these words we have the task allotted to man, and the implied opposition he would encounter in fulfilling it. And thus he is sent forth on his wonderful and divine mission. All the forces of creation are officially subjected to his control, to wrest from them by his energy the tribute that is the creator's due (1 Cor. 15. 28).

And here is a great mystery, the implied opposition, inert or active, of all the powers of nature, the revolt of the creature from the creator's purpose, vibrating like an electric current through the constitution of the universe, producing nothing of itself but “ thorns and thistles,” until laboured, “ in the sweat of man's face,” it is forced to yield in a cornucopia, charged with the fruits of God's beneficence, “ the corn and the wine and the oil ” (Hos. 2. 22), and so contribute to the needs and joys and luxuries of human life, and to the praise of the Great Dispenser of universal blessing.

Thereupon we hear the extended diapason of creation's praise, when every creature in heaven . . . and earth . . . and sea unite in saying, “ To him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb; blessing, and honour, and glory, and might, to the ages of ages. And the four living creatures answer, Amen ” (Rev. 5. 13).

“ The husbandman must first labour before partaking of the fruits ” (2 Tim. 2. 6) is an all-time principle dating from the sentence pronounced on Adam (Gen. 3. 17-19). And rightly so. Ever since, pleasure is the fruit of pain. And

the old adage remains true, “ No pains, no gains ” (John 16. 20-24). And how truly this is verified by the Lord Himself!

“ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and He kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done. And there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground ” (Luke 22. 41-46).

“ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! ” (Matt. 27. 29).

But then look at the obverse of the picture: “ For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God ” (Heb. 12. 2).

Three times the Apostle Paul quotes from this psalm.

1 Corinthians 15. 27 shows the far-reaching consequences of the resurrection of Christ, the universality of the rule of the Son of Man, the deliverance of creation from the thralldom of sin and death, and the final and undisputed supremacy of God, even the Father.

Hebrews 2. 6 presents to the believing Jews the human glory of their Messiah, as Hebrews 1. presents His divine glory. As Son of Man He is placed above angels in the administration of “ the world to come ”; and as conqueror over the great enemy, as David over Goliath, He is now crowned with glory and honour, as the Saviour of the world; having tasted death for it all.

Ephesians 1. 22 declares His headship over it all to the church, which is His body; the efficient instrument for the accomplishment of all His designs.

“The Star of the Morning.”

(A. STEVENSON).

FROM the halls of His glory with infinite splendour
 He comes in His love to escort home His bride,
 For whom He grudged not the unmeasured surrender
 Of all that He had when for her sake He died.

O blest be His Name for the wonderful story:
 In fullness of time He came down from on high;
 Laid by all His garments and girdings of glory,
 Came down as a Man, lone and friendless to die.

He died, and His death is the tale of the ages,
 There never was such and such never can be,
 Eternity ne'er will unfold from its pages
 A story like that of His death on the tree.

Now past and for ever, His sufferings are ended,—
 The road to the cross He most perfectly trod—
 In triumph of love He rose up and ascended,
 And sat Himself down at the right hand of God.

Yes, past, not forgotten. Vast hosts shall for ever
 His pathway of sorrow delight to review,
 And stand, as it were, by the brink of that river
 Which His love for His loved ones carried Him through.

And now as the fair lustrous “Star of the Morning,”
 That heralds the dawn of the day soon to break,
 He comes in the love of His heart deep and yearning
 His bride to His home in the heavens to take.

He comes, for His hope can deferred be no longer,
 The ages of waiting are all but gone past,
 He comes in a love deeper, stronger, and fonder
 Than anything else in the universe vast.

He comes to call up all His loved saints together,
 In triumph they'll meet with Himself in the air,
 Then safe from all sorrow for ever and ever,
 His love and His home and His glories they'll share.

O Bride of the Lamb, each redeemed one, awaken,
 And rub all the dust of this earth from your eyes,
 The Star of the Morning's fair radiance is breaking,
 He comes to take you to His home in the skies.

Full charged with God's wrath are the storm-clouds that gather,
 And spread o'er the earth and its dwellers their pall;
 But His bride will He take to the home of His Father
 Ere one drop of that judgment shall righteously fall.

Some Reminiscences of an Old Soldier.

(JOHN DAVIES).

A Marked Testament and a White Coffin.

THE mother of an officer who had died in the Service called upon me one day with a dozen copies of the New Testament in which she had carefully marked the chief gospel texts from Matthew to Revelation. She wished me to distribute these Testaments among the soldiers in memory of her dead son.

One of these I gave to a Christian, an ex-soldier of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who, in turn, handed it to another man who at the time was suffering from consumption. This man sat one afternoon in the Princess Street Gardens, Edinburgh, and read one by one all the texts that the lady had marked. He was unhappy and anxious and he read eagerly, for he began to realize that the words he was reading were the words of salvation and life, and he, a lost and dying sinner, needed both. At last he came to John 5. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

He read no further that afternoon, for those precious words of the Lord Jesus yielded him that which his soul craved, and he went back to his quarters a happy man—happy because he had found life out of death through the Son of God, and was assured of it by His own sure word.

A few weeks after that red-letter day in his history he was admitted to the Longmoor Hospital for incurables in the city, and this proved to be the commencement of a time of much blessing to the inmates. Through his happy life five other inmates were brought into the joy of God's salvation, and this work was long sustained.

He lived for one year in the hospital, and was wonderfully happy in the prospect of going to be "with Christ"

his Saviour. "Put my body in a white coffin and not a black one," was his startling request one day, "for I'm going to a marriage and not a funeral. My departure will not be defeat and death, but victory and life."

We acceded to his request, and his remains were put into a white coffin for interment. And those believers who gathered at his grave, and there were many, realized how truly his was the victory, as with a ring of triumph those words thrilled their souls: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

[The blessing of that dear man's soul and all that followed resulted from the reading of the New Testament carefully and prayerfully marked by the hand of a Christian lady, and it may be that the relating of the story will lead others to serve the Lord and souls in a similar way!]

A Soldier who could not Pray for a Comrade.

During the Boer War a soldier came into my tent and asked for a gospel book. I gave him one, and he said, "I have already read that one." "So you are interested in these things," I said. "I'm miserable," he said. "I was in the Water Works battle at Bloemfontein and a lad near me was badly hit, and he begged of me to pray for him, and though I'm a local preacher's son I could not do it. The poor fellow muttered the Lord's Prayer for himself, and then cried 'Mother' and died, and I have not had a happy moment since."

I was able to point him to the Saviour, to whom he yielded himself and became a happy Christian, able to witness to others, and in his turn to speak to His fellow soldiers of the one and only Saviour.

[This incident is related now to show the importance of earnestly seeking the blessing of the men in the Service, for their opportunities of being of use to others in the supreme hour of need are great !]

How a Canteen Singer was Saved.

“Chummy” Smith, of the 2nd Black Watch, was a soldier of the old-fashioned rollicking kind, apparently without a care or fear. He was very popular in his regiment because he had an exceedingly good voice and a quaint way of rendering their favourite comic songs.

He was standing on a table in the canteen in Ceylon, where his regiment was stationed, entertaining the men as usual, when the sound of singing was borne into the place on the evening air. A little band of Christian soldiers were pouring forth their joyous praise to God not far away. The singer of comic songs on the canteen table stopped suddenly. “The Christians are happier than we, and I cannot sing any more.” His friends begged him to go on and plied him with drink, but it was useless, he had sung his last canteen song, and rushed to his barrack-room crying like a child.

I was unconverted at the time and could not understand what was wrong with the mirth maker of the company. I thought that he was drunk, but I began to understand the next night, when “Chummy” went to the prayer meeting instead of the canteen and returned to the barracks a happy man.

I knew him and served with him for many years after that, saw his joy in the Lord and the reality of that happiness which he had not found as the popular canteen singer.

[The change was brought about, instrumentally, by the happy singing of a few Christian comrades, and may well impress our readers with the importance of seeking to be helpers of the joy of the Christian men in the Army and Navy. May the Lord show us how !]

“Too Soon” or “Too Late.”

It is important that we should press upon men the need of immediate decision for Christ, for the enemy of their souls will tell them that there is plenty of time, and he succeeds well if he can induce them to procrastinate, and then when they have done that long enough to suit his purpose he will tell them that it is too late. The devil’s clock is always either “too soon” or “too late.” After the battle of Paardeberg the wounded men were taken on carts to the Drill Hall, Kimberley, which was turned for the time being into a Red Cross hospital. I saw two men there lying side by side, badly wounded. One of them said to me, “Do you think there’s any chance for me, sir? I’ve been a bad son, a bad husband, and a bad father.” I told him that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief, and God could and would save him, that “*whosoever* believeth in the Son of God shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” I told him that the door stood open for him, bad as he had been; but his only reply was, “It’s too late.” And it seemed as though the devil’s lie had such a firm hold on his soul that there was no room in it for the truth of God.

The man in the adjoining bed said to me, “I’m not afraid to die, sir, for I can read my title clear to mansions in the sky.” The difference between those two men was that one had seized God’s proffered mercy in days of health, and in consequence was happy and peaceful when wounds and suffering came. The other had served the devil, believing that there was plenty of time, and of ought I know he missed the blessing for ever.

[Fellow servants of Christ, let not popular sentiment prevent us from urging upon men the need of their souls. This is the great matter, and we shall be unfaithful to them and the Lord if we neglect it !]

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

“The Exaltation of the Lord.”

“**WHATSOEVER** things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Rom. 15. 4). The rich treasures of the Book of Jeremiah are just as much ours as are those of the other Scriptures of Truth. For our instruction God our Father has preserved this precious book of moral wealth. Not to teach us history merely; but that those who belong to His beloved Son may be encouraged and edified by the Holy Spirit who inspired its writing; that being strengthened by its spiritual sustenance they may endure with joyfulness and thankfulness, with the brightness of hope beaming before them.

This remarkable book is of immediate and immense importance for us to-day; when, as then, there is such a disastrous drift from the truth of God. It encourages us to look alone to the One who is “Our Hope,” as He is also “The Hope of Israel.”

The very name of Jeremiah indicates this.

ISAIAH means “SALVATION OF THE LORD”;

JEREMIAH significantly means “EXALTATION OF THE LORD.”

This we shall find is the main theme of his testimony. And it is always so in the ways of our blessed God. If men turn away from the truth, the Holy Spirit nevertheless raises up a testimony which *exalts the Lord*; and sincere souls are drawn to Him. To such the teaching in Jeremiah ministers spiritual strength and stimulation. Let us listen attentively to one of his words:—

“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,

That I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness,
Judgment and righteousness in the earth.
For in these things I delight, saith THE LORD” (9. 23, 24).

And now hearken to the answering echo of the same Spirit in the New Testament:—

“Of HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, . . .
That, according as it is written,
He that glorieth, let him glory in THE LORD” (1 Cor. I. 30-31).

1. The Lord seen by Jeremiah and John.

Like John in the New Testament, Jeremiah finds his “Fortress,” “Hope,” and “Strength” for his prolonged labours in the Lord Himself. They were both thus sustained, though they saw a bright day decline with gathering clouds of destruction, as dense darkness descended upon the professing people of God generally. Jeremiah stood out for the truth for over forty years in the land (vers. 1-3); and continued to speak the word longer still, though carried down into Egypt (chaps. 43., 44.). From the revival times of Josiah, with their *outward* brightness, he toiled on to produce *inward* reality, into the dark night beyond the days of Zedekiah, whose eyes were put out, as the prophet had signified, by Nebuchadnezzar. They bound him with brazen fetters and carried him to Babylon. Zedekiah thus represented the dark and sightless state of the nation carried into captivity. But the Lord remained faithful, and Jeremiah foretold a future deliverance. John also sees that which professes the Lord’s Name sink into Babylonish superstition and darkness, and go down to eternal doom. There is in this case no deliverance. “Her smoke rose up for ever and ever” (Rev. 19. 3). The Lord had taken His own, the true assembly, to be with Him previously.

It is instructive, however, to see that before the hour of Babylon's overthrow God calls through John to the same people (the Jews) as He does through Jeremiah: "*Come out of her, My People*" (Rev. 18. 4). "Remove out of the midst of Babylon" (Jer. 50. 8); "Flee out of the midst of Babylon. . . . My People, go ye out of the midst of her" (51. 6, 45). Their Redeemer is strong. He will save them, and overthrow all those who rise up against them. He remains faithful, and His glory shines undimmed, notwithstanding all their failure and backsliding. He will pardon them graciously, and bless them, when they turn again to Him.

But even after they had departed from the Lord Jeremiah sees the Lord in the midst of Israel; and John also sees Him in the midst of that which symbolizes Christendom, before the Babylon system is developed. Truly they both see Him in a unique way. Nevertheless He is there. It is of the utmost importance that we should recognize this *now*. Jeremiah says, "Yet Thou, O Lord, art *in the midst of us*, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not" (14. 9). John saw, "*In the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man*" (Rev. 1. 13). "The seven candlesticks . . . are the seven churches" (ver. 20); "the things which are" (ver. 19); that is Christendom. All this shows the immediate importance of this book for us now, to-day. May we be granted great diligence of soul to grasp the divine truths, and the priceless principles which it contains. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Prov. 10. 4). We are to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" at such a time as this; not what the churches say to us. But this necessitates an attentive ear. The Spirit of Truth is here to glorify the Son of God. "The exaltation of the Lord" is His present normal work, and this He will carry on to the end, in spite of the defection of the professing churches.

The true heart is not indifferent to this departure from the Truth, He surely feels it keenly like the blessed Lord Himself. Touchingly we find Him saying to the assembly at Ephesus: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2. 4). And to Israel also: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals" (Jer. 2. 2). He continues: "They have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters" (ver. 13); "My people have forgotten Me days without number" (ver. 32). How all this shows us what the heart of the Lord feels regarding the ungrateful behaviour of those who profess His Name. Did He not weep over Jerusalem? We see too the sorrow and affliction with which it filled the tender heart of Jeremiah. He saw the value of the people to God as belonging to Him; and then he saw their base sin against Him, and He knew that the rights of God must be maintained. This caused him great conflict of soul, and explains why much that he writes is addressed to God Himself, as representing the people before Him.

But now, at the present time, since the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, since His ascension, and His being "anointed with the oil of joy above His companions" (Heb. 1. 9), things are greatly changed. We feel the sorrow surely, as we have said, but joy and gladness is now our characteristic portion. The Lord is no longer "the Man of sorrows"; so we do not find John *characterized* by sorrow. Although he saw a worse declension than Jeremiah, he writes the last of the inspired scriptures that our "JOY MAY BE FULL." We must bear this firmly in mind, or we shall come short in our experience of that which the Holy Ghost is producing now; since redemption is secured in God's beloved Son, through His blood, and we are blessed in Him, in whom God is fully revealed.

“No” to the World, “Yes” to God.

(H. J. VINE).

WE who are converted to God are the Lord's! We belong to Him! Come what may, we are His for time and eternity! When you are rooted and grounded in that, you can face a great deal that you naturally would shrink from. The word richly dwelling in your heart gives you courage beyond what you have naturally. I heard of two dear Christian lads converted in the country, who went to work in a large city, and both got into the same lodging. They had to occupy the same bedroom, and neither the one nor the other had said that he belonged to the Saviour. The question arose in the mind of each, Was the other going to kneel down? but the other was saying within himself, “I wish he would.” Neither had courage to do it; and so they went on, taking as long as possible to get their clothes off. At last one did kneel down. Down went the other at once, and when he got up he went and put his arms

round his friend. He said, “I am so glad you did that.” Those two young men, by that simple act, were saved from perhaps living prayerless lives. You remember the story of Daniel who was carried off captive to Babylon by the military power of that day; he said, “There are two things I am in for. I am going to say ‘NO’ to the world, and I am going to PRAY to God.” Begin there! Get some moral backbone into you, and when the world comes along in various forms, and appeals to you, let that little word “No” be given to it. “No” to the world, but “Yes” to God. Daniel prospered above all the scholars and learned men, and knew things that the others did not. Not only was he instructed in the times then present, but he was able to look far ahead and to prophesy the destruction of the kingdoms of this world, and the appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The First Recorded Prayer Meeting in Europe.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels).

LYDIA was a business woman, a seller of purple from that great commercial centre, Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She had come to Philippi doubtless bent on making her fortune, but she was destined to acquire great riches of which she had no conception when she left her native city. She became a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The circumstances under which Lydia got her heart opened are noteworthy (Acts 16. 13).

(1) She was outside the city, by a river side.

(2) She was where prayer was wont to be made.

(3) She was with other women drawn together by kindred motive.

The first recorded prayer meeting in Europe is full of interest to us. When

we come together to pray it is of prime importance that we go in figure outside the “city.” The city is the consummate product of man's day, and sets forth all that would seek to engross our attention as dwellers on the earth and to prevent our enjoyment of the heavenly calling and citizenship. No one can pray effectually if his or her mind is occupied with business. We must be able to dissociate ourselves from our secular environment.

The 46th Psalm speaks of the river, the streams of which make glad the city of God. The prayerful must set themselves steadfastly to be alongside that river. God delights to answer the outpouring of the glad heart which has been touched by divine joy. That is the prescription which will cure all the “unprofitable” and ineffectual prayer meetings.

It is important to notice that she was where prayer was wont to be made. Public prayer was no spasmodic effort in Philippi, nor should it be with us either. Those who heard the Apostles' words at first were marked by steadfast continuance in the various expressions of Christian fellowship, of which prayer is an indispensable factor (Acts 2.). If steady prayer was necessary in the first century of the Christian era, how much more essential it must be in the twentieth century, when the enemy is making such great efforts to sweep away vital Christianity with a flood of infidelity.

It is highly significant that only women were mentioned as having been in the habit of resorting to the prayer meeting. A company of praying women is not now very common, but where such are to be found they undoubtedly form a focus from which radiates spiritual activity. Who can say that the flood of blessing which subsequently flowed over Macedonia and Achaia may not

have been due to these simple prayer meetings at Philippi?

What great encouragement for women coming together to pray is thus afforded by this simple incident. The Apostle in writing to Timothy expressed the wish that men would pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands (1 Tim. 2. 8). But for the most part Christian men have not been responsive to the divine injunction, and in many places the absence of public prayer is remarkable. Even in towns in order to hold a so-called "Intercessory Service" it is frequently found expedient that the churches should unite in order to co-ordinate all the feeble forces at their disposal. It may be that in a place where there are no men who will lift up holy hands, nevertheless there is a local responsibility imposed on Christian women that they should utilize the resources which God has so freely provided in collective as well as in private prayer.

The Work of the Caterpillar.

RELATIVE to the article on the "Years that the Locust has eaten" in our January issue, we have received the following communication:

"The caterpillars, like the thieves and robbers in John 10. 8, come stealthily to kill and to destroy. Their presence is not noticed till they have committed havoc, sometimes taking possession of the entire bush and depriving it of its leaves, i.e. all appearance of outward life.

In Matthew 21. 19 the leaves stand for profession. In Mark 13. 28 they are the witness of life. "When a branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near." In Revelation 22. 2 the leaves are for the healing of the nations, not for caterpillars to eat.

They do not come covering the earth as the locusts do, nor do they come ready-made. The early butterfly deposits its eggs with a gauzy covering underneath the leaf, very innocent looking things, nothing apparently to cause alarm, but it is here that diligent care and watchfulness will be rewarded; without this these apparently harmless things will gradually render the tree fruitless and the branches bare and barren. So in our spiritual lives we must 'look diligently' and 'watch constantly,' lest our testimony to men and our fruit for God be quite destroyed by those things which answer to the caterpillar in our spiritual history.

"The canker in a tree shows itself in another way. The tree may be making a fair show with many leaves and some fruit, but the ugly scars of the canker-worm become apparent on both stem and branches. The canker is a contagious disease (see Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. 2. 17)."

(R. Bruce).

“First” and “After.”

“And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake FIRST and bring it unto me, and AFTER make for thee and for thy son.”

(1 Kings 17. 13.)

THE sin in the land was great.

Ahab, a monster of iniquity, only surpassed in wickedness by his queen, Jezebel, whose name has passed into a byword for sin, sat upon the throne of Israel.

God had, by the mouth of His fiery prophet, Elijah, the Tishbite, pronounced judgment upon the land. For three years and six months, the same length of time, be it noted, as the gracious public ministry of the Son of God, famine was to hold the land in a strangle grip. Soon the dry, parched ground told its own tale. “A great famine was throughout all the land” (Luke 4. 25). Prices rose. Food was scarce. Men and beasts perished. Prospects were black indeed.

Is there not a parallel to-day? Is not God visiting these countries in which war is raging, and more or less the whole world? Are not war, famine, and pestilence His agents for the chastisement of men, His means of awakening those whom prosperity had been ruining for time and eternity?

In the midst of all this many Christians are intensely tried. True, many are making better wages than they have ever made, but others are feeling the pinch of rising prices and the drain of increased taxes. Nay, more, the seeming prosperity of high prices is more or less a fallacy. They must come out of the pockets of the people in the end, and what then? As the months roll by so the pinch will become accentuated.

Economy must be practised rigorously, but how? We hear of missions in heathen lands having to be abandoned for lack of funds; we hear of good sound Bible literature having to be withdrawn because subscribers and distributors have dropped off. We hear of publishers of such literature being

faced by heavy rises in the cost of paper and production.

Is economy in this direction right? Is it true sound economy?

A little examination of our text and its context will help us greatly to furnish an answer.

When the drought first gripped the land the prophet was fed by ravens and refreshed by the waters of the Brook Cherith. But the stream ran dry. What could God do for the needy prophet then? Some of us, perhaps many of us, know something about creature streams running dry, our cherished Cheriths failing just when they seemed most necessary.

But if Elijah knew God’s care, love, and power, the drying up of the Cherith need have occasioned him no anguish of spirit, no burden of care, no anxious inquiry what was to become of him. If Cherith ran dry, he had God, and that was sufficient. Have we not as much?

How did relief come for Elijah? God had His eye on a widow woman. She was a woman without strength or resources. She lived in Zarephath, in Zidon, a Canaanite.

The prophet was directed to her. On the surface it did not look like a valiant or noble deed for a prophet to billet himself, *nolens volens*, on a widow woman; and she belonging to a Gentile nation. What claim could he have upon her, and what resource had she to fall back upon?

The prophet introduced himself by asking for a drink of water, and a morsel of bread. Surely under the circumstances not a very welcome introduction!

The widow’s answer revealed depths of poverty, staggering and appalling.

Her food possessions consisted of a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. All she wanted was two sticks, little enough fuel, but sufficient to prepare the scanty meal for herself and her son. That done, her resources would be exhausted, and death literally stared them in the face.

Surely the prophet, if only governed by humanitarian instincts, would cast about for ways and means to help such a case of abject need?

We answer, Yes and no. No; for he did not go about it by **FIRST** meeting *her* need, and **AFTER** considering his own. Yes; for in **FIRST** meeting his own need, as the true representative of God, he met her need then and **AFTER**, as long as the need lasted. In one moment the widow was to be delivered, and sustained as long as sustainment was needed.

Observe the method by which relief came. How encouraging for Christians to-day! How 1 Kings 17. 13 sparkles like a well-cut gem, its facets answering to the light of examination.

The prophet insisted upon the order,
 GOD "FIRST"
 SELF "AFTER."

But how could she make a little cake for the prophet **FIRST**, and then **AFTER** make a second cake for herself and her son? How could materials, sufficient for one cake, be stretched into enough for two? How? Nature cries impossible. Common sense suggests expedients. Let the prophet try at another door, where there may be more "wherewithal."

But no, the widow was about to learn a wonderful lesson—"FIRST" and "AFTER." What did it mean?

The prophet said, "Make *me* a little cake **FIRST**, and bring it to *me*, and **AFTER** make for *thee* and *thy* son."

But how could it be done? *Only* thus; if she cared for God's interests "FIRST," He would care for her's "AFTER." This putting God first

brought her the brightest reward of her life.

She went to the barrel of meal, took out its remaining handful, all that stood between her and a lingering death by starvation, and, lo! there was no diminution of the meal. What she took out did not affect the quantity she found. She went to the cruse of oil. She poured out the oil, but still the quantity left was equal to what she found there. And this went on "many days"—indeed, *all* the days of need. What a story!

And wherein does our spiritual prosperity, and it may be our temporal prosperity, lie to-day?

Just in observing the order "FIRST" and "AFTER."

What a blessed "FIRST"—to be allowed the sublime luxury of caring for God's interests in a world of need.

What a happy "AFTER"—to have God caring for every need as long as we are in the land of need.

If we acted on these lines there would be no withdrawal of God's workers in foreign fields, there would be no cessation of useful and God-honoured Scriptural literature, there would be no slackening of efforts in God's things. Then we should learn the truth of Holy Writ:

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11. 24).

"The liberal soul shall be made fat" (Prov. 11. 25).

"Seek ye **FIRST** the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6. 33).

May writer and reader know the blessedness of putting

GOD "FIRST"
 SELF "AFTER,"

making God's interests **FIRST**, and experiencing God's blessed **AFTER**, how He cares for our interests, even through darkest days. Let us put Him to the test.

“Where Two or Three.”

(W. BRAMWELL DICK).

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”
(Matt. 18. 20).

PERHAPS there is no verse in the Holy Scriptures with which the saints of God are more familiar, or that they esteem more precious, than that which heads this paper. It has been well called

“The Divine Charter of the church for all Ages,”

and while the context would seem to suggest a very distinct connection between the promise and the gathering together of the Lord’s people to pray, we have no doubt that it applies to every occasion on which they are gathered together in His name.

True, in the days of the church’s pristine freshness this assurance is no less true in the days of declension, failure and general break-up in which we find ourselves; and the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning, end, and middle of it makes it grateful indeed to every heart that loves Him. Let us analyse it.

I. “Where two or three.” The smallest possible number, not two or three hundred, or two or three dozen, but—“two or three.” It may be in the centre of Africa, or in the heart of London, in some remote and scarce-known hamlet, or in some great industrial city, aboard an ocean liner, or on the mountain side in a foreign land, that a few—“two or three”—who have tasted His love, and to whom His name is “as ointment poured forth,” are gathered together in His name, and such have the guarantee of His presence.

II. “Are gathered together.” Observe! Our blessed Lord did not say, “Where two or three gather together,” but He did say—and the value of the words lies in the fact that they came from His own lips—“Where two or three *are gathered together.*” We fear that looseness of expression, encouraged

perhaps by the careless construction of certain hymns, has led to a feeble apprehension of the immense importance of these words.

We see at once that such a gathering is not a mere meeting. If it were simply a case of our gathering together, then it would be optional whether we did so or not; though those who wilfully miss any opportunity of meeting with their fellow-believers run a grave risk of soul decay and ultimate spiritual extinction. Our text speaks of those who “are gathered,” nor can there be any question that the One who gathers is no less a Person than our Lord Jesus Christ. He may gather His own that they may enjoy the priceless privilege of remembering Him in His death at His Supper; or, that, in His name, they may pour out their hearts in supplication and prayer; or, for such ministry as He may direct, through such vessels as He may choose.

Whom does He gather?

That is His matter and not ours. We must not presume to arrogate to ourselves that which He has kept in His own hand. If His Majesty commands some person to dine at Buckingham Palace, that person does not inquire who his fellow guests will be; it is sufficient for him that the King desires his company, he thinks only of the honour of being in the King’s presence, and if perchance he does wonder who may be there, he is satisfied that the company that is fit for the King will do for him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gathers whom He will, and if He deigns to call us, and He does call all who are “His own,” our hearts are filled with thankfulness that He should desire our company, that we are to have the joy of His presence; and we count ourselves happy to be associated with all whom He honours in a similar way. To refuse

to do so would be to trench upon His prerogative, to impugn His authority, and to question His choice.

III. "In My name." This at once suggests that those whom He gathers will be those whose character is in keeping with that which His name implies. He who thus spake is "He that is holy, He that is true" (Rev. 3. 7), and He will surround Himself only with those of whom this is characteristic, indeed none other could be happy in His presence. He is "the Truth," therefore those whom He gathers will resemble Him in this respect also. In His name is wrapped up likewise the grace that ever shone in Him. This we see in the chapter in which our text occurs; the lowly grace that led Him to set a little child in the midst, and call for that humility which was so perfectly exemplified in Himself. The unlimited grace too that was ready to forgive not until seven times, but until seventy times seven; the grace that has forgiven us so much and so often. This will mark those whom He gathers, in short, those gathered will take colour from the One who is in the midst, and will be recognized by those who are His, by its moral resemblance to Himself. In these three words there is also a ring of authority, and there is that which inspires confidence.

No name on earth, however great or however saintly, could ever be a gathering point for the people of God. In His name there is divine magnetism that attracts, divine power that holds, and divine authority that controls those whom He gathers. He Himself guards its honour, and He greatly values the loyalty to His name of all His own. At the close of the old dispensation, and down to the time of His first coming into the world there were some who thought upon His name, and who, in days of great discouragement, spoke of Him.

It may be questioned whether the words "are gathered together" bear the full meaning put upon them by our contributor, but this at least is evident that there is a gathering power, *His Name*, and for so gathering there is authority, *His Word*. Happy are all who keep His word and do not deny His name.—(Ed.).

Of these He made special mention, and such He will remember in the coming day. (See Mal. 3. 16, 17; 4. 2, 3; Luke 2. 25-38.)

It may be there will be but few at the close of the present period, but Revelation 3. 7-13 encourages us to believe that there will be some; and we are certain every Christian who reads these lines fervently desires to be among that number, and seeks that on his part there shall be nothing to bring a blot upon the fair escutcheon of that holy and peerless name.

IV. "There am I in the midst of them." Could anything be more exquisite? Obscure, of no account in the world, unrecognized by men, there are those "whose names are registered in Heaven," and whose love for His name is recorded there; such He gathers around Himself, to such He manifests His presence, and with such He shares all that in which He, as risen from the dead and enthroned in glory, finds His delight. We are aware that Hebrews 2. 12 speaks of Him as "in the midst of the church." This we apprehend to mean that just as King George V is always in the midst of his people, though he is in London and his subjects cover the globe, so our Lord Jesus Christ is ever in the midst of the church, declaring to His own the Father's name, rejoicing as He sees the fruit of His toil, singing praises to the Father whose love and favour His brethren share with Him. The verse which we are now considering, however, clearly refers to those occasions when He is pleased to gather His own around Himself for a definite purpose. May we bow to His word, cling to His name, and thus enjoy His presence. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as we see the day approaching" (Heb. 10. 25).

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—I.

(JAMES GREEN).

Introduction.

IT is proposed in these articles to consider our Lord's teaching in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, as He set it forth in the parables which have been recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Matthew. They are fourteen in number, commencing in the thirteenth chapter and ending in the twenty-fifth chapter.

1. The Sower: 13. 3-9; 18-23.
2. The Wheat and Tares: 13. 24-30; 37-43.
3. The Mustard Seed: 13. 31, 32.
4. The Leaven: 13. 33.
5. The Treasure: 13. 44.
6. The Pearl: 13. 45, 46.
7. The Net: 13. 47-50.
8. The King and his Servants: 18. 23-35.
9. The Labourers in the Vineyard: 20. 1-16.
10. The Two Sons: 21. 28-32.
11. The Husbandmen: 21. 33-46.
12. The Marriage Feast: 22. 1-14.
13. The Virgins: 25. 1-13.
14. The Talents: 25. 14-30.

There are three divisions of the Lord's service in this gospel. The first twelve chapters describe His presentation as Messiah to the Jews; the last three chapters relate to His death and resurrection. It is our object now to seek to understand the peculiar character of His ministry given in the thirteen chapters, 13. to 25., which cover the second division.

Even the ordinary reader will be struck by the very distinct change in the character of the teaching at the commencement of the thirteenth chapter. Up to this time the burden of the Lord's preaching had been, "The kingdom of the heavens is at hand." He announced in connection with His own presence the advent of the fifth world power, which according to the prophet Daniel was to break in pieces and subdue all kingdoms, and which being

established should never be destroyed nor left to other people, but should stand for ever (Dan. 2. 44). Why it was announced under the peculiar title of the kingdom of the heavens we shall see as we proceed.

From the 13th of Matthew onwards the words of announcement "at hand" are no longer used, and other phrases are heard from our Lord's lips, such as, "The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens" and "The kingdom of the heavens is like unto," indicating that a real kingdom was to be here on earth, but not in the form of the glorious display foretold by prophet and seer. This last would have needed no similitude to set it forth, it would have been self-evident, whereas that of which our Lord spoke was in its reality to be hidden from outward observation, and its secrets only the initiated would know, that which men would take account of would be merely the exterior shell. Because of this peculiar character which Old Testament prophets had never foreseen, the origin, growth, and consummation of the kingdom were now to be described only in the form of parable. "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" asked the disciples. Now in the first place none but the Son of God could rightly use this form of teaching, it was eminently suited in dignity and truth to Him of whom even His enemies said, "Never man spake like this man." The definition so often given that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning does not sufficiently distinguish it from a fable, a myth, or an allegory, and is misleading, for it leads us to look for the fulfilment of the parable in heaven instead of upon earth. The fable never rises in thought above a wisdom and morality within the reach of men. In its form it is fanciful, frequently transgressing the order of nature, in giving speech to animals and inanimate things.

So that we must by no means confuse the parable with the fable, the latter having no place in the New Testament, although two examples of it occur in the *Old*—the trees choosing a king (Judges 9. 8-15) and the thistle and the cedar (2 Kings 14. 9). The fable may be used on the lips of men to convey a measure of truth, but it could never be a suited vehicle for the thoughts of Him who is "The Truth," and whose object was to raise men above that which their minds could take account of, to the wisdom of God who is above all, and sees not as man sees.

Neither did our Lord use a mythical form of speech, in which the truth and the narrative by which it is communicated are so blended, that the ordinary person will often believe the story to be fact, although it has no foundation in actuality or probability, and he will miss the hidden meaning. Such a method of teaching with its liability to erroneous impressions would not become the One who had come to set forth the truth of God so plainly, that the simplest might hear and believe the realities of God. Indeed the myth has no place at all in the divine Scripture, its narratives are not cunningly devised myths, *μύθοις* (2 Pet. 1. 16). Nor are they, as men in their folly have asserted, fairy tales with a good meaning, but not to be taken seriously. Such men will never understand the mind of Him who spake the words of God nor the infallible records of the Holy Spirit.

Parables are only recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In John we find the Lord speaking by allegories, such as "I am the door," "I am the good Shepherd," using the qualities belonging to these things to set forth the virtues of His own person and work. The word "parabolas" never occurs in John's Gospel, being replaced by the word "paroimia" = proverb, and this latter word never occurs in the first three Gospels. In the Old Testament there is but one word, "mashal," variously translated.

The parables of our Lord are serious narrations of incidents, never fanciful and never exceeding the domain of fact. They are parallels between earthly shadows and divine realities, which only He could draw who created all things, and to whom all things are known. For His parables were indeed prophecies, and involved a knowledge of things to come, which could be possessed by none but the Son of God. So accurate was the forecast that, to us who live during the last stages of the period to which they allude, many of these parables have become history.

In Matthew 13. verses 11-17 is given the reason why our Lord adopted such a method of teaching at the time. Rejected by the nation He had come to bless, and His works of grace attributed to the power of Beelzebub (12. 23, 24). He had sorrowfully to pronounce the sentence of judgment upon a people whose heart was waxed gross, and whose eyes and ears were wilfully closed, lest they should be converted and healed. Judicial blindness was already overtaking them, and in them was being fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (chap. 6. 9-12). By hearing they were to hear and not understand and seeing to see and not perceive, for this reason the parable was used to conceal from them the teaching of Him whose rights they refused to acknowledge. Alas, this same thing is repeated again and again. Men refuse to admit the God-head glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures in consequence become a means of blindness to them, and even that which they seem to have, after all only in profession, is taken away from them. But on the other hand the same scriptures are light and blessing to those whose eyes behold His glory and whose ears are attentive to His words. All blessing for Jew or Gentile turns upon the acknowledgment that Christ was God manifest in flesh. What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He? must ever be the first question. He must be received as Lord before He can be known as Teacher. The parable

then becomes light to the eye that sees and instruction to the ear that hears, and is to the understanding heart the unfolding of divine secrets. Things are then known which prophets and righteous men in times past longed to see and hear, and which could not then be revealed to them, the things concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens.

The prophet Daniel had prophesied of the course of Gentile dominion during the time when Lo-ammi, "not my people," was written upon Israel. In vision he had seen four empires arise, and he saw a fifth, under the figure of a stone cut out without hands, viz. by divine power, break in pieces and consume all that had been before it, and then becoming world-wide in extent, remain, no other taking its place. But he did not see that before that act of crushing power should take place the kingdom would assume a peculiar form. He indeed saw one like the Son of Man come to the ancient of days and receive the kingdom, he saw the glory of it, and all peoples, nations, and languages serving Him; but he had no knowledge of the long years during which the King would be in heaven, and consequently the character the kingdom would take during His absence was unknown to the prophet. The first sign of the coming kingdom was when the Virgin's child was born King. Herod, the representative of the power of the Fourth Empire, the Roman, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, at the announcement of the wise men that the King was born, and immediate steps were taken to destroy Him. But all the powers of evil cannot frustrate the power of God, and in due time the Lord began to preach the proclamation that the kingdom was at hand. He had come to His own people, theirs was to be the first dominion. He issued His manifesto in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5.-7.). He presented His credentials in works of power (chaps. 8. and 9.). He sent forth His heralds (chap. 10.); the nation, however, saw

no beauty that they should desire Him; In chapter 11. the people said He was a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; they rejected grace. In chapter 12. the leaders ascribed His miracles to the Prince of demons; they rejected the power that would have brought the kingdom into display. They would not have the King, but He would have a kingdom, and in parable He described its course until His enemies should be made His footstool.

The kingdom of the heavens is the form the kingdom takes while the King is in heaven. The millennial reign will be heavenly, but it will be displayed, not secret. From the time our Lord took His seat on the Father's throne in heaven He has exercised dominion over a sphere on earth, over those who by grace truly confess Him as Lord and whose conduct is governed by heavenly motives, and also over those who outwardly at least profess His name and call themselves Christian. That which we to-day call Christendom, viz. Christ's kingdom, answers to the kingdom of the heavens. Good and evil, real and unreal, all mixed up in it, what a riddle it presents, and it was in order to unravel the tangle to those who do the will of God, that they might have clear light as to their path, that the Lord uttered these parables. In Mark and Luke the words "the kingdom of God" are used to describe this same condition; but in Matthew, as we shall see, they are never used with the same meaning. The kingdom of God conveys the wider thought of God's dominion, existing wherever God's authority was owned, belonging to Israel before the advent of Christ, taken from them and given to others, including the kingdom of the heavens, and continuing until the consummation of all things. It has also a moral bearing (see Rom. 14. 17). The kingdom of the heavens is a dispensation on earth, commencing with the Lord's ascension to heaven and continuing until He appears in power.

The Christian Name.

“The disciples were called Christians.”—Acts 11. 26.

“Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”—Timothy 2. 19.

SCIPIO AFRICANUS had a son who had nothing of the father but the name, a coward, a dissolute sorry rake, the son of one of the greatest captains in the world. This son wore a ring upon his finger, wherein was his father's picture. His life and character was so opposite to that of his father, and so unworthy, that by an act of the senate he was commanded to forbear wearing that ring. They judged it unfit that he should have the honour to wear the picture of his father, who would not himself be the resemblance of his father's excellence. It is an edict of greater authority than all the senates in the world, “Let him that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Either part with iniquity or part with the name.

How unlike is the Christian world to the Christian doctrine! The seal is fair and excellent, but the impression is languid and hardly visible. The Christian spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof; but if

nobody was allowed to wear the Name but those who could show this right to it, what a reduction would it make!

Do men think to be saved by an empty name? and glory in the mere appearance of that, the life and power of which they hate and deride? It was smartly said, at a time when godliness was greatly derided, “It is a reproach with us, for a man not to be called a Christian; it is a greater reproach to be one in deed and in truth.”

The real disciple of Christ has the only right to the Christian name. . . . The name Christian is the outward inscription of an inward character, and principle, and spirit. As he is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but he that is so inwardly, so he is not a Christian that is so outwardly only. It is not faith as it is in the Creed that will save us, but faith as in the heart, working by love. The doctrines of Christianity do nothing if they only fill the head and wag the tongue; they must transform the soul and govern the life.

Teach us that Name to own,
Whilst waiting, Lord, for Thee;
Unholiness and sin to shun,
From all untruth to flee.

Able to Save.

“**W**ELL, my lad,” said a preacher at the close of a crowded gospel meeting in the east of London, “what are you remaining behind for?”

“Please, sir, I want to know what it is to be saved.”

“That's right, my boy; but do you think that I can forgive your sins, or save you?”

“No, sir.”

“But I am a preacher; surely I am the sort of man to do it!”

“No,” said the little fellow, not a bit baffled.

“Then why can Jesus do this, and not any one else?”

“Please, sir, *because He is God.*”

That dear lad was right. He had learned the secret of salvation. Jesus has done what no other can do, *because He is God.* And to-day He can do for a weary, conscience-stricken sinner what is beyond the power of the best and wisest man on earth to do. He can *save* him, **BECAUSE HE IS GOD.**

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 111.—113.

THE spirit of prophecy having given an adequate theme of praise and worship in the preceding Psalms of Book V, we come now most appropriately to three Hallelujah Psalms; the first two of these at any rate have this word for a title, this is proved by the very precise alphabetical structure of both, which requires that the first word of the first line should begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, "aleph." This structure is followed throughout both Psalms, the other letters following in their proper order to form the beginning of each successive line. This parallelism is still more precise, both Psalms have the same number of verses, the corresponding verses have the same number of lines, and each line usually consists of three words. Moreover, similar, sometimes identical, expressions occur in verses 3-9. Perhaps we may learn from this how entirely the character of the saint described in Psalm 112. is derived and controlled by the revelation of God given in Psalm 111. Certainly the harmony thus disclosed is most instructive and quite analogous to the teaching in the First Epistle of John, in which the divine life in the saints proves itself, by its accord with the life of Christ, as it is said, "which thing is true in Him and in you."

The delight in Jehovah's works mentioned in verse 2, which leads to the praise with the whole heart of verse 1, and finds in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation suited spheres for its expression, may well be coveted by us. The word for "assembly" suggests a narrower circle than "congregation," so that the Jewish writer, Aben Ezra, takes them to represent "privately and publicly." This example is corrective of a common tendency to confine our Christian converse to public gatherings and miss the opportunities afforded by private intercourse.

In the third verses of Psalms 111. and 112. we find one of the phrases which is identical, "His righteousness endureth for ever"; this is repeated in verse 9 of 112., and quoted thence in 2 Corinthians 9. 9. The verses which follow in the Epistle make plain how this is brought to pass in the case of the believer. The favour of God in supplying the seed for sowing increased the fruit of their righteousness, so that it was perpetuated in its effects, evoking praise and prayer to God and ardent desire for the welfare of the saints; and this is by no means limited to this life (see Rev. 6. 11 and 19. 8). But not only is an abiding righteousness affirmed of both God and His saints, but as He is gracious and full of compassion, so are they (ver. 4 in both Psalms). Exhortations for the practical display of this are found in Matthew 5. 44 and Ephesians 4. 32.

Verses 4-9 refer to Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham, in delivering the chosen people out of Egypt and establishing them in the land under His authority and giving them in the feasts the means of remembering His wonderful works. That this combination of thought presents some analogy to the Christian's reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper need not be denied, although ancient writers have built more upon it than the words justify. The Psalm closes with a needed reminder of what is always true, that the reverential fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom and obedience ensures a good understanding. On the other hand, many of us know by painful experience how self-will darkens our intelligence in spiritual things.

We should further notice in Psalm 112. how the blessings of the godly man, as here described, are all realized on earth under the merciful ordering of Jehovah, and this is in harmony with

the revelation of God given in the preceding Psalm. In the New Testament He is known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessings of the Christian are in heavenly places in Christ, in whom they are set forth. This contrast is specially evident in verse 8, in which the godly man receives the promise that he shall see his desire on his adversaries, and the desire is plainly not for their blessing. In the present dispensation this order is often reversed, and the enemies of the believer see their desire upon him, and of this the cross is the great and abiding witness. The pathway corresponding to the cross is livingly presented in 1 Corinthians 4. 9-12, and in it the Apostle beseeches the backsliding Corinthians to be imitators of him. In a way made known to faith the First Epistle of Peter reveals a providential government of God in favour of the righteous, and thus, in spite of all suffering, he can say, "God is for us" (Rom. 8.).

A promise of guidance is given in verse 4, similar to that in Psalm 97. 11. In both cases this favour is afforded to those in a certain moral condition, and this is emphasized by the second line of the verse, in which, though the adjectives are in the singular and "upright" is in the plural, there can be no doubt the added qualifications are intended to give needed fullness to the character, "he is gracious, and of tender compassion, and righteous." Such a person is truly an imitator of God (Eph. 5. 1), and can count on guidance in spite of all the surrounding darkness. In the last verse the passing away of the wicked is contrasted with the permanence of the righteous, as in Psalm 1., and here we find described that mental anguish which results from the overthrow of all the purposes formed to oppose God. All such efforts are vain, though for a time, as we have seen, they may appear to prosper; in the end every knee must bow to the

Name of Jesus, and in that we can rejoice.

PSALM 113. As the preceding Psalm described the blessing of the righteous man under the rule of God's kingdom, so this celebrates the inauguration of the kingdom in power: "Blessed be the Name of Jehovah from this time forth and for ever more. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Name of Jehovah be praised" (Mal. 1. 11). Not only is He lifted above all nations, but His glory is above the whole sphere of creation; from thence He humbleth Himself or stoops down—how blessedly was this exhibited in the Saviour!—to take account of things in heaven and on earth. We know it is the same power which wrought in the resurrection of Christ, which takes us out of the place of death to unite us with Him in His exaltation (Eph. 1. 19, etc.); this power in the Psalm is operative to make the very dust and dunghills of humanity to yield companions for princes (*cf.* Ps. 45. 16 and 68. 13). The words are taken from the song of Hannah, which adds a reference to the anointed King. The last verse shows us the barren woman of Isaiah 54. established in her own house, a joyful mother of children, for whom no tears will ever again be shed, for they have been begotten of grace, and have God's law written in their hearts.

It may be interesting to add that according to Jewish ritual Psalm 113. begins the Hallel, which was sung at the three great Festivals, at the Feast of Dedication, and at the New Moons. At the Feast of the Passover it was divided into two parts, the first of which, consisting of Psalms 113. and 114., was sung before the meal, that is, before the second cup was passed round; and the second, consisting of Psalms 115.-118., after the meal, when the fourth cup had been filled. The name "Great Hallel" is given to Psalm 136. (Perowne, taken from Delitzsch.)

Lessons from the Tabernacle.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

No. IV. The Materials.

IN our last article we took up the typical teaching of the metals used in the construction of the Tabernacle. In this present article we will consider the dyes and textiles necessary for the same.

The dyes come first in order, and are three in number:—

(1) Blue; (2) Purple; (3) Scarlet.

The textile materials are two, viz.:—

(1) Fine linen; (2) Goats' hair.

To these must be added skins, viz.:—

(1) Rams' skins; (2) Badgers' skins.

(1) Blue. The azure vault of heaven is the great blue colouring in creation. When no earth-born clouds intercept, nothing is more beautiful, or more impressive in nature, than the colour of the atmosphere, caused by its depth and purity. Blue, then, speaks of that which is *heavenly*. The contrast between the blue heavens and the brown earth, or dun sand of the wilderness in which the Tabernacle was erected, was not so great as the difference between the heavenly of the new creation and the unrelieved blackness of that into which poor fallen man has plunged himself.

And there is nothing which should be so emphasized as the heavenly character of the manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the *gold* in the Tabernacle teaches in a figurative way the deity of the Son of God, *blue* typifies that even in *His manhood* He is essentially the heavenly one. He could speak of Himself when on earth as "the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3. 13). Further, in 1 Corinthians 15. 47 we read, "The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord *from heaven*," and then, evidently viewing Christ as the glorious Head of a new race, we read, "And as is the Heavenly [Christ], such are they also that are heavenly" (ver. 48).

There is nothing more important at this present time than a deep reverent acknowledgment of the character of the Son of God and the maintenance of the fact that, like Him, His own are a heavenly people.

How Christendom has degraded these things, until with many the Son of God is little more than a superior member of Adam's fallen race, while the truth is that as to His life here in the world He stood entirely alone, and in resurrection He is the Head of a new race.

(2) Purple. This is everywhere recognized as the imperial colour. "The Imperial Purple" is a common phrase. The Lord Jesus was attired in a purple robe, in derision of His claims to kinship; and the Apostle John in his vision saw "a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour" (Rev. 17. 4)—figure of the Mystical Babylon the Great. As we shall see in detail later, *purple* is typical of the wide glory of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man, for it is as Son of Man that in a future day He shall take up the government of the world, and shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords—the true Emperor.

(3) Scarlet. This typifies the kingship of the Lord Jesus. *Scarlet* is the kingly colour, as purple is the imperial. He will yet reign over His ancient people as their Messiah and King. What a day will it be for that race, scattered among the nations, downtrodden and despised, with no country, and no king, when they come into their own possessions, and have as their ruler Him, who is the Creator of all things, the most wonderful King ever set upon a throne. Words fail to express the glory of that hour, which will lift that little country to be the head of the nations and not the tail. And events to-day are undoubtedly working towards the consummation of this.

It may be asked why the dyes should come first in order, followed by the textiles. The reason is very apparent. The Lord Jesus was *born* a heavenly Man (blue); *born* Son of Man, with rights to universal reign and homage (purple); *born* King of the Jews (scarlet).

Textiles, on the other hand, are fabrics formed by weaving. So the textiles used in the materials of the tabernacle typify what was the outcome of the blessed life of the Lord Jesus—woven by Him, as it were, in daily grace and patience, during His life. They were two in number.

(1) Fine Linen. One verse signifies the meaning of *fine linen*; "To her [the Lamb's wife, the Church in union] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19. 8). *Fine linen*, then, in the tabernacle typifies practical righteousness, and as it refers in the type to the Lord Jesus, it brings before us in a striking way the perfect righteousness that marked the Lord Jesus in His life down here. What rest of heart it is to view the only perfect One in His life of perfect devotedness to the will of God. This will be presented in fuller detail later on.

(2) Goats' Hair. This is typical of the thorough separation the Lord maintained from the world and its spirit and ways. None were so accessible as He, none so ready to help and bless, and yet none so thoroughly separate from the world in every particular. It will be remembered in proof that the prophet Elijah wore a hairy garment, that John the Baptist wore a garment of camel's hair, and both were characterized by thorough separation. Zechariah 13. 4

speaks of "a rough garment" (Heb., *a garment of hair*, margin) as a symbolic dress of a prophet.

Lastly we come to the skins employed.

- (1) Rams' skins.
- (2) Badgers' skins.

These were employed as coverings for the Tabernacle, and when we come to the happy task of taking up the typical meaning of the curtains and coverings of the Tabernacle we shall endeavour to explain in detail their typical meaning.

(1) Rams' skins. The ram was the animal used in the consecration of the priests, and therefore typifies the full complete consecration of the Lord Jesus. Everything in Him was always and altogether set for the glory of God. Be the cost of the path He trod ever so exacting, even to the length of the cross, He trod the road unswervingly to the very end, even death itself and that of the cross.

"Rams' skins *dyed red*" typifies that His consecration took Him all the way to the cross and the shedding of His precious blood.

(2) Badgers' skins. These formed the outermost covering of the Tabernacle, as the fine linen did the inner. The badgers' skins were what met the gaze of the outside beholder, and seem, in their rugged uncouthness, to typify what the prophet Isaiah put into words: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53. 2).

How affecting it is that the one Object of the Father's deepest joy and delight should be the despised of men. How happy that our rejoicing eyes have been opened to see beauty in Him, who is the altogether lovely.

Christ is Head over all to effectuate by the qualified agency of the church, His body, the heavenly and eternal purposes of God for His own glory and the blessing

of His people, according to the unsearchable, i.e. the unfathomable, the inexhaustible riches of the Christ.

(E. C.)

Answers to Correspondents.

"Gathered in, or unto the Name of the Lord" (Matt. 18. 20).

E. D.—Whether you use our Authorised Version, "gathered together *in* My Name," or other versions which translate the words "gathered together *unto* My Name," the meaning is the same. The Greek word *eis* having the force of, in, unto, or at. And the meaning of the passage is that the Lord's Name is the rallying-point for His saints during His absence, and to them, when gathered together in or unto His Name, He gives His presence, spiritually, of course.

This marks the difference between the present time and the days of the Tabernacle and Temple in Israel. Then the Lord's Name and presence were attached to those material buildings. If any would inquire of the Lord it was to these buildings that they had to go, for from them He gave forth the expression of His character and will. He was represented in the world by the house that bore His Name. Thence the terrible sin of the Jews in debasing the Temple to their own base purposes, and the indignation of the Lord when He "went into the temple of God and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21. 12).

Matthew 18. brings out the great change, the Temple at Jerusalem was

Exodus 12. 8, 9. and John 6. 53.

Glasgow.—The feeding on the Lamb in Exodus 12. is no doubt a striking type of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. It is the soul's realization that being under the judgment of death on account of sin it could have no life apart from the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus by faith we identify ourselves with His death, and

no longer to be the place of the presence of the Lord, nor was His name to be connected with any material building. Instead, "two or three," the smallest possible company, of those addressed in this chapter, gathered together in His name would assuredly have His presence.

The chapter shows who they are to whom the promise is made. In verse 3 they are converted, and become as little children, and from verses 15 to 20 they are called the church or assembly. They are those who have yielded themselves to the Lordship of Christ, knowing Him as their Saviour through grace. The thought in being gathered to His name is that they come together in His interests as His representatives; it is because of this that their prayers are answered by His Father in heaven, and the Lord gives His presence to them.

You speak of some "claiming to be thus gathered." All that we can say is that it is not for those who own the Lord to be making claims in these days, but to see to it earnestly that they bear the character of the Lord, keep His word, and do not deny His name. Let them see to it that they are devoted to His interest and the maintenance of His glory, then they will have no need to make any claim, or fear what may be said about them, for all such when they are gathered together will have His presence without any pretension on their part.

we realize the enormity of sin that made it necessary, and the vastness of the love and grace that made Him willing. It is a side of the truth that needs to be pressed, for many think only of shelter from the judgment of their sins by the blood of Jesus, and forget that His death was also the judgment of God on the life that brought forth the sins.

The Pre-eminence of Jesus.

(JAMES BOYD).

THERE is none, O Lord, like Thee,
 Thou Son of the Father's love;
 Creator of everything I see,
 In the visible sphere surrounding me,
 And of unseen things above.
 There is none—there is none like Thee,
 Thou well-beloved of God!
 In the increate eternity—
 There is none, O Lord, like Thee.

There is none in heaven like Thee:
 Thou hast no rival there.
 Thy might and Thy glorious majesty,
 Thine infinite supremacy,
 The hierarchs declare.
 There is none—there is none like Thee
 Angelic hosts among:
 Head of all principality—
 There is none, O Lord, like Thee.

There is none on earth like Thee,
 Keep silence, princes all!
 Kings, rulers, judges, bend the knee!
 Hear ye, and fear the divine decree!
 Before His footstool fall!
 There is none—there is none like Thee
 Among the sons of men.
 Great is Thy kingly dignity—
 There is none, O Lord, like Thee.

There is none with such wealth of grace
 In the heart's deep fountains stored.
 In the sacred and celestial place,
 By things illustrious and base,
 Be Thy peerless name adored!
 There is none—there is none like Thee
 To creation's utmost end.
 Lord of the heaven, the earth, the sea!
 There is none, O Lord, like Thee.

There is none with a love like Thine,
 So sovereign, tried, and true!
 Which brought Thee down from the
 heights divine,
 To die the death that was justly mine,
 And me to create anew.
 There is none—there is none like Thee,
 My life, my righteousness!
 Whom soon in Thy glory I shall see—
 There is none, O Lord, like Thee.

“Strike Only on the Box.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

WE are all acquainted with that very useful household article, the match that strikes only on the box. Nothing could be more admirable and safe provided the conditions are right, but there are times when it turns out to be most disappointing. It is probable that we have all discovered this. We have found ourselves in possession of these matches when we were needing light and heat and found that they had been put by mistake in a box of the ordinary kind; their special box was missing, and so they failed us utterly.

They remind us of some Christians we have met, if we may be permitted to use our homely illustration; as long as the conditions were such as suited them all was well. If meetings were good and Christian fellowship and friendships hearty they were bright and warm, but when removed from such surroundings they were like our safety matches—cold, useless, and disappointing. Christians, don't be like matches that strike only on the box, but be ready to give forth your light and heat at all times and in all circumstances, and the darker the times and the colder the surroundings be the more anxious to strike and burn and shine for the Lord.

Don't say if your environment were different you could be better Christians; don't plead that it is impossible to witness for Christ in your present position; remember the sufficiency of the Lord, and count upon Him. Don't forget that He has said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15. 5); but remember also that one of His servants could say, “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4. 13). And remember also that there is no reason why we should not have the same wonderful experience as Paul had—except it be our own selfishness and cowardice and unbelief—for Christ is as much at our disposal as He was at his. He is the same for you and us.

To consider Paul as “a pattern to them which should hereafter believe” (1 Tim. 1. 16) is a stimulating occupation. He was not elated in prosperity nor depressed in adversity; he lived in no ruts, and was not dependent upon outward conditions; indeed, the harder the conditions the brighter shone his light. He was troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed (2 Cor. 4. 8, 9). And what lay behind this indomitable energy, this more than human courage, this unconquerable enthusiasm and joy? He knew **GOD**, **THE LIVING GOD**, and he leaned upon the surpassing power of Christ. When in the direst of straits he could sing, “We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in **GOD WHICH RAISETH THE DEAD**. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us” (2 Cor. 1. 9, 10). It is a poor ear, and poorer heart, that cannot catch, and is not moved by the glorious strain of that battle march. Again, when he stood a poor prisoner, without an earthly friend to plead for him, in the presence of the might of Imperial Rome, grown haughty in the magnificence of her power, he encompassed a whole diapason of triumphant praise when he said, “At my first answer no man stood with me. . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (2 Tim. 4. 16, 17). That was the grand finale of the life of the man who knew the excellency of the power of God. He cared not how terrible the surroundings or appalling the earthly prospect to

himself so long as he had the opportunity of making the preaching known to men, and through that preaching of bringing glory to the Lord who loved him so well.

Let us not excuse ourselves by saying Paul was an apostle, for he tells us that he was "less than the least of all saints" and that he was "nothing"—and when we get down there we shall understand things better. Yet he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am . . . not I, but the grace of God, which was with me" (1 Cor. 15. 10). And that grace fails not, the supplies of it are as full as ever: Yes, as full for us as they were for Paul."

"Be instant in season and out of season" was one of this aged warrior's exhortations to the young and timid Timothy. We need it; it means don't be dependent on suitable conditions; indeed there are no unsuitable conditions where lost and dying men are, and while God's grace flows freely.

Don't get into ruts, don't become those who can only exercise themselves when surrounded by like-minded Christians where their activities are scarcely needed; don't be like matches that strike only on the box.

Here are some other words from that same closing exhortation: "Stir up"; "Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord"; "Hold fast"; "Be strong"; "Endure hardness"; "Study to show thyself approved unto God"; "Flee also youthful lusts"; "Preach the Word"; "Watch, thou"; "Endure afflictions." We commend these stirring words, especially to our young brethren, and would ask them to remember that if we are to carry them out God must be greater to us, and nearer and more real, than any circumstance of life. But if the living God is our constant confidence and to witness for Christ our life's purpose we shall have no need to fear any change in this life, and we shall not be like matches that strike only on the box.

An Interesting Instance of God's Work.

THE following letter from a soldier is interesting as showing how God can and does work in the souls of men; and is encouraging also to those who are seeking to win the men for the Lord Jesus in the way in which the recipient of this letter is doing.

"Dear Sir,—You will no doubt be disinclined to reply to this letter when you read the contents, but I felt I must tell you whether you despise me or not.

"Do you remember a Sunday afternoon about two weeks ago in G—— St. S—— stopping a man and asking him to accept a pocket Testament? You wrote his name and regiment in it, and he told you he had been out at the Front, and come back with dysentery; well, I am the man who told you such a pack of lies,

but I could not rest without telling you.

"To-day, the first of a new month (March), I have felt very happy, simply because I have found Jesus Christ and the secret of true happiness. The only thing I am doubtful about is your forgiveness for telling lies to your face. I cannot keep this Testament with my lies staring me in the face every time I open it, so I am enclosing it with the letter. If you could possibly send me another one I should value it above all else, bar a small Bible of my mother's. You have the satisfaction of making one man see his errors in the true light."

Subsequent letters prove the reality of this man's yielding to the Lord, whose conscience was first aroused by his own lies.

The Christ.

(E. CROSS).

PSALM 45. is the climax of the Messiah's glory. Psalms 2. and 8. are His official glories. Psalm 45. is His personal, divine glory. We know that the "Son of Man is coming in His own glory, and His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9. 26). The subject of this Psalm is the glory of His God-head.

In Psalm 2., as Son of God, born in time, He is anointed King on God's holy hill of Zion; His kingdom is a terrestrial kingdom, including all nations and extending to the ends of the earth.

In Psalm 8., as Son of Man, "all things" are made subject to Him. He only is accepted who subjected all things to Him. What the extent of that overlordship is, as implied in that word "all things," is beyond our highest thoughts, embracing, as it does, every created thing in the universe.

Of late we have witnessed the recrudescence of the fateful pride of man striving for the overlordship of this world, the "Welt-politik" he has proposed to himself. It was defeated before. It will be defeated again; and every fresh attempt at it will be defeated, according to the word of Ezekiel 21. 27, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall not be, until He come to whom right judgment belongs; and I will give it unto Him." Man's schemes are bold according to his own ideas. But how microscopic is his forecast of universal power, and how feeble his resources to effectuate it in his own small sphere. "Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus." Still the pride of it is the same as though the dice were played for a higher prize.

The Book of Daniel gives us the history of "the times of the Gentiles," the four great imperial powers in their opposition to the kingdom of God. "The stone cut out without hands" (chap. 2. vers. 34, 45), that smote the image upon his feet, is the same as the

"Son of Man" (chap. 7. ver. 13; Matt. 26. 64); and this is again the "foundation stone" of Isaiah 28. 16, "the stone which the builders rejected," which, when it falls on the final confederacy of these hostile powers, will "grind them to powder" (Matt. 21. 44). They will "become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind shall carry them away" (Dan. 2. 35). "They are quenched as a fire of thorns" (Ps. 118. 12). "They are brought into desolation as in a moment" (Ps. 73. 19).

So much for these visible and material powers acting in opposition to God. But behind these agents are the actuating forces—spiritual powers, in conflict with the Almighty for the supremacy of the universe. In 1 Corinthians 15. the battle-field is enlarged, and we are allowed to see the issues that are at stake in this great final contest. Death is the last enemy. Broken by the resurrection of Christ it will be finally annulled altogether, *καταργείται* (1 Cor. 15. 26; Heb. 2. 14); so that in the new heavens and the new earth "death will exist no more." *καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται*, etc. (Rev. 21. 4).

As a mere matter of the material extent of the heavenly realm let us take as descriptive what Sir R. Ball says in his "Story of the Heavens" when speaking of the Star 61 Cygni. It appears that this star "is one of our nearest neighbours in the heavens." Its distance is "a measurable quantity," calculated by one astronomer at "sixty billions of miles," by another at "forty billions." "There was thus a discrepancy between the two astronomers of twenty billions of miles. Is a discrepancy of twenty billions of miles so very serious? No doubt, viewed by our terrestrial standards, the amount is enormous. It would take about 300,000 years even to count twenty billions—20,000,000,000,000. But the discrepancy is not so very significant when it

has occurred in these colossal magnitudes, the stellar distances."

So much for the stars, more or less resolvable by the telescope, alike "infinite in number as variable in size."

And then come the nebulæ, which would appear to be star clusters, bundles of worlds, still farther sunk in the fathomless abyss of space, beyond the power of the mightiest telescope to resolve. Regarding these he says: "The difficulties of finding the distance of a star are great . . . but the difficulties are much greater and apparently insurmountable in the case of the nebulæ; and no method has as yet been devised that will enable us to solve this mighty problem. Our knowledge on the subject is purely of a negative character. We cannot tell how great the distance may be, but we are able in some cases to assign a minor limit to that distance. Ordinary measures of miles are quite unsuitable for such distances as we shall have to encounter. We must call in a far longer measuring tape, and fortunately we have one well suited for the purpose. The most appropriate unit for such magnitudes is the velocity of light, which sweeps along with the prodigious speed of 180,000 miles a second. Moving at this rate, how long will the journey take from the nebulæ to the earth? It is believed that some of these nebulæ are sunk in space at such an enormous distance that the light takes centuries before it reaches the earth. We see these nebulæ, not as they are now, but as they were centuries ago. At this climax we bid farewell to the nebulæ. We have reached a point where man's intellect begins to fail to yield him any more light, and where his imagination has succumbed in the endeavour to realize even the knowledge he has gained."

Contrast with this what the psalmist says, "He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by names" (Ps. 147. 4). If man is little, God is great.

All this is alike interesting and instructive as the contemplation of it carries the mind to its utmost stretch. But when we come to Psalm 45. it transcends the rest, as the divine transcends the human. We pass here from the creature to the Creator.

In this Psalm the Messiah—and mind it is always the Messiah, the Christ—is set forth in His proper, personal, divine glory. Twice over (vers. 6, 7) He is addressed as "God"—the Son (Heb. 1.), and the structure of the whole Psalm is in accordance therewith. He is peerless among those whom He deigns to make His peers: He is incomparable among those with whom He would compare; and if He assumes the relationships of time He dwells Himself in the bosom of eternity.

Verse 2: "Thou art fairer than the sons of men"—of Adam's sons there is none to compare with Him—the comparative in Hebrew puts the thing compared apart from that with which it is compared. "Fairer," the word is in a peculiar form, meaning to be "very beautifully formed" (*Fuerst*).

"Therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever": there is no term to it. Every conceivable excellency belongs to Him in its fulness—majesty and meekness, grace and glory, truth and righteousness, victory to uphold the right and crush the wrong, power to destroy the works of the devil and to beget after His own likeness in a world of wonders what will abide for the good pleasure and the rest of God for ever.

This is the Messiah, the Christ Jesus, of whom it is written, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure." The limitations of Psalms 2. and 8. are defined: the former is His terrestrial kingdom; the latter His mediatorial reign *until* He has subdued all things to His rule. But in Psalm 45. all is without limit, eternal.

Verse 6: "Thy throne, O God, is for

ever and ever." "The strongest possible terms are here used to denote absolute eternity" (*Speaker's Com. in l.*)

Verse 17: "I will make Thy name to be remembered throughout all generations; therefore shall the peoples praise Thee for ever and ever." The whole framework of the Psalm is set in what is eternal.

Verse 3: "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, Mighty One—gibbor—in Thy majesty and Thy splendour." The same word occurs in Isaiah 9. 6 combined with "el," mighty God, "gibbor-el." Apparently cognate with this word "gibbor" is the Latin "vir"; whence our word "virile" = all that makes for what is forceful, masculine, powerful in man. Such is the Christ—"God manifest in flesh."

We have then in this Psalm set forth the proper divine glory of the Messiah, the resource of His people and the sustainer of their faith in the most distressing period of their history. Look at their sufferings in the preceding Psalms. Psalm 42. 3: "My tears have been my meat day and night, while the continual taunt is flung at me, Where is now thy God?" Compare with this Matthew 27. 39-44. Again, Psalm 44. 19: "Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death. . . . Yea, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter."

What a glorious answer to all this is Psalm 45. Their Messiah is none less than God Himself—very God—with all that that involves in majesty and delivering power, and, best of all, in love unchangeable, unchanged. Jerusalem the desolate, the sorrowful, will be "Jerusalem the golden." She who

sits forsaken, as a widow, and full of sighs will, in the day when, weaned from her former ways, she turns to Him from whom she has "deeply revolted" (Isa. 31. 6), find her name engraven on His heart (Exod. 28. 21), and on the palms of His hands (Isa. 49. 16). No longer called a widow, desolate and forsaken, "she shall be called Hephzibah, and her land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in her, and her land shall be married" (Isa. 62. 4). She will be displayed in that day in glory suitable to His own estate, the cynosure of those who will be called to the marriage supper of the King (*cf. Rev. 19. 1-10*).

Notice now how in the following Psalms all the stress is laid on the fact of "God" Himself.

Psalm 46—Luther's Psalm—opens with "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." So again, all through the Psalm, "the God of Jacob is our refuge": while Psalm 47. celebrates the "God of Abraham" (ver. 9), and Psalm 48. celebrates the beauty and the joy of "the city of our God" (ver. 8). "For this is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide until death" (ver. 14). Truly "the conies are a feeble folk, but they make their houses in the rocks" (Prov. 30. 26; Ps. 106. 18).

And while this Psalm refers primarily to Jerusalem and the virgin cities in the country around that will attend as bridesmaids at the day of her crowning joy, it is the privilege of faith, in the same Spirit at all times (2 Cor. 4. 13), to find in the hour of deepest trial its refuge and its hope, through Christ, in God. And "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

"With smiles of peace and looks of love
Light in our dwellings we may make,
Bid kind good-humour brighten there
And still do all for Jesus sake."

“My Infirmary”—His Wonders.

TH**ERE** are, we believe, everywhere, earnest young Christians, whose souls “pant after God and holiness as the hart panteth after the water brooks.” They feel instinctively the evil of the world and shrink from it; they are conscious that its best prizes are disappointing and dead things, and they “thirst for God—THE LIVING GOD.” Yet with all their thirsting they have not yet reached their desire. They have their seasons of joy in the contemplation of the grace of God towards them, and the thought of the love of Jesus often bows them on their knees in adoration before Him; but no sooner have they determined that these are the things that their souls must pursue than they are beset by a strange spiritual inertia; there is that within them that refuses to rise according to the aspirations of their souls to the things above; they find themselves like birds with clipped or broken wings, only able to flutter fitfully and feebly towards the goal of their desire, and “tears are their meat day and night.” They find that the old evil within them bestirs itself with a giant’s strength and exercises a tyranny over them which makes them feel the most abject of slaves, so that they have even said unto God, “Why hast Thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” And worst of all they feel that they are so evil, so despicable, that if the Lord did cast them off for ever they could not complain, for nothing else than this do they merit. And yet, thank God, in this sorrowful experience they have a sense of His goodness which makes them cling to Him, and this saves them from despair, while at the same time it is the pledge of a glorious deliverance from the slough in which they are floundering.

It often happens that the personal experience of one who is, or has, passed through such exercise as this proves helpful to others in a similar condition

of soul, and for this reason we publish the following letters, with the writer’s permission.

“I have had such a desire these last few days to write to you as the Lord’s servant to ask help in some of my spiritual difficulties. I have been wavering in my own mind as to whether I should write or not, but it does seem pressed upon me, and it would be a relief just to write and to ask you to pray earnestly for me.

“I started already to write, and to try to put into words the exercise and conflict I have been going through, but I found it simply impossible—and I do not suppose it would be at all profitable. What I think is really the cause of all the distress is that ‘the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit.’ But it seems to me as if I could not get a firm hold of anything, as if I could not lay a firm hold on the faith, but that an awful power was dragging it away from me. It is just as if every power of evil was set against me to keep me from Christ. I have been praying that I might know Him as a living Reality to my soul, and I do desire with all my heart to tread a firm upward path, and I know that I could bear contempt if I just had the sense of the presence of the Lord with me. But I seem to be finding out in my own heart unsuspected pride, and anger and rebellion seems to rise up so quickly with no power to overcome it. It is a strange, hateful history—and I feel that I know all you can tell me as to it being ended in the cross of Christ, but that is just what I want to know practically every moment. I do want to be fully delivered from looking within, and to have my eye fixed on Christ. I am terribly ashamed to have to confess all this, because I thought I had really got out of Romans 7. and into Romans 8. I am the more ashamed of it too when I think of the work that I have taken up for the Lord, but I

think it is really since I started the class that the conflict has become so fierce, and it is very specially for the sake of the class that I do desire to be brought out of it all, brighter for Christ than ever before.

“But what I do want for myself is to be made willing to surrender entirely to Christ. I have really said, and I meant it, ‘Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee,’ but what I want is the power to act on that from moment to moment. I would value, more than I can tell, your earnest prayers for me (James 5. 16).

“I have been unable to get my regular hour in the mornings for prayer and reading of God’s Word, as I used to, having been run down in health, but I would like, if the Lord would grant me the health and the perseverance, to get that hour steadily, to hear His voice alone in the mornings, because there are so many voices all around me that lately I have just been filled with terror sometimes. But I do desire to-day to set my *whole* heart to seek Him, and I feel if I just got Him everything would fall into its right place. I do hope I have not wearied you, but I know that your joy is to strengthen others in their faith in the Lord Jesus, and I know that you will pray for me.”

An experience such as this letter describes is deeply humiliating and for the time being very distressing, and yet it is necessary if the soul is to be established in the full liberty of grace. It is a time in which Satan sifts the soul in hope of destroying its faith, but God turns the sifting wholly for our blessing, and lessons are learnt in the process that are of lasting value. *Self decreases* in the estimation as the depths of evil in it are uncovered and *Christ increases* as His goodness and grace are contrasted with it all. Our absolute helplessness in the conflict with evil also becomes evident, and our entire dependence for deliverance upon some person or power outside ourselves is at last acknow-

ledged. It is not, we believe, “the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,” as our correspondent supposes, but the learning that SELF is not a suitable and satisfying object upon which to expend time and thought, that self-occupation and self-analysis only lead to misery; that an object outside of self is needed, and that object is CHRIST. And that a power also that is not natural to us can only deliver us from being self-centred and occupy us constantly with Christ, and that power is the HOLY GHOST, who dwells within us if we have believed the gospel.

In answering our correspondent we suggested the prayerful study of Psalm 77., pointing out the great change that takes place in verse 10, and in reply we received the following letter:

“This is the first opportunity I have had of writing to thank you for your very kind letter, which has been a great help to me. The moment I wrote to you seemed to be the turning-point, and before ever your letter came I had indeed judged that it was MY *Infirmity*, and had set my heart to seek the Lord. I have indeed found Him a wonderful spring of joy, a fountain of living waters. My heart has been simply bubbling over with joy, and last Lord’s Day I enjoyed the remembrance of the Lord in His death, in a deeper and fuller way than I think I ever have done in my life. His presence was so real, and every prayer and every word of each hymn seemed so true, and made Him more and more precious. Last night, at the class, I could not help telling them about it, and if it only makes some of them long to participate in the same joy, which is for them as much as for any of the Lord’s little ones, it will have been well worth suffering for. If only God would graciously open their eyes to see beauty in His beloved Son I know they would not rest till they too were seated at His table enjoying His feast of love. It is something worth praying for.

“I had never before noticed the wonderful truth hidden in Psalm 77. Scripture is so marvellous, and to find the truth of Romans 7. and 8. so condensed in one of the Psalms confirms one more and more as to its divine authorship. I long to study it more and more diligently and through it to know the Living Word—‘my wondrous, blessed Saviour.’

“I know you will rejoice with me that I can now write to you so joyfully, and I thank you for your kindness and faithfulness in writing me as you did.

“I send a summary of the Psalm.

PSALM 77.

Self-Occupation.

1. MY Trouble (v. 2).
2. MY Sore (v. 2).
3. MY Soul (v. 2).
4. MY Spirit (v. 3).
5. MINE Eyes (v. 4).
6. MY Song (v. 6).
7. MINE own Heart (v. 6).

Occupation with Christ.

1. THY Wonders (v. 11).
2. THY Work (v. 12).
3. THY Doings (v. 12).
4. THY Strength (v. 14).
5. THINE Arm (v. 15).
6. THY Way (v. 19).
7. THY Footsteps (v. 19).

“Turning-point in verse 10:—

“This is MY Infirmity, BUT I will remember the—*Most High.*”

In answer to our suggestion that the letters might be helpful to some of our readers we received the following permission to use them.

“It was an unexpected pleasure to get your short note yesterday. If the summary of Psalm 77. could be of any help to a soul in distress such as was mine, I am sure it must be only right to make use of it. As to the two letters, if you think they too might be useful as simply giving expression to soul exercise (which many young believers may be passing through at this time, without being able to understand, and which they may think peculiar to themselves alone) you are very welcome to them. No human friend knows anything of their having been written, so that they would not be recognized by any one. I know what help I have got from papers on personal experience in some of the magazines. It is wonderful how the Lord gives us a little bit here and there right along our pathway—just like the watchful Shepherd guarding the sheep on every side, constantly on the watch to keep them in that narrow pathway in which alone they are safe. So perhaps He wants this little bit for one of ‘the thousands of God’s sheep’; and after all we are only giving back what we have received—only giving back of His own.”

The Spirit.

IT is eternal life to know the Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17. 3). Yet without the Spirit, and a divine Spirit, we could have no communion and no knowledge. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us: our bodies are His temples (1 Cor. 6. 19). He works in us, leading us objectively to the Father and the Son. God dwells in us, and by the Spirit we know the Son is in the Father, a divine Person

thereby; we know we are in Him, and He in us. And in Romans 8. we find Christ and the Spirit in this respect identified. The Holy Ghost is a divine Person, and in the unity of the Godhead adored and worshipped. He is the immediate agent of all that God does—immediate to the effects. But His place in the divine ways is not in the same way objective—as divine and as personal, but not in God’s ways so objective.

(J.N.D.)

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 2.

(H. J. VINE).

2. The New Covenant Prophet.

JEREMIAH has been styled "The Weeping Prophet." He has also been called "The Prophet of Sorrow." This latter is scarcely just, for beyond the night of sorrow he points to the glad-some dawning of the day of Christ's glory. More correctly, he has been called "The Tender-hearted Prophet"; but he is pre-eminently "*The New Covenant Prophet.*" Like a wealthy store embedded in the very centre of his book is discovered the resplendent truth of the New Covenant. There its far-reaching rays glow and glisten in chapter 31.; amidst such strange surroundings that even the most diligent students of Scripture seem unable to sound their divine depths. It shows us the rich resource of God triumphing in grace when man failed in responsibility.

The spiritual opulence of that one section alone is abundant enough to encourage us to search diligently. From its generous treasure we find the Holy Spirit taking to embellish the pages of the precious gospels, and epistles too, of the New Testament. There amidst suited surroundings we find its glorious truths shining at the very centre of the silver picture of redemption. The grace and glory of this New Covenant is shown beaming now, with attractive lustre, in our living Lord, the Man Christ Jesus. Jeremiah is supremely the New Covenant Prophet.

Why has this book been so neglected? Both as to the present preaching of the gospel, and also as to the order of the assembly, its truth is given a place of first importance by the Spirit in the Epistles of Paul, as well as in the gospels! We are shown in the former that the gospel carries *the ministry of the New Covenant* of which Jeremiah spoke. We are shown too that when together in assembly, to take the Lord's Supper, we drink *The Cup of the New Covenant.* Indeed all our blessing is based upon

the blood of Christ, which is the blood of the New Covenant. Our blessed Lord is the Surety of it, and the Mediator of it also; whilst He sums up the covenant itself in His own Person: securing for it an eternal character; so that it becomes the everlasting covenant. How happy should they be who through faith are brought into its unalterable blessings now.

Jeremiah uses the expression "covenant" twenty-five times. His first use of the word is both interesting and instructive. It is found in chapter 3. verse 16, where he speaks of "*The Ark of the Covenant.*" How significant are his words about this "Ark"; as he sees the living glory and covenant coming in Christ with surpassing splendour, he says, "*Neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it!*" It is outshone by a greater glory! This is most helpful for those who cleave to the living Lord to-day; for there are many who are ensnared in superstition and darkness by vague and mysterious teaching as to "The Ark." I myself have met some such in great distress of mind. We have the living Christ; and we are to follow Him. The last mention of "covenant" is in chapter 50. 5. There Babylon is judged; and in true sincerity, the children of Israel and Judah together seek the Lord their God, to be joined to Him in "an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten." This is abiding. That which is said concerning the setting aside of "the Ark of the Covenant" involves the bringing in of "*the new thing*" of chapter 31. 22; when the old order will be completely outshone by the glory of the new. Jewish scholars have been perplexed by this verse (3. 16). They see in it the complete subversion of all they have boasted in. Until they turn to our Lord Jesus Christ, the explanation of it all, their perplexities will not lessen, but increase more and more.

It is needful to notice a striking fact:

which took place doubtless under God's gracious guidance in Jeremiah's time. A fact which explains the deep moral tone and the frequent use made of the truth and spirit of Deuteronomy, in Jeremiah's ministry. This fact is recorded in 2 Kings 22. 8 thus: "Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." (Hilkiah is mentioned in Jeremiah 1. 1. Jeremiah was therefore of priestly distinction and dignity, though fulfilling the prophetic office). Now this Book of the Covenant certainly gave character to Jeremiah's ministry. It showed up in glaring colours the inward state of God's people, alongside of the holy claims of God's majesty. This would cause great pain to his tender heart. He saw the *outward* revival at that time, in Josiah's reign; but he knew the lack of *inward* reality. He recognized, consequently, that like fruit which is fresh and blooming on the outside, but unsound at the core, speedy corruption must swiftly spread over all. And thus it came to pass, "They grow," he says to the Lord, "*yea, they bring forth fruit: Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins*" (12. 2). Outward departure must inevitably follow this inward unreality.

Jeremiah's quotations and citations from the *Book of the Covenant* are too many to mention. Notice a few from Deuteronomy to illustrate. (*Compare 2. 6 and Deut. 32. 10; 5. 15 and 28. 49, etc.; 7. 33 and 28. 26; 11. 3 and 27. 26; 11. 4 and 4. 20, and so on. Notice "Covenant of the Lord," Jer. 22. 8-9 and Deut. 29. 24-26).*

Jeremiah too is the only prophet who refers to the "*token of the covenant*"—to "*circumcision.*" After the Book of Joshua the first mention in the Old Testament is in Jeremiah 4. 4; and the last in the Old Testament is in Jeremiah 9. 25. The Holy Spirit in Romans 2. 28, 29 quotes the former, to emphasize the inward reality necessary for the *true Jew*. This again is entirely

in accord with the truth found in Jeremiah.

We thus see that it was clearly the people's state, and God's claims as seen in the *Book of the Covenant*, which weighed with Jeremiah. He has no vision of the fiery Seraphim and the glory of the Lord like Isaiah; no sight of the glorious Cherubim and the throne of majesty like Ezekiel; no miraculous interventions or deliverance like Daniel. The word of the Lord and the truth sustain him, in the face of the waywardness of the people, to whom he spoke for "the exaltation of the Lord as the New Covenant and Prophet." With him it is the Lord and the state of the people, revealed by the book which expresses the Lord's mind in regard to this.

3. Divine Names and Titles.

Like every real servant of the Lord, Jeremiah laboured in the consciousness that there was one true God. The truth of Deuteronomy 6. 4 was laid deep within him. "*Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.*" He knew Him. Using many names and titles to speak of Him, singular and plural too, it is most interesting and instructive to notice the same. Very precious it is also to remark the intimate way in which our blessed God allows Jeremiah to speak to and of Him. This is often found with true servants of God, and we do not find it condemned, but rather encouraged, in a right way, of course.

The name "*Jehovah*" is used over six hundred times; as if he would hold the people by that name of relationship and covenant. And notwithstanding their declension, he speaks of "*Jehovah Elohim*" over fifty times; clinging to the fact that Jehovah was their one true God.

"*Elohim*" is used alone eighteen times; and "*Jehovah Elohim of hosts*" thirty times; whereas "*Jehovah of hosts*" is used by him over forty times. In keeping with his tender thoughts,

Jeremiah but once speaks of God as "*The Great and Mighty El*"; and just once likewise of "*The Mighty and Terrible One*." Twice he calls Him "*The Living God*" = "*The Living Triune God*" (plur.); and once only "*The True God*" = "*The God of Truth*." In various ways, as "*King of Nations*" (10. 7); and once as "*Jehovah Elohim of all flesh*"—a very comprehensive name indeed.

For Israel, in a unique way, Jeremiah beautifully and touchingly speaks of Him as "*The Fountain of Living Waters*," from whom alone comes true vitality and freshness; as "*The Hope of Israel*"; and again as "*The Saviour of Israel*"; and then as their Stay He is "*The Confidence of Israel*," and "*The Holy One of Israel*." For their hearts, "*The Portion of Jacob*." Looking on to His coming, He is "*Their Redeemer*"; and as after the flesh, of the house of David, "*A Righteous Branch*."

For his own heart Jeremiah delights in speaking of the Lord in language that shows how entirely his experience comports with the meaning of his own name—"Exaltation of the Lord." The sweet and fragrant names he uses in this intimate connection breathe out to us the preciousness and the support he found in Him amidst his feebleness and frequent trials. "*My Strength*";

"*My Fortress*." These tell us eloquently where his weakness reclined. "*My Hope*"; "*My Praise*" How beautifully we can see here the secret spring of his heart's confidence; and also the discovered Source of satisfaction and song. When all hope seemed gone for Israel, and there was nothing praiseworthy in the nation, the Lord Himself becomes his "*Hope*" and his "*Praise*."

Just another feature before leaving this subject. Twice in this book a name is found which is often quoted and sung about, because of the rich and everlasting blessedness involved in it for the believer. It is "*Jehovah Tzidkenu*" = "*The Lord our righteousness*." There is great instruction in the way it is twice used. In the day of Christ's glory it is said first, "HE shall be called Jehovah Tzidkenu"; referring to the same period, it is next said of Jerusalem, Christ's earthly metropolis bride and city, "SHE shall be called Jehovah Tzidkenu" (23. 6 and 33. 16). She takes character from Him. "The woman is the glory of the man." She will shine in His brightness and beauty. In this again we see the exaltation of the Lord. It is the same in principle for the assembly now; and for the individual too, as is often sung:

"No refuge, no safety, in self could I see;
'Jehovah Tzidkenu' my Saviour must be."

Christian Fellowship.

CHRISTIAN fellowship has its very roots in the death of Christ, and it may be rightly called the fellowship of the Lord's death. It is true that it embraces in its range the things that "God hath prepared for them that love Him," things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and that have never entered into the heart of man, but things which He hath revealed unto us by His spirit (1 Cor. 2. 9, 10), but in its relation to this world and to sin and the flesh it is the fellowship of the Lord's

death. Baptism makes this plain, for "as many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus have been baptized unto His death" (Rom. 6. 3, R.V.), and the Lord's death stands forward as one of the most prominent features of the Corinthian Epistle, the Epistle that treats so largely the subject of Christian fellowship. And in the death of Christ the depths of God's heart have been revealed and the perfect love of Jesus told out.

The Order of the Pauline Epistles.

IT would appear as though there had been divine supervision in regard to the order in which the books of the Bible are placed in our Authorised Version. Take the nine general epistles of Paul as an example.

(A). ROMANS unfolds the subject of righteousness and declares the way by which God justifies the ungodly according to His own inviolable and eternal justice. Having been put into right relations with God in this divine way, and having received the Holy Spirit, which is the seal of it, the next important matter is to understand in what relationship we stand with those who have been brought into the same place of blessing.

(B). 1 CORINTHIANS deals with this question. It brings out the truth of Christian fellowship, lays down great principles for its maintenance, shows how all believers have been brought into a divine unity, being baptized into one body by the Holy Ghost. Things having been adjusted in the Christian circle, the next question of importance is our testimony before, and our relationship to the world.

(C). 2 CORINTHIANS takes up this. It really unfolds for us what is the true Christian character. The light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus has shone into our hearts, that it might shine out again in the darkness around. The Christian is here said to be an epistle of Christ, *known and read of all men*, and even a superficial study of this epistle will reveal many special traits of God's character coming to light either in the Apostle Paul or in the saints.

These three epistles might be briefly summed up as (1) Right with God; (2) Right with the brethren; (3) Right before the world; or, (1) The Christian's righteousness; (2) The Christian's fellowship; (3) The Christian's character. The epistles that follow fall each into its place with these first three, and may

be spoken of in a general way as confirming or more fully unfolding and extending the truths of the first three.

(A). GALATIANS, though evidently written before Romans, is a treatise in defence of the truth laid down so blessedly in the larger epistle.

(B). EPHESIANS unfolds the eternal purposes of God in regard to that assembly which is the body of Christ and the habitation of God, the great principles for the conduct of which here below are laid down in 1 Corinthians.

(C). PHILIPPIANS brings out very clearly the true experience and character of the saints and servants of God on earth. We see in chapter 1. the object of the Christian life—Christ's glory; in chapter 2. the pattern for the Christian life—Christ in humiliation; in chapter 3. the energy and goal of the Christian life—Christ in glory; in chapter 4. the superiority of the Christian life to all circumstances through Christ our strength.

(A). COLOSSIANS declares how God will reconcile all things to Himself by Christ, and how we who were once alienated and enemies are now reconciled, and here it links on with Romans, and brings afresh before the soul the hope laid up for us in heaven, which was first revealed to us in the gospel in Romans. Paul is also here a minister of the mystery, but there would have been no hearts to receive this ministry but for the former ministry which made souls subject to the will of God, so Paul links up his labours in this epistle with the kingdom of God (chap. 4. 11) which Romans unfolds.

(B). 1 THESSALONIANS gives to us the translation of the assembly to heaven at the coming of the Lord.

(C). 2 THESSALONIANS describes God's vengeance upon the world that has refused the gospel preached by the lips and lives of His saints and servants in it.

(J. T. M.)

Lessons from the Tabernacle.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

No. V. Typical Meaning of the Materials Used.

“Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate” (Ex. 25. 6, 7).

WE complete now the list of the materials enumerated in Exodus 25. 3-7. Hitherto the materials have all distinctly referred to Christ, and were used in the actual construction of the tabernacle. The materials under consideration now differ in this respect, that they were used in the *service* and not in the construction of the tabernacle.

Oil is clearly a type of the Holy Spirit. It was called the anointing oil. The Spirit as given to the believers is called “the anointing.” “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you” (1 John 2. 27).

Three classes were anointed in the Old Testament—prophets, priests, and kings. Oil was poured on their heads. In the case of David the connection between the outward symbol of anointing and the inward reality of the Holy Ghost are clearly brought out. “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16. 13).

Then in the scripture already quoted (1 John 2. 27) the connection between the anointing and the intelligence of the anointed is very marked: “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.” Man, as man, cannot teach his fellow of the things of God. Man, as a vessel of the Holy Ghost, can be used as a gracious *channel*, but the *source* of the teaching is always and ever the Holy Ghost.

In the tabernacle oil was for the light and for anointing oil. Thus we are taught that there is no true light, no divine illumination, no spiritual teaching, but by the Holy Ghost. There was no light of sun by day or moon by night

in the heavenly curtained tabernacle. The *only* light that made things visible was that which came from the seven-branched lamp fed by the oil.

And no man saw the light but the anointed priests who served in the tabernacle, showing that the believer must have the Holy Spirit in order to be able to receive the light and teaching the Spirit gives.

But here we must carefully safeguard ourselves. The Holy Spirit alone uses the Scriptures for the purpose of teaching, light and illumination. They give us the *whole* revelation of God, and there is no revelation outside of them. The man of God may only be “thoroughly furnished” (2 Tim. 3. 17) by them.

Just this morning have I got a letter, stating that a certain truth (?) must be received by “an inbreathed conviction.” Now this is most unsatisfactory and highly dangerous, and opens the way for the vagaries of every unbalanced mind to advance views outside of Scripture revelation. This must be stoutly resisted.

The Scriptures are by divine inspiration, are complete, and outside of them the Holy Spirit never goes. Truth taught by Him will ever be found in “the Scripture of truth.”

And, moreover, it is only as the believer is under the power of the anointing that he can receive truth in a divine way. We must seek that spirit of prayerful dependence, and refuse both the slowness and brilliance of mere intellect. The slowness of intellect leads Christians into the most foolish notions; its brilliance into as foolish, and infinitely more dangerous because the possessor of a brilliant intellect is liable to influence others. The Holy Spirit is able to quicken a

dull mind, as He is able to restrain a brilliant one. May He have His way with each one of us.

Spices for the Anointing Oil.

We come now to the spices for the anointing oil and for sweet incense. They typify all the blessed graces of the Lord Jesus, as shown forth in His life down here.

If the believer receives the Holy Spirit, it is His joy to reproduce the graces in him which characterized the Lord Jesus. Indeed in Romans 8. 9 the indwelling Holy Spirit is spoken of as "the Spirit of Christ." It is the mark of the indwelt believer that he is Christlike. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" — all graces fully exhibited by our blessed Lord — are the fruit of the Spirit and illustrate the spices for the anointing oil.

Then further, they were to be used for sweet incense. Sweet incense was used in the approach to God in worship, and spoke only of Christ. Nothing of ourselves can we present to God. But the believer is privileged to present Christ to God. Here the spices speak not of the production of Christ in the believer as is symbolized when they are used in connection with the anointing oil, but of the personal graces and beauties of Christ as He is the theme of

worship before God. How little we know, alas! of all this.

The Precious Stones.

Only one of these is designated by name, viz. the onyx. Job, speaking of wisdom, bursts out in admiration, "It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the *precious* onyx, or the sapphire" (Job 28. 16).

What the exact significance of onyx is we know not. It was the gem used exclusively in the construction of the two shoulder pieces of the High Priest, on which the names of the twelve tribes were inscribed, and was one of the precious gems used in the breastplate.

Gems, in the connection in which they are used, show forth the preciousness of God's people to Him, and of the place they have in the affections of Christ in connection with His ceaseless ministry of representing them before God as their great High Priest. But more of this when we come to the consideration in detail of the garments of the High Priest. The simple thought, however, of how dear the believer is to Christ, known to Him, loved by Him, cared for by Him in all His power and wisdom; ministered to by Him in all the depressing vicissitudes of the wilderness journey, may be used of God to cheer many a saint of His in these trying times.

Disputation.

A FATAL hindrance to a heavenly walk and conversation is our too frequent disputes. A disputatious spirit is a sure sign of an unsanctified spirit. They are usually men who are least acquainted with the heavenly life who are most violent disputers about the circumstantiality of religion. Yea, though you were sure that your opinions were true, yet when the chiefest of your zeal is turned to these things the life of grace soon decays within. (*R. Baxter.*)

Reconciliation (Matthew 5. 23, 24).

WE must, before every communion especially, remember what differences or jealousies are between us and any one else, and recompose all such disunions, and cause right understandings between each other. Offering to satisfy whom we have injured and to forgive those who have injured us.

(*Jeremy Taylor.*)

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—II.

(JAMES GREEN).

Parables of the Sower, and the Wheat and Tares.—Matthew 13.

REFUSED and rejected by the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, the Lord Jesus turned from the prophetic work of announcing blessing for His people Israel, to whom He had been a servant from His youth, and became a husbandman (Zech. 13. 5). Sitting by the sea, symbolic of the Gentile nations, He uttered His first parable: "Behold a sower went forth to sow." He was the Sower, the seed which He sowed was the Word of God, and His object in sowing was to produce that which He had not found in Israel, viz. a generation whose distinguishing mark was obedience to the will of God. Such would be the subjects of a kingdom which would be brought about not by the outward display of power, but by the secret of life in the sown seed. How suitable is the natural parallel to the spiritual reality. The seed scattered, apparently lost, yet it lives; the germination of a seed is a hidden mystery. As the Lord said (Mark 4. 26, 27): "The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how." The growth of the seed is dependent in the first case upon its quality, secondly upon the character of the ground upon which it falls. The difference of result produced by the message of grace sown world-wide by the Divine Sower was due not to any varying quality in the seed, for it was the good word of God, but to the manner of its reception. Falling here by the wayside, on those who were indifferent to it; there on the stony ground, on those whose interest was aroused for a time, but where it soon withered away. Again, amongst the thorns, upon those who would like to have it along with their other matters, only to find that the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of these other things choked it; and in

neither of these cases was the fruit produced which the sower desired. Lastly there was the good soil, that had come under the ploughshare and the harrow, and here the seed could grow up unto perfection. What a story is here presented of the natural heart in the presence of Divine grace and the need of Divine preparation that the soil may receive the good seed. Even then in result some bring forth thirty, some sixty, some a hundred-fold, showing that the work of grace is here viewed in connection with the responsibility of the receiver of it. Then there is also an adversary to this work; the wicked one is on the alert, ever ready to catch away the seed as soon as it is sown. The principle of this parable applies whenever the word of God is listened to either by sinners or saints; each listens according to one of these four ways, and in each case the result is according to the measure of the faith and exercise of soul in which it is received.

The parable of the sower is introductory to the series which follow, and shows the way the kingdom in its present form is brought to pass. The Lord pointed out to His hearers that if they perceived not this parable, how could they know all parables (Mark 4. 13). Unless this new departure connected with the rejection of the Son of Man is understood, the ways and silence of God during the absence of Christ remains an unsolved problem. But once let it be grasped that by the word "sown" God is producing something un contemplated by the Old Testament prophets, and not having as its object the establishment of a world-kingdom in display, all becomes clear to the soul. Then the parables that follow instead of blinding eyes that profess to see and closing ears that boast of hearing, become explanatory of the

state of things in this world and the present activity and purpose of God. The six parables that follow in Matthew 13. are also key parables, enabling one instructed in them to understand the old things prophesied of the coming kingdom in glory, and the new things relating to the present mystery or condition of the kingdom apart from the presence of the King. Three of these parables present the exterior appearance of the kingdom of the heavens, these were uttered in the hearing of all; the next three show its internal secrets, and were told only to those who had ears to hear.

In the parable of the wheat and tares (darnel) is shown the mingled condition of good and evil that would characterize the sphere that professed to own the authority of the Lord. The good having its source in the seed sown by the Son of Man, the evil produced by the sowing of the enemy, the devil. The indolence of those who should have watched (*cf.* Acts 20. 28-31) gave the opportunity for the production of those who like the darnel and the wheat were difficult to distinguish outwardly, but being the children of the wicked one had no part with the children of the kingdom. This having taken place, was any remedy possible? No, the failure must remain. The servants would not be able rightly to discern the one from the other, neither would the authority be given to pull out the tares, for the field being the world this would involve putting them out of it. This must not be confounded with that which is incumbent upon any company of Christians to put away from among themselves a wicked person (1 Cor. 5.). The history of the Middle Ages furnishes only too sad an example of the attempt to extirpate heretics from the world, resulting as it did in the persecution to death of God's saints. No, the mixed condition of that which is called Christendom, viz. Christ's kingdom, must continue until the end. It is indeed a reproach to His name, and many seeing this are still hoping to better it, and purge it by various means. But no scribe instructed

by our Lord's words can expect otherwise than that it will grow worse and worse, until in the time of harvest it shall be taken in hand by its Sovereign Lord, who by His angels will bind the tares in bundles to burn them, and gather the wheat into His garner. "Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them": it is in the time of harvest and not at the immediate end that this action takes place. That we have drawn near in these days to the completion of the age cannot be doubted. The seed sown by the enemy is ripening, and from the hearts of the children of the kingdom rises the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." And may it not well be that the present deadly strife amongst so-called Christian nations, taking place indeed in those countries where the gospel has borne most fruit, will result in the binding of the tares into bundles, that is the placing of the nations together in view of the judgments of the last days. It will be upon a reconstituted Europe, the federation of the ten kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire that the severest punishment will fall, but the wheat will be gathered into the garner. The wheat includes all that is good in the kingdom of the heavens, not distinguishing the church from the Jewish remnant, and the garner the places assigned in the counsel of God. Some to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, others to be in the kingdom of the Son of Man out of which He shall have purged all things that offend and them which do iniquity. This parable, like that of the sower, is closed by the words, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," and well is the exhortation needed lest our thoughts should be diverted to something which is not the intention of the Lord of the harvest. Instead of being occupied with the tares or seeking to improve the mingled condition of that which bears His name, He would have us labourers together with Him, seeking the growth of the wheat, the result of His own husbandry, which shall presently be seen to His praise in the glory of His coming day.

About Angels.

(H. P. BARKER.)

(The subject of Angels and their activities has lately been brought into prominence by the remarkable stories told by soldiers who declare that they saw heavenly guardians during the memorable retreat from Mons, and that the British army benefited by their intervention. It will be well to turn to the Word of God, our only sure guide, content to abide by its decisions and its instruction. The object of this paper, written in the form of a dialogue, is to assist the reader in doing this.)

Did Angels appear during the Retreat from Mons?

A. I suppose there is no doubt as to the reliability of the many witnesses who report the appearance of the angels?

B. They seem for the most part to be level-headed, trustworthy men, whose evidence would be received without hesitation if they were summoned as witnesses in any court of law. There are officers, non-commissioned officers, and men who declare that they saw angels during the retreat.

A. So I am told. I have never come into personal contact with such, however. Can you indicate any particular individual whose testimony may be taken as a sample?

B. Take the testimony of Corporal Rogers, of the Essex Regiment. It was given at Preston, on February 20th, 1916, before a large audience. A reporter that was present says that "he spoke in simple, soldier fashion, and the large audience was evidently impressed with his sincerity." The corporal's testimony was as follows:

"It is an absolute fact that the angels came to the assistance of the British forces at a critical period of the Mons retreat on August 25th, 1914, and I cannot understand how people in this country can laugh at the testimony of so many eye-witnesses and say they were dreaming. There was no time for dreaming in that awful retreat. We were outnumbered by nine to one, and when we thought all was lost and were preparing to make the last stand, God intervened in a miraculous way.

"The Germans were coming to close quarters when suddenly a light appeared in the sky, small at first, but gradually it became brighter and brighter, and then there seemed to be something in the light which we could not at first discern. But God removed the scales from our eyes, and I saw with my own eyes three angels. . . . There was no fighting then. We stood spell-bound. . . . I saw it all myself, and I ask you to believe me. There are others who will tell you the same, and I am as certain as that I am standing here to-day that the angels came in answer to prayer to save us. . . . I am convinced the British army would have otherwise been annihilated. . . . Many men who saw the apparition have been converted as a result."

A. Do you think that we, as Christians, should give full credence to testimonies like these?

B. We should, I think, receive them with a measure of reserve. We must not err on the side of credulity. On the other hand we must not be absolutely incredulous as if there were no such beings as angels, and as if they had never intervened visibly for the deliverance and protection of men. They have frequently done so in times past. Of this we are assured by the Word of God. In these days, when faith in that Word has been so widely abandoned, such despite done to the Spirit of grace, and such contumely cast upon the atoning work of Christ, one would hardly be surprised if God were to revert in measure to His former ways of dealing with human affairs.

A. I gather, then, that you do not care to either affirm or deny the

appearance of angels in Belgium. And, of course, there are numbers of men who were in the great retreat who say they saw nothing of the sort.

B. I should attach little importance to the evidence of such. Hundreds of men have been to India without ever seeing a tiger. The evidence of one man who HAS seen a tiger there outweighs the testimony of hundreds who have not.

A. Of course I am aware that the writer of a certain work of fiction has claimed that all these stories as to the supposed angels have arisen from his book, and have therefore no solid foundation. But such a claim is absurd in view of the fact that many of the witnesses had never heard of this book, and could not possibly have been influenced by it. Are there any details, however, which you regard as worthy of fuller credence?

B. Leaving on one side the stories of angels with outstretched wings which many affirm that they saw, I think the circumstantial accounts of the behaviour of the horses, both on the British side and on the German, is most remarkable. We have a similar case in Scripture of an animal seeing an angel who stood in the way and prevented further progress, though to the rider nothing was visible. (See Numbers 22. 23-31.) As to the horses on the British side we have the following narrative by an officer:

“I was told to take a certain wood, and started with my troop. On reaching a road at right angles which I was to follow, to my surprise my horse stopped dead, and nothing would induce the animal to move. Turning to the aide-de-camp, I found the same thing had happened, and not only so, but to the whole troop; **THE HORSES REFUSED TO MOVE.** Finding it useless to waste time, I followed a parallel road further on. Afterwards we found that a strong German ambush awaited us along the road from which we had been so

strangely turned by the conduct of our horses.”

It certainly looks as if some unseen power such as that which made Balaam's ass first run into a field and then thrust herself against a wall, was preventing the little force of British horsemen from falling into the trap that had been set for them.

A. Did any similar thing happen to the German horsemen?

B. The evidence seems to point to it. We are told that a lady in Germany, who is well known for her work among English women there, affirms that there was much discussion in Berlin because a certain regiment which had been told off to do a certain duty at a certain battle failed to carry out their orders, and when censured they declared that they did go forward, but found themselves absolutely powerless to proceed with their orders, and their horses turned sharply round and fled like the wind, and nothing could stop them.

This same lady had the opportunity of a conversation with one of the lieutenants of the regiment in question, and as the affair had made some stir in Berlin owing to the severe reprimand given to the men, she asked him what really had happened. He said, “I cannot tell you. I only know that we were charging full on the British at a certain place, and in a moment we were stopped. It was most like going full speed and being pulled up suddenly on a precipice, but there was no precipice, nothing at all, only our horses swerved round and fled and we could do nothing.”

Such is the story, confirmed, it appears, from other sources. We must leave it, with the remark that an occurrence like this would not strike the student of Scripture as either impossible or improbable.

Now let us take our Bibles and see what the Word of God has to say on the subject of angels, their ministry, and their intervention in human affairs.

The Ministry of Angels in Times

Past.

A. In what part of the Bible do we read most about angels?

B. In the Epistle to the Hebrews. These Christians, with the history of their nation, as recorded in the Old Testament, in their hands, would be quite conversant with the activities of angels in connection with the chosen people. Indeed, the existence and the guardian ministry of angels was one of the great fundamental truths of Judaism. The very Law in which it made its boast was ordained by angels (Gal. 3. 19), or, as Stephen puts it in his wonderful discourse, "received . . . by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7. 53). At Sinai, when the Law was given, Jehovah's presence was attested by thousands of these heavenly beings. So Psalm 68. tells us. Their existence, therefore, was an essential part of the orthodox creed of Judaism.

When rationalism developed among the Jews it took the form of denying what was fundamental to their religion as a divine revelation. The denial of the existence of angels stood therefore in the forefront of the negative creed known as Sadduceeism, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Acts 23. 8). In just the same way, modern rationalism takes the form of denying the great essentials of Christianity: the deity of Christ, the efficacy of the atonement, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the necessity of the new birth.

A. It is evident that angels played an important part in connection with the chosen nation. We find them acting as God's messengers again and again, do we not?

B. We do indeed; and this is specially to be noted with reference to the birth, the pathway, and the resurrection of Christ. Infallible proofs were thus given, which would appeal more than anything else to a Jew and convince all

who were not wilfully blind and deaf, of the true Messiahship of the Lord Jesus.

Angels in connection with Christ when on Earth.

A. To what events do you particularly refer?

B. In connection with the birth of the Lord Jesus angel messengers were sent to Joseph and to Mary. In the case of the latter it was the same exalted being, Gabriel, who more than four hundred years previously had disclosed to Daniel the remarkable facts set forth in what is commonly spoken of as "The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks" (see Dan. 9. 20-27). An angel announced the birth of the Saviour to the shepherds in the field. He was accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God. When the angels had gone back to heaven, the fact of their appearance was spread abroad by the shepherds, so that there was a testimony which all would regard as of the most convincing nature, to the Person who had come amongst men as a Child.

During His life on earth this testimony was continued. After the temptation in the wilderness angels came and placed themselves at His disposal, gladly acknowledging as their Lord the MAN who had so signally overcome Satan.

Amid the sorrows of Gethsemane, too, when men, knowing nothing of His entire devotion to the will of God and the Father's good pleasure in Him as He trod the path marked out by that will, might have judged Him to be an object of divine displeasure (compare Isa. 53. 4), "there appeared an angel unto Him, strengthening Him."

After His resurrection, testimony to what had taken place was rendered by means of "a vision of angels" (Luke 24. 23).

The Nature and Powers of Angels.

A. Is there anything in Scripture to show what kind of beings angels are ?

B. We are told that they are beings who "excel in strength" and that they are God's ministers who do His commandments and hearken to the voice of His word (Ps. 103. 20). Elsewhere they are spoken of as "mighty" (2 Thess. 1. 7). They are evidently great potentates, capable of performing mighty tasks. Michael, the archangel, is represented in Daniel 10. as effectually thwarting the devices of the powers of darkness. He does not, however, seem to be as great a personage as Satan (Jude 9.), though with the angels under his leadership he ultimately defeats the evil angels and their leader (Rev. 12. 7-9).

Again, the angels are spoken of as "elect" (1 Tim. 5. 21); this distinguishes them from the fallen angels, which have followed Satan in his apostasy.

They are also described as "holy" (Matt. 25. 31). They are sinless beings who have never known the taint of evil. Potent to deal with it in others, they are free from it themselves.

The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

A. For what purpose are angels referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

B. Let us turn to the various passages in that book which speak of angels, and the object of their introduction will be apparent.

The first passage is chapter 1. verses 4 to 7:

"Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to

Me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."

The great theme of this Epistle is the superiority of Christ and everything connected with Him to all that was rightly held in reverence by a Jew. The writer at the outset places his finger on a thing that was of tremendous importance to the Jewish mind, that which was the seal of his nation's position in the world as the chosen of God, viz. the ministry of angels. From the Old Testament scriptures he shows how much greater Christ is than they. They are God's ministers, that is, His servants; Christ is God's SON. Angels find their place among the happy worshippers when the First-begotten receives His rightful place in the world; HE is the object of their worship. The angels are but creatures, God assigns them their functions as it pleases Him; HE is their Creator and is addressed as "O GOD!" Then in turning from Judaism and from that which was its highest boast, no one would suffer loss if it was to One so infinitely great as the Son of God that they came. Angels cannot be compared with HIM.

The next passage is chapter 1. verse 13 to chapter 2. verse 3:

"But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast . . . how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken BY THE LORD?"

A. What is the line of argument in these verses ?

B. The Apostle is evidently seeking to meet every objection which a Hebrew might urge. One might say, "I am a poor, weak creature, and I should not like to deprive myself of the ministry of angels in the thought of which I have found great comfort, even though I have never actually seen one."

"But think," replies the Apostle, as it were; "no angel sits in the place of power which CHRIST fills! He is at God's right hand! Is not His might far greater than that of any angel? Moreover, you lose nothing even of angelic ministry; for their service is now not directed to the sons of Israel, but to THE HEIRS OF SALVATION, those who have believed in Christ to the saving of their souls."

He then proceeds to show how serious a thing it is *not* to be a Christian. The word spoken by angels (that is, the Ten Commandments) could not be slighted with impunity. But we have now to do with the word spoken by One infinitely superior in dignity and power to angels—by THE LORD HIMSELF. What would be the awful consequences of slighting the word of such a Person?

It is a deeply interesting fact that the Apostle states in the course of his argument, namely, that *all that the angels were to the Israelites of old they now are to Christians*. With this truth in mind we can appropriate to ourselves all the comfort of such promises as: "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. 91. 11, 12); "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34. 7). We have actual instances of angelic ministry to Christians in the case of Peter's deliverance from prison and Paul's encouragement amid the tempest (Acts 12. 7; 27. 23).

A. But in these cases the angels actually appeared. You do not mean that this is the normal thing for Christians to expect?

B. By no means. In the early days of Christianity the appearances of angels were no doubt intended as a testimony to the divine origin of this new thing, which the mass of the Jewish nation were regarding with suspicion and contempt. And it was just the sort of testimony that would carry most weight with them, if indeed they did not willfully close their eyes.

A. You did not mention the case of Cornelius. An angel was sent to him to tell him how he might be saved, if I remember aright.

B. You will find, if you refer to the passage, that it was not quite as you have stated it. To preach the gospel is a high privilege to which angels are not called. Never having experienced for themselves the mercy of God in the forgiveness of sins, never having proved in their own case the cleansing power of Christ's precious blood, it is not theirs to testify of these things. This privilege is reserved for those of Adam's guilty race who have themselves been washed from their crimson sins. The angel was sent to Cornelius to direct him to SEND FOR A MAN, for Peter, who indeed should tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved (Acts 11. 13, 14).

A. Referring once again to the "word spoken by angels," do you not think this "word" must have been clothed with immense authority in the eyes of those to whom it was given, by reason of the attendance of the angels in their thousands at Sinai, according to Psalm 68. 17?

B. Yes, but as we have seen, the word of salvation comes to us with a far greater authority. It is the word of the Son. We may indeed be thankful that we have such a firm basis on which to build our confidence.

A. Yet there are those who would much prefer to have an angel appear to them and assure them in an audible voice that their sins are forgiven than to have nothing but the statements of the Word of God to rest upon!

B. The audible voice of an angel would be a poor basis for our assurance seeing that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light for the purpose of deception (2 Cor. 11. 14). To rest upon any such foundation might be to fall into a trap of the enemy. But we can rest with the most unqualified assurance on the word of Him who is the Lord and the Creator of the angels.

Now read a further passage from Hebrews 2. verses 5 to 8:

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet”

A. What is the meaning of this reference to the world to come in connection with angels?

B. The expression “world to come” refers to the millennium, and the passage shows that angels will not have the prominence then that they have had in the past. The former age was to a large extent ruled by angels. Heavenly influences were often brought to bear upon men by their means. But God has other plans for the future. It is His purpose that MAN should have the place of pre-eminence in the world to come. Adam was at the beginning given the lordship of creation. But he soon showed his unfitness for the position. In CHRIST, however, man will be at the head of all things. This is revealed, but it is not yet brought to pass. We do not at present see all things put under man’s feet. But we do see JESUS, crowned already with the glory and honour which by and by we shall share with Him.

In the coming day the saints will not only rule the world, but will rule the angels (1 Cor. 6. 2, 3). It seems clear that while everything is to be headed

up in Christ, He will administrate the actual government of the world by means of the sons of Israel. The part that will fall to the heavenly saints (including, of course, the Church) will be to carry the influences of heaven and affect men thereby, and thus be the intermediaries between God and men, even as angels were in the days of old.

A. Will angels play no part in the affairs of the Kingdom of the Son of Man?

B. Assuredly they will. Their manifest presence will be a continual testimony to the close relations between heaven and the happy earth in the day when MAN is exalted in righteousness. They will be seen ascending and descending, ever with the Son of Man as the object of their service. No jealousy will be felt by these holy beings at the superiority assigned to MAN. For Him whom they worship has become man, and those who share His place of honour are His brethren!

A. Where next do we read of angels in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

B. In verse 16 of chapter 2.: *“For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.”* The italics introduced into this verse are not very helpful. The word used has the force of *taking up any one to help him*. Conybeare and Howson translate it: “He giveth His aid,” J. N. Darby, “take hold . . . by the hand.” The meaning is that the Lord Jesus did not come to suffer for angels, but for men. He did not shed His blood to win redemption for fallen angels, nor to seek for Himself a Bride from among the elect angels. No angel is to share His throne, nor be His companion for ever. What He has wrought is for *men*, for the guilty seed of Abraham. These, the Jews, are specially mentioned here, but there is no difference. The same applies to men of Gentile blood.

Not angels, but men are made the sons of God, the companions of Christ, His Body and His Bride. WE, once

proud rebels against God, have been brought nigh to Him, to sing

“A song which even angels
Shall never, never sing;
They know not Christ as Saviour,
But worship Him as King.”

A. And yet there are people, some of them, I suppose, Christians, who sing, “I’d like to be an angel, And with the angels stand.”

B. Which really means: I would like to give up the wonderful place that the grace of God has put me in, as His child and as co-heir with Christ, to become a mere servant! Which is better, to be among the happy throng that *surround* the throne (Rev. 5. 11) or to sit with Christ *on* the throne? (Rev. 3. 21).

One other passage in Hebrews remains to be examined (chap. 12. ver. 22): “*But ye are come . . . to an innumerable company of angels.*” In former days angels appeared to men singly, or in twos and threes. But in Christianity we have come to the whole company of them. ALL of them are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. It is sometimes remarked how numerous the demons must be if a whole legion of them could inhabit the body of one poor man. But the Lord could speak, not of a legion merely, but of TWELVE legions of angels being at His disposal (Matt. 26. 53). In fact, they are, as the verse says, innumerable. And every one of them is ready to serve us, the children of God, in the way that is appointed them.

How Angels are Taught.

A. Are there lessons that angels have to learn, just as Christians have to be taught lessons of dependence, confidence in God, and so on?

B. There are indeed. As early as in the days of Job we find problems concerning God’s ways with men being worked out in the view of the “sons of God,” by whom are no doubt meant the angels. Satan, introducing himself among them, suggested that a man to

whose integrity God Himself testified, was pious only because it paid him to be. God took up the challenge and proceeded to show that He was able to secure the disinterested love and service of man.

When the Lord Jesus was here the angels, for the first time as far as we know, SAW GOD (1 Tim. 3. 16). Think what this must have meant to them! To see their Creator and God clothed in flesh and treading the earth a poor and despised Man! There were things that had formed the subject of angelic inquiry (1 Peter 1. 12). In connection with the sufferings and exaltation of Christ these things became clear to them. But it is the church which is the great lesson book of the heavenly powers. In the Mystery (namely, the union of Jew and Gentile in one BODY) all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were enfolded. These treasures are now made known not only for the instruction of men, but of those higher intelligences above (Eph. 3. 10).

The Future Mission of Angels.

A. Do we not read a good deal about the angels in connection with the Second Coming of the Lord?

B. Yes. In connection with the Rapture we are told that the Lord will come not only with His own shout of triumphant joy, and with the trump that will express the satisfaction of God, but also with *the voice of the Archangel* (1 Thess. 4. 16). There will thus be the utterance that marks the fruition of angelic hopes. Their lessons will have been learnt; and they who all through the centuries have been witnesses and sharers of Heaven’s joy over repenting sinners will be witnesses and sharers of its joy when the church is brought to her destined abode, and the Bridegroom welcomes home His Bride. Blessed unselfish, unjealous, angelic joy!

But it is rather in connection with

the public manifestation of Christ in the day of His Appearing that the angels have such an important mission. Now they are concerned about saints; then they will be concerned about sinners. Let us read in Matthew 13. what will take place at the coming of the angels:

“The harvest is the end of the world (or ‘age’); and the reapers are the angels. . . . The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (vers. 39-42). *“At the end of the world (‘age’) the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire”* (vers. 49, 50).

Observe that it is here foretold that the angels do two things:

- (1) They shall deal with all offending THINGS.
- (2) They shall deal with the offending PERSONS.

If we think for a moment of all the vile and sinful things which abound in the world to-day we shall have some idea of the task that the angels will have when they take in hand the cleansing of this Augean stable! It will go hard with the evil-doer in that day. The man who is pursuing his way in defiance of the God of heaven, who is a worshipper of the “Beast,” and a lover of everything bad will feel an arresting hand laid upon him. Turning to see what has happened he will find himself

in the stern grip of a powerful angel. Nor will that mighty avenger relax his hold till the sinner is cast into the place of torment. Depend upon it, the angels will be thorough in their work. They will in this way prepare the earth for the reign of her rightful Lord.

There is also another service to be rendered by the angels at that time. Matthew 24. 31 tells us that they will be the instruments used by God to recover the final remnants of His scattered people from all the countries where they may be found. Many will have returned to their own land previously. Some will have been brought on their way by a great maritime power by means of her swift cruisers (see note to Kelly on Isaiah, new ed., p. 217), but it is the angels who will finally bring back those that are still scattered throughout the world.

The millennium follows. And another angelic contribution to the peace and blessing of that happy time will be the binding of Satan for the whole period. This will be carried out by an angel sent for the purpose (Rev. 20. 1, 2).

In a magazine article, even of the length to which this has run, it is impossible to examine every reference to angels in the Scriptures. What has been said is suggestive rather than exhaustive. Nor have we dealt with the subject of the fallen angels, save incidentally, in passing. It is not without importance to know what the Word of God has to say as of them. Perhaps on a future occasion we may take up that subject.

“Unto the Son He saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”

(Heb. 1. 8).

God . . . John 1. 1; Matt. 1. 23; Isa. 40. 3
 Thy throne, O God, is for
 ever and ever . . . Heb. 1. 8
 The Mighty God . . . Isa. 9. 6
 The Everlasting God . . . Isa. 40. 28
 The True God . . . 1 John 5. 20
 My Lord and my God . . . John 20. 28
 God my Saviour . . . Luke 1. 47

Over all, God blessed for
 ever, Amen . . . Rom. 9. 5
 The God of the whole earth . . . Isa. 54. 5
 God manifest in the flesh . . . 1 Tim. 3. 16
 Our God and Saviour (*marg.*) . . . 2 Peter 1. 1
 The Great God, and our
 Saviour Jesus Christ . . . Titus 2. 13
 Emmanuel, God with us . . . Matt. 1. 23

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 114.—118.

PSALM 114. In language of much spiritual energy, this Psalm declares the glorious results of God, and specially the God of Jacob, being with and for His people. How this can be, consistently with all that He is in righteousness the Psalm does not tell us, but we know from Exodus that as soon as Israel, represented by the first-born, were under the shelter of the sprinkled blood, at once Jehovah gave testimony, by the symbols of His presence, that He was with them (13. 21, 22) and for them (14. 19). This is true in righteousness because sin has been judged in the victim, whose death becomes the witness that it has not been passed over. We find the same consequences for believers now in Romans 8. 31, etc. The mention of Israel and Judah separately in verse 2 does not imply any breach of unity, for each has a distinctive privilege. We should rather learn that God had this purpose for Judah from the beginning, and will, as we read in Ezekiel 48. 8, carry it out in the end.

The association of God and His people, as Redeemer and redeemed, having been formed, every obstacle and hindrance must give way before them, that His purposes may be accomplished; the divided sea, the flight of Jordan and the shaking of Sinai's mighty cliffs, all testify that God is with His people, let the earth tremble. This seems to agree with the promise in Haggai 2. 5 (on linguistic grounds also, it has been thought that this Psalm was written on the return from the captivity) in which Jehovah of Hosts pledges Himself to be with the restored remnant even as He had been with the nation redeemed from Egypt. Following this the Prophet speaks of the shaking of all that seemed most stable, and the Psalmist, in the climax of verse 7, bids the earth tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob.

The use of such a title, which tells of unchanging grace, will comfort the hearts of the faithful in their future trials, a comfort enhanced to them, as they are reminded of the mercy manifested in the beginning and end of their journey through the wilderness of old, for the last verse of our Psalm refers both to the giving of the water in Exodus 17. and in Numbers 20.; in the former grace rose above the murmuring of the people against Moses, and in the latter above the reproaches of Moses against the people. Such are the ways of Him whose mercy endures for ever!

PSALM 115. This Psalm, which is thought to have been used in the services of Zerubbabel's Temple, is another utterance of the returned remnant of that time. Purified from the horrid self-righteousness which had deceived them into refusing the ministry of Jeremiah (see chap. 7. and elsewhere) in the spirit of true worship they exclaim "Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory," for they are tasting the fruits of His loving-kindness to their deep needs and His truth or faithfulness to His promise of restoration. The heathen taunt "Where is now their God?" has been answered, and "our God" has done what He pleased in restoring and blessing His people. This leads to a contemptuous reference (repeated in Psalm 135.) to the idols of Babylon, who could not deliver their worshippers in the time of their need. The degrading effect of idol worship on its votaries is plainly stated in verse 8; man ever becomes assimilated to what is before him as an object (see also Isa. 44. 19 and Jer. 2. 5). The remaining part of the Psalm affords us more of the prophetic application, and may be described as the education of the faith of the righteous in the knowledge of Jehovah in view of the kingdom; so the Psalm closes, "We will

bless Jehovah from this time forth and for evermore. Hallelujah." But they are led to this happy worship by their experience of Him as help and shield, and the terms employed in verses 11 and 13 indicate how the Gentiles are at last recognized among the people of God not as now in the truth of the "one body," but yet, as we shall see in Psalm 117., in association with Israel. Jehovah, who has been mindful, will bless not only the house of Israel and the house of Aaron, but them that fear Him both small and great; but it must be noticed that the only sphere of blessing here thought of is the earth. The heavens are Jehovah's heavens, and the dead go down into silence; only "the earth hath He given to the children of men." This is in striking contrast to the Christian's portion who, according to the Saviour's own words, looks forward to his full blessing in resurrection (John 6. 39, 40, 44, 54), who is even now "heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 48), and has his blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1. 3).

PSALM 116. The love which the law demanded but never secured is seen in our Psalm to be the response to the delivering mercy of Jehovah. Trouble and sorrow had been known, the bands of death and the pains of Sheol had been round him; Jehovah had been sought and had answered in saving power. Such is His way to make Himself known, and it is the triumph of His work on its subjective side to beget in us the reflection of what He is, for God is love (1 John 4. 7-19). Thus after a season of distress and agitation (which is the true meaning of "haste" in verse 11) the soul returns to its rest in Jehovah, fortified by a fuller knowledge of Him.

The citation of verse 10 in 2 Corinthians 4. 13 (taken from the LXX) is most instructive, showing how we may use these

Psalms with profit, although in their strict interpretation they are distinctly Jewish. The Psalmist writes: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling; I will walk before Jehovah in the land of the living" (*cf.* Ps. 56. 8, 13). These expressions are by no means descriptive of this present time, but are anticipative of the establishment of the kingdom. *Now* the man of faith walks before God in the land of the dying, and he is exempted neither from death nor tears. But Paul can tell us about "having the same spirit of faith"; by which we understand that the faith which in the Psalmist counted on preservation, in the Apostle trusts God for resurrection. In this way, verse 15, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His saints," may, as in Psalm 72. 14, be fulfilled in preservation from dying; or be used by the Spirit to comfort those who may have to pass through death prior to the coming of the kingdom in power.

Very beautiful is the hesitation expressed in the question, "How shall I requite Jehovah for all His bountiful dealings with me?" The answer that exactly accords with divine grace follows, "I will take the cup of salvation," etc., and this answer is enlarged by the full surrender, in the joy of a newly acquired liberty (Thou hast loosed my bonds) to serve the new Master (Romans 12. 1), and finally in praise according to God's ordering in His house at Jerusalem, all being animated by the love of verse 1. The similarity of this Psalm with Psalm 18. should be considered, but in the earlier one in place of worship in the temple the final praises of the great King are uttered in the glories of the kingdom, the King having been established Head of the Gentiles.

"Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15. 3).

Answers to Correspondents.

Communion of Saints.

G. V. B. asks, "Does the 'communion of saints' in the Apostle's Creed mean knowledge comradeship, sympathy, love, and prayer between the *church militant* on earth and the *church expectant* in paradise as they both look forward to the final joy of the *church triumphant* in heaven?"

All creeds, and all interpretations of them, must be tested, as to how much truth there is in them, by the Word of God, and in that Word we do read of the communion or fellowship of the saints; it is one of the great Christian privileges which God would have us enjoy by the Holy Spirit. It is presented to us in some of its phases in such passages as 1 Corinthians 1. 9; 10. 16, 17; Philip- pians 1. 5; 1 John 1. 7. But in none of these scriptures, or in any other, is there the slightest hint that this fellowship is between saints alive on the earth and those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Such a doctrine is an invention of the

human mind, and a very pernicious one too, for it leaves those who are deceived by it an easy prey to Spiritism, which is fellowship with demons and not with saints at all. In Isaiah 8. 19 we read, "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, . . . should not a people seek unto their God? *for the living to the dead?* TO THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY: IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM." Hold fast to the Word, it will preserve you from every snare.

Prayers of the Saints.

"Do our dear departed ones pray to the Lord for us, and are their prayers referred to in Revelation 5. 8; 8. 3, 4? Dives prayed for his brothers. The following texts seem to show that the departed seem to know what goes on in this world; Luke 16. 29; John 8. 56, Luke 9. 31; Hebrews 12. 1."

There is no word of Scripture that would lead us to suppose that the departed saints still pray for those who are left behind on earth. There is one passage, however, which we believe proves the fallacy of such a supposition. Revelation 14. 13 states, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest from their labours*; and their works do follow them." Intercession and prayer for others is one of the labours of saints on earth (Col. 4. 12); from all these they rest when they die in the Lord. This teaching, closely allied to the popish "invocation of saints," is also most pernicious, being well calculated to turn our thoughts from the Lord Jesus as our great Intercessor. It should be sufficient for us to know that He maketh intercession for us, and

that our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Him are with Him, resting there from all their labours.

The prayers of the saints in Revelation 5. 8 and 8. 3, 4, 5 we believe are prayers that have been, and are still being offered that righteousness may prevail on the earth; for the Father's kingdom to come and His will be done here below, and while these prayers are as incense to God, which all true prayer is, yet they call down His fierce judgments upon a godless world, as the fire from the altar cast upon it denotes. There is no warrant in these passages for the suggestion in the question.

It is true that Dives (Luke 16) prayed both for himself and his brethren still upon earth, but neither of his prayers were answered, nor does this parable

give any ground upon which to build this strange unchristian teaching.

John 8. 56 refers to the faith that was in Abraham when he was here on earth, which made him rejoice in anticipation of the Lord's day.

Luke 9. 31. The transfiguration of the Lord was a special event, and God had a special purpose in allowing Moses and Elias to appear with Him there, and then to disappear, leaving JESUS ONLY with His disciples. Our limited space forbids our going into this purpose in these answers.

Hebrews 12. 1. To make this passage mean that the Old Testament saints, or any other, are witnesses in the sense of onlookers while we run the race of

faith below is to spoil the whole force of it. The cloud of witnesses are those enumerated in the previous chapter, whose lives, recorded by the Holy Spirit, bear witness to the possibilities of faith, and to the fact that it is possible, in spite of all opposition and through much affliction, to run the race of faith patiently and triumphantly.

1 Thessalonians 4. 13, 18 enlightens our ignorance concerning them which are asleep. So much has God been pleased to tell us. As to their present interests and occupation Scripture is silent except to assure us that to be with Christ "is far better." Let us rest satisfied with that, for it is as much as we need to know.

The Work completed until the Day of Jesus Christ.

"Did the Apostle mean that growth in purification to fit the saved for God's presence will go on in the intermediate state?"

No, he could not possibly mean that, for in *Colossians* 1. 12 he gives "thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Fitness for the presence of God is not a question of progressive purification, it is the fruit entirely of the one offering of Jesus Christ by which He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (*Heb.* 10. 14). All who have believed the gospel stand in all the value of that offering before God,

they are His saints, or sanctified ones.

In the passage in question the Apostle expresses his confidence in regard to the *Philippians*; this confidence lay in what he had already seen of God's work in them; there could be no doubt as to it, for it made itself manifest in their lives, it would be completed unto the day of Jesus Christ. The completion of it would be when their bodies were changed into bodies of glory like Christ's own body (*chap.* 3. 21).

The Fate of those who Die Impenitent.

"If any soul has not in this life in penitence and faith definitely accepted Jesus Christ, is it for ever impossible that he may do so in the hereafter? What about all who died before our Lord came, all the heathen since who have never heard of Him, and all young children?"

We have no ground in Scripture for supposing that those who have heard the gospel and rejected it will have another offer made to them after death, but the whole evidence of the Word plainly points to the contrary. It is to living men that the message is sent. "He that believeth not shall be damned" (*Mark* 16. 16). "Behold,

ye despisers, and wonder, and perish" (*Acts* 13. 41). "Them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (*2 Thess.* 1. 8, 9). "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure

in unrighteousness " (2 Thess. 2. 12). "As it is appointed unto men once to die, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT " (Heb. 9. 27).

Those who died before the Lord came had a testimony given them by God, either by His works in creation or by His law and His prophets, each in itself sufficient to produce repentance and faith in their hearts towards Him.

The heathen who have not heard of Christ will not be judged for not be-

lieving in Him, but they will be judged for sinning against God, who has given them a testimony as to Himself and His goodness by His works in creation, and in spite of their consciences. "They are without excuse " (Rom. 1. 20).

Young children who have died, not having come to the age of responsibility, come into that verse "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He died to save them, and they have not rejected Him.

The Spirits in Prison.

"What are we to understand by 1 Peter 3. 18-20 and 4. 6?"

The first of these passages is the great text used by those who preach a "larger hope," or, an offer of mercy after death, but even a cursory glance at it should prove that it gives this theory no countenance at all. For even if it means that Christ went after His death to preach to spirits, which we entirely deny is its meaning, the spirits in question are definitely specified, and the scope of the preaching is strictly limited to those who were disobedient in Noah's days. The passage holds out no hope for any others, indeed its very definiteness excludes all others from participation in whatever the verse means. And then the question might well and justly arise, Why should the preaching be confined to these spirits to which the verse does so decidedly confine it? The sinners of Sodom had not as faithful a witness amongst them in Lot as had these antediluvian sinners in Noah, so that their responsibility was not as great. Then why should they not have been included in the verse also? Plainly some other interpretation must be found for it if we are not to do violence to the text itself; set it in opposition to the teaching of the whole body of Scripture; spoil the sweetness and power of the gospel and nullify completely all the solemn and terrible warnings that accompany the gospel. Its meaning lies on the surface. "Christ

being put to death in the flesh was quickened by the Spirit." This is the same Spirit by which He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient, when once "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah," etc. When did He preach to them? During the time of their disobedience "while the ark was preparing." Then He preached and then were they disobedient. Now they are in prison. Peter speaks of the Holy Spirit in the prophets as "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 11). And in connection with the time of this disobedience God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men" (Gen. 6.). But the question may be asked, Why should this be introduced into this passage at all? The answer, we believe, is simple. Those to whom Peter wrote were few and suffering, and it doubtless seemed to be a strange and discouraging thing to them that since Christ had risen in the power of the Holy Ghost so few should obey the gospel or be affected by the testimony borne to this great fact. The Apostle shows them that this was neither strange nor new, for it was the same Spirit that preached in Noah's day, when all mankind except eight souls were disobedient. The Christians to whom he wrote had been saved out of the disobedient mass, and their baptism was the sign of this.

Noah's family being saved by water was a figure of the baptism of these Jewish believers.

1 *Peter* 4. 6. This text is a powerful one for proving that when men die they do not escape the results of their sins and disobedience to God as men in the flesh. God has sent a testimony to all; its fulness has not been the same in every dispensation, but it has always made clear the goodness of God, and has carried with it to the consciences of men the fact that He must visit

judgment upon iniquity. The *living* will be judged when Christ comes, as the previous verse declares, but the *dead* also will be judged, and on the same ground—that of having failed in their responsibilities as men in the flesh before God. Could any of them plead that God had given them no testimony at all they would have an excuse indeed, but "they are without excuse." The only door of escape from this judgment is to be quickened by the Spirit, which all are who believe the gospel.

2 Thessalonians 2. 10-12.

C.J.H.—This passage is sufficient as you suggest to prove that those who reject the gospel will not turn to the Lord in the interval between the catching away of the church and the

Lord's return to earth to judge and reign. The great multitude of Revelation 7. will be gathered from those who have not heard the gospel in this present period.

Esau's Birthright.

ANON.—The birthright carried with it those promises that God had made to Abraham and Isaac. Abraham and Isaac valued these above all earthly things, and they made them pilgrims and strangers in the land. Jacob, in spite of all his crookedness, was a man of faith, and he too valued these promises, but Esau was a profane man,

and thought only of the present, and present advantage; so he sacrificed the future for present gratification and discovered his folly when it was too late (see Heb. 12. 16, 17). He represents those who despise God and His grace, and the hope that He gives with the gospel, and who live for time and self alone.

Death.

FALKIRK.—Death does not mean the complete extinction of all life, for that would be annihilation. When men die the natural life comes to an end, the body dies, its life ceases entirely, but the soul lives on. Dissolution between body and soul takes place, but the existence of the soul is not less real than it was before death. This is plain from the Lord's words in Luke 12. 14: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom

ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

The Lord's death was real. He gave up His life and His dead body lay in the grave three days and nights. He was raised again from the dead by the glory of the Father. If He had not actually died He could not have been our Saviour, for death lay upon us as the judgment of God, this dread penalty had to be borne, as well as its power broken.

The Assembly of God.

(H. J. VINE).

Question by D. H. : When did it Begin, and of whom was it first Composed ?

THE church of God, or more correctly the assembly of God, began when Christ gave the Spirit at Pentecost to His own disciples. These first composed the assembly. "The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty" (Acts 1. 15). With one accord they were all together in one place, when the Spirit came both upon them and within them.

To say that to understand Paul's writings is to know the truth of the assembly, just as to understand John's is to know the truth as to the flock and the family of God, is true in a certain sense. But to understand the assembly in the essential and vital sense we must know Him who is the exalted Head of the body, which is the assembly. Having secured eternal redemption by His work upon the cross, Christ rose from among the dead victorious over sin, Satan, death, and Hades; and "He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is THE BEGINNING, the Firstborn from among the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1. 18). Exalted in heavenly glory, He gave the Holy Spirit as we have seen; thus uniting His own livingly with Himself as Man in heaven; they becoming members of His body, the assembly. Nothing like this had ever been known before.

To complete the thought of God as to the assembly (the *ek-klesia*, the out-called) we find a number from among the Gentiles also baptized in Acts 10. 44. (Read also 11. 16-17, which unites with Acts 1.) Those at Pentecost were from among the Jews only; and the assembly (which was to be *out of* and not of the

nations) was to embrace those of both Jews and Gentiles. In Old Testament times God had dealt nationally; now the assembly is called out as something new entirely. Not seeing this, many fall short both in spirit and practice of the truth.

Paul was the special minister of the truth concerning the assembly of God; but that it began before he was converted is proved both by Acts 2. 47 and by his own words—I excessively persecuted the assembly of God and ravaged it (Gal. 1. 13, N.T.). To unfold truth and instruction as to the assembly of God is one thing: its vital beginning, existence, and power another. For the former, how important are the writings of the Spirit by Paul for those who are truly Christ's. How they preserve those who truly heed them, amid the ecclesiastical snares and strifes of to-day; also guiding them, as belonging to this new thing, in regard to their deportment towards the powers that be, in the different nations where they are found.

As regards the foundation of the local assembly at Corinth, where Paul laboured so much, he wrote, "I have laid the foundation . . . which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 10, 11). But when writing of the whole structure, which embraces all the saints, he shows that all the apostles and prophets of the New Testament times, given from Christ the ascended Head of the body (Eph. 4. 11), have their part in the foundation of it, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE" (Eph. 2. 20).

Before Christ came it was a time of promises, but the Gospel to-day is a proclamation of facts.

Is it Possible to be Without Anxiety?

(J. T. MAWSON).

NONE of us who have believed that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him can ever doubt His love to us; but we may easily treat that love as though it had only secured future blessing for us and was entirely indifferent as to our present welfare; as though it leaves us to struggle with the burdens and difficulties of life and comes only to our aid when at last, wearied in spirit and body, we lay ourselves down to die. A Christian might not care to express it quite as plainly as that, for to do so would disclose a rebellious heart, and yet the thought is often present, and it makes itself articulate in the frenzied efforts put forth to do "the best one can for oneself," and in the depression and anxiety so prevalent amongst many who are intelligent as to Christian doctrines and sure of heaven at last.

When surrounded by material prosperity it is easy to talk of being without anxiety, but that talk is mere sanctimonious cant if we become immediately burdened with care when the easy days are compelled to give ground before the steady advance of grim and heartless adversity. And we do well to test ourselves and to inquire whether we are ready for the great trial; whether our resources are equal to the conflict, and whether God is able and willing to carry us through or not. If He cares for us, then He is enough for any and every day, if He does not we are in a worse plight than those who do not know Him.

Take the present state of things: Christian men cannot resist authority; they must be subject to the powers that be "*for conscience sake*" and for "*the Lord's sake*" (Rom. 13. 5; 1 Peter 2. 13). And subjection threatens for many of military age the break-up for the time being of their home life. It threatens a period of hardship for them, and a great burden cast upon the shoulders of the wives and dependents left behind; for in addition to the anxiety

for the safety of their men folk there is the upkeep of the home and the care of the children, possibly on reduced resources. These are no trifles, and where the grace of God flowing into the life has made the human sensibilities the keener they will be the more sharply felt. These are realities, and this is a grave crisis, and to meet them, and it, something more is needed than empty theories and fair weather theology.

Would it not be an immense relief to all in these circumstances, or in any others that make demands upon us, if they knew that divine love had not only provided for their everlasting felicity, but that God Himself—even the Father—was taking a personal, constant, and minute interest in each individual case? Would not such knowledge, if it were the deep conviction of the soul, bring a great peace into the life and drive away dull care? We know that it would.

Now to assure us of this God has taken infinite pains in His sure and holy Word; it is bright with many faithful sayings in regard to it, and beautiful with many concrete cases in which His perfect care for those who trust Him is illustrated, but nothing can be more conclusive and convincing in regard to it than the life of our Lord Jesus on earth.

Let us consider, then, how the Lord Jesus acted in regard to the matters domestic, and the general needs of those whom He loved as shown us in the Gospel of John. In that Gospel, be it remembered, He comes forth as the Word, who was with God, and who was God—the great Creator of the universe become flesh for our blessing, and in that same Gospel He said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Is it not, then, most worthy of note and full of comfort to all who need comfort, that in this Gospel, and this alone, He is shown to us as a guest at a wedding, rejoicing with those that

rejoice? and is it not equally significant that in this Gospel, and this alone, He is also shown to us weeping with the bereaved sisters at the grave of their dead brother? The wedding is the beginning of the home life, and may represent its most joyous period; the sealed grave is the close and the break-up of it, the darkest day of all. And the Lord, who came to earth to show to us the Father, was at both; and is there a day between the two when He is absent? No. He has said: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and that, be it noted, again in connection with the home life (Heb. 13. 4-6).

There are profound depths of spiritual meaning in these two incidents, and we should certainly seek these, but in doing so do not let us miss that that lies clear and plain upon the surface. Jesus, who was the Creator, the only-begotten Son of God, the revealer of the Father, associated Himself with His own in the joys and sorrows of their home life. Perish the thought that we may only know His presence at the meetings for prayer or worship, that He only connects Himself with what are known as religious services. If this were all, then our religion were artificial and dead, and our Lord useless to us in this present stress, and scarcely of more value than the dumb idols of the heathen. But He comes into the home life when He is allowed, comes in all the plenitude of an inexhaustible grace, rejoicing if we rejoice, and Himself becoming the source of a joy that earthly circumstances cannot yield; and standing by us in days of stress and sorrow, to sympathize with and support the heart that looks to Him. How near this brings Him to us; how real it makes Him; how tender and accessible it shows Him to be.

If this is the case, and only those who do not know the Lord will deny it, then all that we have to do is to bring our need to His notice. At the wedding in Cana and at the sorrowing home in Bethany this was done, and it was not done in vain. So that we would say to

all who are affected by the present state of things, make your need known to Him—present your case before the Father, whom He was here revealing, and if in His love and wisdom He sees that it be for the blessing of you and yours, and for His glory, He will certainly order things so that you may still abide in the place where you are. If, on the other hand, He permits your nest to be disturbed, and you to be flung into new conditions of life, you may accept this as His will for you, quietly and confidently. He will not permit you to be overburdened, not a feather's weight more than you are able to bear joyfully will be put upon you, and though you may be reduced as to material comforts you will be greatly enlarged in the knowledge of Himself—who is the Lord Almighty, and who has said: "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters" (2 Cor. 6. 18). Thus will you prove for yourself that it is possible to be without anxiety.

One other incident from this precious Gospel must suffice. In chapter 21. the disciples set out to do the best they could for themselves without direction from their Lord, and weary work it was, for they toiled all night, and cold and hungry bodies and disappointed hearts were the only results of the labours. But when they turned their eyes to their Lord, who stood in the rosy light of the morning upon the shore, they discovered that He had not forgotten them: **THEY WERE COLD**, He knew it, and so had gathered coals and made a fire at which they could warm themselves. **THEY WERE HUNGRY**, He knew it, and so had prepared them a breakfast of fish and bread for their need. Their faithlessness had made them **FEARFUL AND ASHAMED**, He knew it, and so invited them to sit down before Him, and made them quite at home by His grace, while He gave to them the food that those precious pierced hands had prepared for them.

And He is the same, yesterday and to-day and for ever.

“He that hath an Ear, let Him Hear.”

“A CIRCULAR letter” from brethren in Switzerland, dated “March, 1916,” and signed as beneath, has just come to hand, of which the following is a translation:—

“Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“We bring to your notice the need felt and expressed by a great number of brethren, to consecrate a day to humiliation and prayer.

“Ever since the beginning of the distressing period through which we are passing, more than one among us has expressed the thought that a *national humiliation*, expressing itself by fasting, ought to have been the attitude of *all the peoples* placed under the judgments of God. If humiliation had been effected, the divine rod might have been withdrawn, as, in the days of Jonah, Nineveh was spared, when the king proclaimed a fast and public prayers. This *national faith* (very different from *real faith*) consisted in recognizing that the divine chastisement was deserved. God took account of it and withdrew His hand for the moment, so that, without on that account changing the principles of His government, He spared Nineveh for two centuries.

“Dear brothers and sisters,

“*We are not entrusted* with a rôle, like that of Jonah, with regard to the nations. The reason is this: that in the presence of existing calamities we have *first* to recognize that this judgment falls *upon us, believers*, quite as much, more even than upon the world, in this sense that ‘the judgment of God begins with His house’ (1 Peter 4. 27). We have not only left our first love, but, as a collective testimony, we have dropped down to the coldness of Sardis, and to the lukewarmness of Laodicea (Rev. 3.), and whence now is our *authority* found to call the world to repentance? Let us begin then with ourselves. It was only after having borne all the judgment of his own guilt that Jonah could

become the mouthpiece of God for the world.

“We address ourselves then to you, and we say: Let us be the first to humble ourselves. Let us not humble ourselves locally, or by nationalities, still less by independent sects, but as having been called to bear witness to the *unity of the body of Christ* on the earth; and if we act thus, ‘*perhaps*,’ as David said, ‘the Lord will look upon our affliction’ (2 Sam. 16. 12).

“We note again emphatically that in no way do we invite our brethren to an *external* humiliation which the world could imitate. Our appeal, were it received in this sense, would only produce a vain show. Our humiliation must not be something commanded, but a *real conscience-need*. Let those then among us who feel no such need hold aloof; let those who feel that their moral and spiritual state has made these calamities necessary come with us to seek the face of our God, and if many withhold from doing it, let them be at least assured that our hearts, realizing before God *the fellowship of all the saints*, will embrace them all in this common humiliation.

“We have confidence that divine pity will respond to a sorrow of heart according to God, working repentance unto salvation. We shall have no regret on account of it (2 Cor. 7. 10), for the humiliation, in bowing us beneath the just sentence of God, will bring us back to a true separation from the world (Neh. 9. 1, 2), will show us the way we have to follow (Ezra 8. 21), and will be the prelude of a speedy deliverance granted to our faith (Dan. 9. 3, 13, 23).

“This humiliation, completely realized, will be accompanied, we have ground for thinking it and desiring it—with *fasting*, not with fasting ordained or public, such as could be under the law, and which is received among men,

but, with a fast all the more real that it will be the product of the grief that we undergo on account of our unfaithfulness, our divisions, which have dishonoured the name of Christ, and grieved the Holy Spirit, by whom Christians are formed *into one body*.

“But the primal cause of all the disorder among us, is it not in our conformity to this present age? We have allowed ourselves to slide insensibly, since the days of the revival, on a down grade which leads in result to *moral conformity with the world*. We have followed similar objects with it: Success in business, the thirst for gain and luxury which accompanies it, association with unbelievers, seeking after the honours which the world confers, ambition to distinguish ourselves in the world.

“What shall we say of the spirit of pride and self-righteousness, of the lack of love by which we have so often repelled our brethren instead of attracting them?

“What shall we say again of our unfaithfulness in the family circle, of the slackness of parents with regard to their testimony at home, the lack of seriousness in the bringing up their children in the discipline of the Lord, so that the children have been allowed to walk in the easy ways of moral laxity and corruption?

“What shall we say finally of our individual unfaithfulnesses, the want of sobriety and watchfulness with regard to our lusts, the search for material enjoyments, of avarice, which is idolatry?

“We have in great measure forgotten that the character of the Christian is that of Christ, his humility, his devotedness, his obedience: we have lost Him from view as a model, and as an object to attain to. To all that is added the lack of zeal for the interests of the Lord before the world and indifference with regard to the assembly. We have lost sight of the fact that it is

around the Lord, centre of the gathering of His own, that we are to come together. The consequence of this has been the seeking after man and the ease with which the gathering of the assembly is forsaken to run after attractive preachings.

“We have also to confess the little interest for the Word, and the harmful literature that falsify it, or turn the mind from it. From there the little importance attached to guarding the truth, the ground of which is easily given up for a wider ground and slack doctrines.

“Dear brothers and sisters,

“As this convocation comes from Switzerland, a country spared up to the present by the war, we are bound to express to you that we feel ourselves absolutely unworthy of such a favour, and that as we are exposed to the same judgment as you are, so our humiliation is true and profound. It is then in self-humiliation with you under the mighty hand of God that the signatories of this letter invite you everywhere to this day of humiliation, of prayers, of supplications, and of fasting. Let us be assured that such sentiments will find an answer in the heart of our tender Father, ready to grant us his deliverances.

“‘I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity I have not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto Him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye’ (Ps. 32. 5-8).

“‘Is there anything too hard for the Lord?’ (Gen. 18. 4).

“Not being able, from serious reasons, to cause this day to fall on a

Sunday, and wishing to make it accessible to all, our choice is fixed on a holiday—

“Easter Monday, 24th April.

“The date of this meeting is no doubt rather remote, but that will give us all time to be exercised before the Lord with regard to all that which humbles us, of all that which we have to confess and to forsake.

“Your brothers in Christ,
 “(Signed) J. BERNARD.
 S. PROD’HOM.
 H. ROSSIER.”

The spirit in all this is good and the words are excellent. It is too late now to join with our brethren in the convocation at the date fixed above; but we can still join with them in spirit and wait upon the Lord that these good desires may not be strangled at the birth, but that the words may be consummated by deeds. It is written of God’s ancient people: “Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a *feeble whispering* prayer—*à basse voix*—when Thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that

draweth near to the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen” (Isa. 26. 16–18).

It is not enough to have the most excellent truths and the best desires. One fact is better than a thousand theories. If the name of Christ is enough to bind in one all His own in the unity of the Spirit, then let it be enough for us in practice and in truth, in deed and not in word only. But we must remember that the owning of His name means the disowning, the disowning openly and above board—*à haute voix*—in faith and in fact of all that we have ever held most sacred, to which we have clung most tenaciously, for which we have fought most persistently, which is not according to the plain, direct and written Word, that reveals to us the meaning of that name. Otherwise the result will be self-deception and vanity, as fruitless as the wind. (*E. Cross.*)

Suffering and Glory.

TH**ERE** is a community of sufferings betwixt Christ and us. Poor would we be if His sufferings were not ours. But this way it goes; He is that apple tree excellent above all the trees of the forest, and we do rest under the tree. Now when the shower of rain falls it lights first on the tree, and the stroke of it is broken, and it does not great harm to those that are under the tree. If ye be ill-spoken of, so was He; if ye be hated of the world, so was He; if your blood be shed, and your face deformed, so was His fair face deformed and marred (Isa. 52. 14). Be content to drink with Christ. Now here by the way is a great comfort in trouble; those that are dear to you die, and ye mourn: Christ mourned and groaned in spirit

for dead Lazarus: ye weep, so He weeped. Are ye poor? So was Christ all His days.

There is a community of glory betwixt Christ and us. The heaven that Christ enjoys is our heaven. Rejoice in this, ye that are in Christ, ye and Christ are sharers together of heaven and glory. In the fighting, He fights all the battles. The great fight of Calvary was His alone. We but look on: but when it comes to the dividing of the spoil, we get a rich share of it.

“And we shall see Him as He is,
 And we shall know as we are known,—
 His bride, His love, His undefiled,
 The sharer of His endless throne.”

(*Rutherford.*)

The Hand of God.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THE hand of God is in this war.

Each nation may seek to lay the blame of its origin on the other, and endeavour to clear itself; but, back of all this self-vindication, and behind the secret working of Satan, there is, evidently, the permission of God in a slaughter of men, as universal as it is unprecedented.

If God be God it is needless to deny His knowledge and permission of that which is transpiring. He is calling the attention of the whole world to that permission, calling it to the fact that, spite of the extraordinary skill of man in the warlike inventions of the day, things have reached a kind of deadlock, and, so far, victory is withheld from all.

What the end may be people may surmise, but they may not foretell. It is known only to God.

Meanwhile the terrible slaughter must proceed, and the waves of sorrow roll onward, while hearts are broken, and tears flow, and widows multiply, and the frantic rush for the manufacture of limitless stores of munitions, and the wild waste of treasure, and the still more prodigal waste of human life, all this frenzied activity, this madness, marks the desperation of all the lands involved, and that to their misery. They fight for their very existence. But what else can they do? It is surely impossible for one nation, still unconquered, to lower its flag to another, or to sue for peace while victory trembles in the balance. That is true; and so the struggle continues until utter exhaustion, on one or both sides, forces a settlement. But what a result! The world decimated of the best of its men, and reduced to the pinch of poverty and desolation. The prospect is dark indeed.

It may be asked: What better can a nation do than fling all its energies into the construction of the most life-destroying instruments of war, or marshal its greatest resources, or sacrifice the best of its men? Could anything

else be done? Well, this is no doubt the way of war, nor can war be waged otherwise; but the question is: if God indeed be God, and if His mighty hand be outstretched in chastening, should not He be sought to restrain, in His power and mercy, the wrath and the fury and the violence of man? Let us remember that "He doeth as He will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," and that if "none can stay His hand, or say 'What doest Thou?'" yet He bids us humble ourselves under His hand, that He may lift us up. He is supreme everywhere. The non-acknowledgment of GOD is the common sin of the day. God is excluded.

Witness the wellnigh impossibility of obtaining common humiliation and prayer. The word "humiliation" seems to be most objectionable, as though there were no cause for it, and as though God had no voice in permitting countless thousands of the bravest to be swept away.

Can this mighty massacre have no interest to Him? Can He who cared for the very cattle of Nineveh be regardless of the appalling loss of human life to-day? Surely not!

What then should be done?

Things cannot be forced. That which is not the work of the Spirit of God is of no value. Unless He be pleased to produce a spontaneity of desire we need not look for unanimity in supplication. Common humiliation in the church has been disproved by her downward history in Revelations 2.-3., as also that of Israel in her moral decay, while repentance on the part of the world at large is negatived by the fact that the vast profession of Christianity will be "cut off" (Rom. 11).

As to Israel, we read in Isaiah 9. 13 that "the people turneth not to him that smiteth them." They were assailed back and front by the Syrians and

Philistines; their condition was bad enough as smitten by these opponents, but another hand was against them, unseen, unacknowledged, disowned, but none the less smiting them, and to that smiting hand they refused to turn. Things had to take their course.

Had they turned to God how different their end would have been! But if the mass be insensible and immovable it is all the more incumbent on the individual—the man of God and of prayer—to maintain the honourable place of intercession with God. So did Moses and Samuel of old to the deliverance of their nation; and if only to-day those who

know and love the Lord set themselves personally, privately, and irrespectively of the pride and prayerlessness and cold exclusion of God from the exigencies of the day, to cry continually and thankfully to God, their cry would be heard by Him, and their example would soon become a stimulus to others.

May each child of God who reads this paper see to it that he, at all events, shall turn to the hand that is smiting, and thus become the honoured instrument of accomplishing more, by the good hand of God, than can possibly be done by the resources of man.

How the Worst Sinner in the Regiment was Converted.

(JOHN DAVIES).

PRIVATE A—, of the Royal Scots, was the most incorrigible man in the regiment. Drink and a bad temper made him next to useless in the regiment. He was a trouble to the officers and non-commissioned officers, and was known as “a bad lot.” It was on a New Year’s morning he came to my house without cap, boots, or belt. He appeared as if he had been dragged through the mud. He had been drinking the night before and found himself lying in the street minus his boots, belt, and cap. We had him kindly attended to and then set him down in an arm-chair at the fireside in company with a number of bright Christian men from his regiment. When he saw the happy surroundings he wept bitterly. He sat at our table and had his New Year’s dinner with us, and in the evening he came to a gospel service and yielded himself to Christ and returned to his regiment in the company of the Christian men a changed man—a sinner saved by grace, and happy because he knew it.

He had to appear before his colonel next morning for losing his belt. This gave him the opportunity of confessing his wrong-doing, and of telling how God had had mercy on him and had forgiven him. The colonel replied: “I am glad to hear it and will encourage you in your efforts to lead a Christian life.”

His ungodly companions persecuted him and tried by every means in their power to drag him back into their company. He was called a turn-coat by some, as he had been a Roman Catholic, but in spite of all that the devil could do **A**— went on proving that God could keep him as well as save him. The corporal of his room said to me three months after his conversion: “I did not think it was possible for a man like that to turn, but I see now that all things are possible to God.” The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, and **Private A**— of the Royal Scots proved it for himself and became a witness of it to others.

Russia's Place in the Near East.

THE success of the Russian arms in Asia Minor and Persia, and the failure of Great Britain's efforts in the same areas are deeply significant and should interest students of prophecy, for Russia has yet to play a prominent and most malevolent part in these very countries before Israel is established without menace or fear in the land promised to her of old by Jehovah.

The prophecies which definitely connect Russia with the scenes of her recent successes are found in Ezekiel 38. 39. In the former chapter we read: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethopia, and Libya (Phut marg.) with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee" (Ezek. 38. 3-6). Of this passage J. N. Darby says: "'The chief prince of Meshech and Tubal' is properly translated Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. (This translation, of the correctness of which I have no doubt, is that of the elder Lowth, some hundred and fifty years ago, before these prophetic views were mooted.)" (Coll. Writings, Vol. XI., 507). And again: "The elder Lowth translated it 'prince of Ross' (or rather 'Rosh'); the most accurate modern translation does too. Gesenius gives it as the unquestionable meaning, and adds that without doubt it means the Russian. In the Middle Ages in the East they had the name of Ross" (Coll. Writings, Vol. VIII., 453). And again: "If you consult Genesis 10, the generations of the sons of Japheth are named Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesec, and Tiras. Of

these we get Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Mesec under the same names in Ezekiel 38. as followers of Gog; you will also find Persia, which was united to Media (Madai). . . . These mentioned above are the nations that comprise Russia, Asia Minor, Tartary, and Persia. . . . They are described as under the dominion of Gog, prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk)" (Coll. Writings, Vol. II., 517).

We gather, then, from Ezekiel 38. that Russia will directly rule over, or influence the lands lying east and north of the Holy Land, and her phenomenal successes against the Turks, after surmounting the extraordinary difficulties which the Caucasus Mountains present to modern military operations, seem to be bringing things rapidly into line with the Holy Scriptures.

It is well known that the policy of Great Britain for more than half a century has been to frustrate Russian ambitions in regard to Asia Minor. The Crimean War was fought for this very reason, and in the year 1875 another war with Russia, when she threatened to march on Constantinople, was barely avoided. Now, strangely enough, these two former foes are allied for the overthrow of the power that Britain poured out so much blood and treasure to uphold. But what is so significant is that Russian arms are alone successful. In spite of the gallantry of the British troops in the Dardanelles the campaign there proved to be a complete failure, and the despatches of the generals commanding, describing the failure, leave the impression upon the mind that some unseen force was against them, for nothing seemed to transpire as was intended. But when the decision was made to withdraw the troops everything changed; General Monro's despatch makes remarkable reading in this regard. The Ægean which had been

swept by storms became calm, and the moon which was at full was covered with a haze, with the result that the great army was embarked and got away without the loss of a man, a feat that no living man thought possible. It seemed as though God's hand was against the armies of Britain while they remained in territory that must come under another Power according to His Word, but was for them from the moment the decision was taken to withdraw. The advance upon Baghdad and the failure to relieve Kut-el-Mara discloses similar features. It was not the Turkish armies, but rain and flood that stood between the British and victory. Lord Kitchener, in the House of Lords, said:

“ Every effort was made to relieve the beleaguered force. To the adverse elements alone was due the denial of success, and constant rain and flood not only impeded the advance, but also prevented, in lieu of turning movements, direct attack on an almost impossibly narrow front.

“ No praise would seem extravagant for the troops under Sir Percy Lake and Sir George Goringe, and that they did not reap the fruit of their courage and devotion was due to the circumstances which fought against them ”

But while British plans and hopes fail in a sphere in which she will probably exercise no influence in the great struggle that is yet to come, for she

belongs to another group of nations, Russia steadily advances into those lands which are to be her subordinates, or allies according to the sure word of prophecy; and all the land she occupies she will no doubt hold.

We put these remarkable events and the Scriptures that speak of Russia's destiny together, not in a dogmatic way, but as calling attention to them as being worthy of note; and feeling that they indicate that the time cannot be far off when Russia's millions, augmented by the armies that she will gather from these other nations, will be thrown by their rulers into Palestine in order to destroy the nation of the Jews, and overthrow Jerusalem, which is to be a “burdensome stone for all people” (Zech. 12. 3).

The result of that great invasion is plainly foretold in Ezekiel 38. 39. God Himself will deal with it in fierce judgment of fire, and so great will be the slaughter amongst the multitudes of Gog, that seven months will be occupied in the burial of the carcasses (39. 12); and so shall perish the most persistent and probably the last persecutor of the sons of Jacob—God's chosen people, who are yet to be the centre of blessing for nations on the earth. But for this final battle, e'er all weapons of war are beaten into implements of peace, Israel will be resurrected as a nation by the breath of the Lord according to Ezekiel 37.—(Ed.)

I Will Refine Them.

“ I WILL . . . refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried ” (Zech. 13. 9). If there be any good metal in you, as silver and gold, make ready for the furnace of the children of God. When trouble comes through the land His people are ready to think that, because they have true grace, they shall be kept from the

*

scourge. Nay, but your gold must go to the fire as well as the devil's dross. Peter says: “ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ ” (1 Peter 1. 7). (Rutherford.)

The Two Pentateuchs & the New Testament.

A comparison of some passages from the five books of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the New Testament.

"All these things happened unto them for ensamples (or types)" (1 Cor. 10. 11.).

M. = Pentateuch of Moses. D. = Pentateuch of David. N. T. = New Testament.

Book I. The Beginning of New Life in the Soul.

| | | |
|---|------|--|
| <u>Genesis.</u> | | (The entrance of God's Word gives light.) |
| The Hebrew name of the book means "In the beginning." | M. | "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Genesis 1. 3. |
| Psalms, 1st Book— 1 to 41. | D. | "He spake, and it was done." Psalm 33. 9. |
| | D. | "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19. 7. |
| | N.T. | "Being born again . . . by the Word of God." 1 Peter 1. 23. |
| | N.T. | "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3. 3. |
| | N.T. | "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5. 17. |

Book II. Redemption of God's People.

| | | |
|--|------|---|
| <u>Exodus.</u> | | |
| The Hebrew name of the book means "These are the names." | M. | "The people which Thou hast redeemed." Exodus 15. 13. |
| Psalms, 2nd Book— 42 to 72. | D. | "My soul, which Thou hast redeemed." Psalm 71. 23. See also Psalm 49. 7, 8, 15. |
| | N.T. | "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1. 14. |
| | N.T. | "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1. 18, 19. |
| "He knows His redeemed by name." | M. | "I know thee by name." Exodus 33. 12, 17. |
| | N.T. | "I know My sheep." John 10. 14, 27. |
| | N.T. | "He calleth His own sheep by name." John 10. 3. |

Book III. Sanctification of God's People.

| | | |
|--|------|--|
| <u>Leviticus.</u> | | ("Holiness becomes His house.") |
| The Hebrew name of the book means "And He called." | M. | "I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Leviticus 11. 44. |
| | N.T. | "Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1. 16. |
| | N.T. | "God hath . . . called us . . . unto holiness." 1 Thessalonians 4. 7. |
| (This was a "calling" around Himself for worship.) | M. | "I will set My tabernacle among you, . . . and ye shall be My people." Leviticus 26. 11, 12. |
| | D. | "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house." Psalm 84. 4. |

Psalms, 3rd Book—
73 to 89.

They are led into the
sanctuary of God, to
worship.

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| D. | | “ God is greatly to be feared in the <i>assembly</i> of the <i>saints</i> .” Psalm 89. 7. |
| D. | | “ Until I went into the sanctuary of God.” Psalm 73. 17. |
| N.T. | | “ The <i>church</i> of God . . . them that are <i>sanctified</i> in Christ Jesus, called to be <i>saints</i> .” I Corinthians I. 2. |
| D. | | “ All nations shall come and <i>worship</i> before Thee.” Psalm 86. 9. |
| N.T. | | “ True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” John 4. 23. |
| N.T. | | “ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up <i>spiritual sacrifices</i> .” I Peter 2. 5. |

Book IV. The Lessons of the Way.

Numbers.

The Hebrew name of
the book means “ In
the wilderness.”

Psalms, 4th Book—
90 to 106.

Figurative of the
journey of the Christian
through the *World*.

Justification.
(Christ the righteous-
ness of His people.)

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| M. | | “ The Lord spake unto Moses <i>in the wilderness</i> ” (the opening words of this book). Numbers I. I, etc. |
| M. | | “ He made them wander <i>in the wilderness</i> forty years.” Numbers 32. 13. |
| D. | | “ Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.” Psalm 95. 10. |
| D. | | <i>Discipline</i> .—“ Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest.” Psalm 94. 12. |
| N.T. | | “ For a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise,” etc. I Peter I. 6, 7. |
| N.T. | | “ No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: . . . <i>afterward</i> it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” Hebrew 12. 11. |
| M. | | “ To do thee good <i>at thy latter end</i> .” Deuteronomy 8. 16. |
| D. | | <i>Grace</i> .—“ He made known His ways unto Moses. . . . The Lord is merciful and gracious. . . . He hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities.” Psalm 103. 7-10. |
| M. | | “ He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.” Numbers 23. 21. |
| M. | | “ How goodly are thy tents ! . . . as the trees . . . which the Lord hath planted, and as <i>cedar</i> trees beside the waters.” Numbers, 24. 5, 6. |
| D. | | “ He shall grow like a <i>cedar</i> in Lebanon.” Psalm 92. 12. |
| D. | | “ Let the <i>beauty</i> of the Lord our God be upon us.” (A prayer of Moses.) Psalm 90. 17. |

(Illustrative verses in the O.T.)

A challenge to Baalam (Numbers 23)—the enemy of God's elect.

- N.T. "Thy *beauty* was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord." Ezekiel 16. 14.
- N.T. "Thou art all *fair* . . . there is no spot in thee." Song 4. 7.
- N.T. "Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54. 17. See also Isaiah 45. 24, 25.
- N.T. "Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us . . . *righteousness*, and *sanctification*." 1 Cor. 1. 30.
- N.T. "As He is, so are we *in this world*." 1 John 4. 17.
- N.T. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Romans 8. 33, 34.

Note.—(The world is the place where—after we have known redemption—we are left to be practised in what we know, that we may be "those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.")

Book V. A Review of their History.

Deuteronomy.

The Hebrew name of the book means "These are the words."

Psalms, 5th Book—107 to 150.

(It contains the Words, Statutes, and Judgments of Jehovah. Psalm 147. 19.)

Israel's blessing in the land figurative of the Christian's blessing in heaven.

All the mystery of God's dealings with them is gone for ever. They see it was the "right way."

And they praise Him with everlasting song.

- (*The Day of manifestation.*
The Rehearsal of their history.)
- N.T. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5. 10.
- N.T. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14. 12.
- (*The End of the Journey.*)
- M. "Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and possess." Deuteronomy 1. 8.
- D. "So He bringeth them unto their desired haven." Psalm 107. 30.
- N.T. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4. 17.
- (*God's ways vindicated.*)
- D. "He led them by *the right way*." Psalm 107. 7.
- M. "His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment. . . . *Just and right is He*." Deuteronomy 32. 4.
- D. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. *The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works*." Psalm 145. 3, 17.
- (*Universal praise.*)
- M. "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God," etc. Deuteronomy 32. 3.
- N.T. "And they sing the Song of Moses, and the Song of the Lamb." Revelation 15. 3.
- D. "Let *everything* that hath breath praise the Lord. *Hallelujah*." Psalm 150. 6.

The Word of God.

- | | |
|------|--|
| N.T. | “And every creature . . . heard I saying: ‘Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever.’” Revelation 5. 13. |
| M. | “By every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” Deuteronomy 8. 3. |
| M. | “These words shall be in thine heart.” Deuteronomy 6. 6; 11. 18. |
| D. | “Thy Word have I hid in my heart.” Psalm 119. 11. |
| D. | “For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.” Psalm 119. 89. |
| N.T. | “The Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” 1 Peter 1. 23. |
| N.T. | “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24. 35. |

Note.—In the “Temptation” Christ meets each assault of Satan with a quotation from Deuteronomy. Compare His words “It is written” with the meaning of the Hebrew title of Deuteronomy (with which the book opens)—“These are the words.” And compare this with Psalm 119—which is full of the *Words* of Jehovah—and is the key to the 5th Book of Psalms. (*A. W. T.*)

They often murmured by the way
Because they judged by sight;
But were at length compelled to say,
“The Lord hath led us right!”

The way was right, their hearts to prove,
To make God's glory known,
And show the wisdom, power and love,
Engaged to save His own.

John Newton.

“Be Careful for Nothing.”

WHAT shall I do then? Go to God. “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks.

We see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. “Let your requests be made known.” Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it.

Paul, when he prayed, had for answer, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” But peace will keep your heart and mind—not you will keep this peace.

Is He ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? He thinks of us, we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours.

I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled.

He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty

that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say, thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a blessed thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request—perhaps a very foolish one—and, instead of brooding over trials, that I can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here. While our affections are occupied with heavenly things, we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything.

As Paul says, “without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.” It was worth being cast down, to get that kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand?

He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but, though we see not Him, He sees us, and comes down to give us all that kind of comfort in the trouble. (*J. N. D.*)

The Man of God.

(JAMES BOYD).

TO be wise as serpents (Matt. 10. 16), to be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6. 10), to be filled with the Spirit (ver. 18), to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3. 1), are exhortations which every saint of God without exception is to take to himself. But such qualities as these are at present but very little found among saints; nor indeed have they ever marked the spiritual condition of the people of God as a whole, if we except the first hour of this present dispensation, when it is said of them that: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 4. 31).

There have always been in the Christian community the feeble, the faint-hearted, the dissatisfied, the murmuring, the disappointed, the carnal, and the contentious. The sick, the lame, the languid, the ill-nourished, the dispeptic, have always been found there. Those with weak constitutions, those with little or no desire for the Word, those who are always weary of the way, those who are on the continual look out for a smooth path for their tender feet, those who are always looking back at the Egypt they have professedly left, and longing for a little of its carnal dainties, because they have not learned the satisfying joys and the infinite delights that are to be found in Him in whom is centred the good pleasure of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And these have to be very tenderly cared for, and helped by suitable ministry, meat in due season, the pure mental milk of the Word, by example, by precept, by warning, by rebuke, by encouraging words, and by sympathetic support, for His sake to whom by redemption they belong.

Not every one can walk alone; and very, very few can truly be looked upon as a stay, support, counsellor, and comfort, to the weary, the short-sighted, the cowardly, and the ready-to-halt in this day of sorry declension, division, and departure from God, from Christ, and from the Word of life.

The darkness of this world's night has fallen close down upon that which bears the name of Christ, and its narcotic influence has to a large extent paralysed spiritual activity. As in a man under a powerful anæsthetic, only here and there in the body of this huge Christendom can be found a feeble beat of the pulse of life. But that pulse is there, thank God, the witness that the Spirit is still here and that the soul is in the body. The moment this pulse-beat ceases to be felt the professing body will be nothing but a putrid corpse.

When this state of things comes to be contemplated in the Word of God the individual, and not the professing body, comes into prominence. It is so in the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy, and it is so everywhere else in Scripture where the ruin of the corporate testimony comes under consideration. "To that man will I look," says God, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isa. 66. 2). And this is the man that truly loves the Lord (John 14. 21-24).

God never leaves Himself without a witness. However dark the day may be; whatever character the departure from the living God may take; however widespread and universal the revolt from His authority: the man of God, the witness raised up and supported by His power, is always to hand; and the darker the hour the brighter shines the witness, just as the darkness of the night serves to bring out the glory of the stars that shine in the cloudless blue.

The ungodliness of the antediluvian world brought the elect of God into prominence, among which Enoch and Noah shine conspicuously. The idolatry of the world, even in the days of Shem, brought out from Ur of the Chaldees a mighty witness to the true God, a brilliant star in the firmament of God's governmental dealings with the world that far eclipsed every other luminary,

though there were other brilliants that feebly twinkled through the vapours of their worldly surroundings; Lot, for example. It was so in the days of the apostasy of the nation of Israel, when they made the golden calf, that Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, calling it the tabernacle of the congregation. It was so in the days of Elijah, when alone he stood for God against four hundred of the prophets of Baal, and confounded them all, though they had all the unholy support that the godless king and queen of the people could give. In the days of Malachi, when they said it was vain to serve God, and when the proud were called happy; and when they said that those that wrought wickedness and that tempted God were the people who prospered, they that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name find an honourable place in His book of remembrance.

And is it different to-day? In the midst of the innumerable sects of Christendom, each of which is by its respective founders, champions, and adherents, designated the temple of the Lord (Jer. 7. 4), on what does the eye of the Lord rest? and who are they that are pleasing to Himself? Who could they be but the individuals who call on the Lord out of a pure heart? Such belong to no sect or party, nor do they look at themselves as connected with anything less than the body of Christ and family of God. Such will seek to walk in harmony with the whole revealed will of God. Men of such spiritual calibre will be a light to those who are seeking the pathway of God's will, and they will be a source of strength to their weaker brethren; they will be greatly used also to help those who have no intention of following their lead in rigid separation from this world; and above everything else they will be pleasing to the heart of Christ, and their faithfulness will not be forgotten or go unrewarded in the day of His glory.

From the great break-up at the time of the Reformation the power and

presence of God have not been with any *company* on earth as such, but with *individuals* who walk in separation from iniquity, call on the Lord out of a pure heart, speak often one to another, and together follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Such are men of God, devoted to the interests of Christ, diligent in His service, unworldly to a degree, and finding the home of their hearts in the love of God, as it has come to light in Jesus.

To such many attach themselves who may be at the outset carried away by the glamour of what they call "*new truth*," but who are very little able to distinguish between truth and error, and these in some cases make a measure of profit by what they hear; for the Word tells us that: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise" (Prov. 13. 20); but being unspiritual and lacking in faith, instead of connecting themselves with their living Head in heaven, and with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they connect Him with themselves, like Jacob and his altar, calling it El-elohe-Israel (Gen. 33. 20). Position, church position, is everything to them, and the presence of the Lord in the midst, and His sanction of their ecclesiastical position they determinedly connect with their little *company*; the flesh gets a loose rein, and the fact that all believers are members of the one body of Christ is overlooked; self-occupation, the allowance of flesh, biting and devouring one another, divisions and separations take place. Pride of heart, spiritual pride, the worst pride of all, has been a disease from which we all have suffered, and rightly has it been visited with the rebuke of God. And to pride of heart partyism owes its origin, for neither is of the meek and lowly Head of the body.

No: the truth, the testimony of our Lord, the interests of Christ—all are to-day maintained by the individual in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. The man of God is the only man at the present moment to be counted on. I do

not mean that we should put our trust in any human being, save the Lord in heaven. But the man of God is the only man that *is* standing for God in the midst of this corrupt profession. The man of God will let nothing slip of Paul's doctrine, nor will he pay little regard to his manner of life. He will not be under the Roman delusion that that which is ecclesiastical is the *only* thing that God has respect to, and that moral and spiritual state is of little account. He will understand that God has no respect to the claim to outward ecclesiastical correctness where the inward spiritual condition is bad. He will be well aware that the ecclesiastical edifice, as set up by the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and which has been built upon by others, has become corrupted and has fallen into decay, but that the life which is in Christ Jesus is beyond the reach of contamination by evil. This life is that to which the saint is called, and it is that which is already his by the quickening power of God, though to have it in its own sphere and according to eternal purpose involves glory with Christ.

And it is on this life Paul falls back amid the ruin of the church. It is a life unassailable by the forces of the enemy, and on this great fact the Apostle can, and does, retire with confidence.

Beloved saints of God, we have not

much longer to be here. Of this most of us, I doubt not, are thoroughly persuaded. The coming of the Lord is at hand. Already we can see the *day* approaching. The Morning Star will soon put forth all His mighty and attractive power, and in incorruption, power, and glory shall come forth His people from the graves, the living shall be changed by that same power, and then we shall rise to meet Him, and to see Him as He is. And what a glorious meeting that will be!

Let Him not find us disputing with one another over a mere ecclesiastical position, but let us rather be found of Him without spot and blameless, and in the exercise of divine affections, caring for His interests, holding forth the Word of life, ministering to the needs of His beloved people just because they are His people. Let Him not have to say to us that we sought our own, and not the things that are His (Phil. 2. 21); or that His sheep wandered through all the mountains, and were scattered upon the face of all the earth, and that we had not searched or sought after them (Ezek. 34. 6), or that if we did seek after them it was only to gather them to ourselves, and not to Him. May we act before Him, as under His eye, seeking only to have His approval, and being content with it whatever men may say about us or to us.

Waiting to be Called Up.

“**A**RE you waiting to be called up?” I asked a Christian man of military age. “Yes,” he answered, “I’m waiting to be called UP”; and the way in which he laid the emphasis on the word “up” showed what he meant. Then he added: “I’m ‘looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us’” (Titus 2. 13). What a calling up that will be; no Christian living or asleep will seek exemption from it. “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).

This is our hope; don’t let us lose sight of it, fellow-believers in Jesus: it will bring light into the darkest day and comfort into the greatest sorrow, and cheer our hearts along the roughest road. We are told to “comfort one another with these words”; may we not be slow to do it. The day is approaching. Now is “our salvation nearer than when we believed.” We are waiting to be called up.

Edification and Education.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels).

ALTHOUGH everyone with a passable knowledge of the English language recognizes that these words are different, many students of Scripture fail to distinguish their spheres of application.

The Greek word in the original text of the New Testament which is translated "edification" or "to edify" literally means the act of "building a house," and indeed in Scripture the word is more often translated "building" than "edification." In its usage the Apostle has in his mind's eye at least two conceptions, viz.:—

(1) That the great structure of Christianity is like a house composed of individual stones which require fit placing in the building. The Apostle Peter speaks of the saints as living stones being builded up into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2. 4, 5).

(2) That the individual believer has a composite spiritual structure like to a house. His or her spiritual character is composed of Christian virtues which, like stones, require placing in view of the day when the Lord shall appear to inspect the building.

If these conceptions are clearly apprehended it will be seen that edification is no mere mental process. Education has to do with the letter of the Word, but edification is indissolubly bound up with the apprehension of the spirit which permeates the Word of God, and our becoming affected in spirit by it. A Scripture student may become very conversant with passages of Holy Writ, and its phrases may escape from his lips with great facility, and yet these living words may gain very little control over his spirit.

We are apt to look upon the description of the Laodicean church in the third chapter of the Revelation as applicable only to something anti-Christian. But we who have at one time or another undoubtedly tasted

that the Lord is good will do well to sit down and examine ourselves as to how far the poverty, the nudity, and the blindness of that church are characteristic of us as individuals; *poor* as to the spirit of Christ; *naked* as to the Christian virtues; *blind* as to the perception of the marvellous living formative truths which lie beneath the simple pages of Scripture.

Now we come to consider the external or communicative aspect of edification. It must be clearly recognized that no saint can edify another if he, or she, is not also edified in the process.

There must be a preliminary exercise of soul, not primarily with a view to edifying others, but that one's own spiritual structure may be strengthened. Then we are in a position to do good and communicate. It is only spirit which can communicate spirit.

One endowed with very little natural capacity, if under the control of the Spirit of God, may edify the saints very greatly through speaking five words which are like live coals from the altar, while another possessing great natural powers may speak ten thousand words very fluently and yet these words may prove to be in an unknown tongue. The Spirit of God is not pleased to use them in satisfying the longing soul. Why? Because they are not living words, and hence they are in a tongue unknown to the spirits of the hearers.

On the other hand we must guard against belittling knowledge of the letter of Scripture. It is the vehicle in which the living truth is wheeled up for our apprehension. God never reveals anything to us except what is contained in the letter of His Word. But the great point is that we may not be content to stop at the apprehension of the letter, but that we may lay ourselves open to come under the control of the spirit of that which we have read or heard. In that alone is life.

"My Way Hidden."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THERE is more than the possibility, when your prayers are long unanswered, and your expectations languish, and the dark clouds of hopeless despair begin to settle down on your soul, that you say with Jacob of old (Isa. 40. 27): "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over from my God."

A dark mystery seems to attach to the dealings of God with you. Things are not as in days past when His candle lit up your darkness and His sun shone on your path. You then prayed and were heard. You felt that you had abundance of help and sympathy from on high. Your sky was clear and your song triumphant. But now clouds, darkness, difficulty, sorrow, helplessness surround you, and your heart is crushed. And the sore experience continues. Did it last but a night and then be followed in the morning by joy and deliverance, you could bear it; but that deliverance comes not, and the one thing that makes life, for the man of faith, worth living—the realized, conscious help and smile and favour of God—are still withheld. If His loving-kindness be better than life, the lack of it is worse than death. "True, indeed," you say. Hence you think that your way is hid from the Lord and your judgment passed over by God!

So you feel; nor can any one relieve you of the feeling. Your condition is deplorable, but it is not altogether uncommon. Others have gone through the same murky waters and felt the same bitter pain. That road is well trodden; and, toilsome though it be, it leads to the right and blessed end.

Your way hidden! Ah! that is not likely. Your judgment passed over—never!

Then why am I thus? Why this tide of sorrow, loss, bereavement, misery? The question may be unanswerable, at least by man; nor is he, in his limita-

tions, able to assuage your sorrow, or to relieve you of your load; but how, oh how can your way be hidden from Him to whom all things are naked and opened, and who knows your down-sitting and your uprising, and who numbers the very hairs of your head?

God assuredly knows all your sorrow and pursues, with a care that is as unailing as it is wise, all the intricacies of your chequered way. Say not: "My way is hid from the Lord." As surely as you are a child of God, even though your faith be feeble, forget you He never will! Never.

Mark, the explanation of His ways with you shall be given in good time, but not to-day; and does not the greater part of your difficulty lie in the desire to obtain that explanation now? Most probably. Must God explain to us the why and wherefore of His discipline? Is that necessary to us? Must we give the reason to our children why we see fit to chasten them? And if God supplied us with the deep secret of His corrections, would we benefit therefrom?

Many a long chapter of trial did the patriarch Job pass through ere he was given to know the reason of his losses, bereavements, and trials. But the reason came at last, and was understood and valued.

"To do thee good at thy latter end" was the object of the manna that had to be gathered in the lowly stoop of each day's journey. Happy it is when the end justifies the means, and when the sorely tried pilgrim is content to walk by faith and not by sight, just because he knows that all things (sweet or bitter, pleasant or painful) work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose.

"Give us," prayed an honoured servant of Christ, "unbounded confidence in Thine unbounded love." Get hold of the fact that you are loved

with love unbounded, even though you fear that your way is hidden, and your judgment passed over, and even though "all these things are (as this same Jacob said) against" you, then light will begin to break on your poor desponding heart, and the clouds will scatter under the light of heaven.

What a remedy the same passage, in Isaiah 40. supplies. "The young men," we read, "shall utterly faint and fail" (for the greatest human vigour is unequal to the strain), "but they that wait on the Lord shall renew (change)

their strength, they shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

What is the remedy? To wait on the Lord. Is that all? Yes; but, if you wait on the Lord, you abandon every other conceivable refuge. You reach the glorious Fountain Head, where the heart is at rest and satisfied for evermore.

"God is love; he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4. 16).

The Estimative Faculty.

THE wisdom or folly of any man is most seen in the estimative faculty. Many are great judges and learned, as the magicians of Chaldea, and philosophers, who know wonders and hidden things, and causes of things, and yet are not wise, but fools, and vain in their imaginations, because there is a great defect in their estimative faculty. They choose darkness for light, evil for good, a creature for their God. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11. 25). And how is his faith made faith? And how is it evident that he was not a raw, ignorant, and foolish child when he made the choice; but a man, ripe, come to years, and so, as wise as he was old? It is proved because his estimative faculty was right. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He is a wise man who maketh a wise choice, and for this cause Esau is called a profane man (Heb. 12. 27); he had not wisdom to put a difference between the excellency of the birthright and a morsel of meat. A profane and wicked man hath not

wisdom to esteem God and Christ above the creature, but confoundeth the one with the other.

Estimation produceth love, even the love of Christ; and love is a great favourite, and is much at court, and dwelleth constantly with the King. To be much with Christ, especially in secret, late and early, and to give much time to converse with Christ, speaketh much love; and the love of Christ is of the same largeness and quantity with grace, for grace and love keep proportion one with another.

He who duly esteemeth Christ is a noble bidder, and so a noble and liberal buyer. He outbiddeth Esau; what is pottage to Christ? He overbiddeth Judas; what is silver to Christ? Yea, all things, in the greatest count, can be cast up; for it includeth all prices, all riches; it taketh in heaven, as it is a created thing. Then, all things, the vast and huge globe and circle of the capacious world, and all excellencies within in its bosom; nations, all nations; angels, all angels; gold, all gold; jewels, all jewels; honour and delights, all honour, all delights, and every all beside, lieth before Christ, as feathers, dung, shadows, nothing.—(Rutherford.)

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 4.

(H. J. VINE).

A Type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE Spirit of Christ was in Jeremiah (1 Peter 1, 11). We are therefore justified in seeing some express foreshadowing of our blessed Lord in him. There is doubtless much about Jeremiah also that stands out in striking contrast to Him. For instance, if, like his Lord, he is led as "a lamb" by his persecutors "to the slaughter" (11. 19), he certainly was not farther, in this case, like Him; for Christ "opened not His mouth." Again, they said, as to the prophet, "Let us cut him off from the land of the living." They did not, however, do this to Jeremiah; but they did it to our blessed Saviour (Isa. 53. 8). They *desired* that Jeremiah's "name may be remembered no more"; but of Christ it is asked, "Who shall declare His generation?"

Like our Lord Jesus Christ, the prophet loved Israel and Jerusalem. He felt very really their sorrowful state; so deeply did Jeremiah enter into it that we find him exclaiming, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart" (4. 19). And just as if their desolation was his own, he cries, "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me" (8. 18).

Christ wept over Jerusalem as He beheld it, and spake of its sore affliction. Going into the temple, too, he was grieved to see the religious trafficking that went on; as Jeremiah had said, "Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (7. 11). In the Lamentations we hear the prophet saying, "I am the man that hath seen affliction" (3. 1); again, "He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled with reproach" (3. 30). And again, how like the Lord Jesus, when he personifies the city, saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (1. 12). Only Christ could enter fully into all that their sin had brought upon them. Jeremiah could not do that. The blessed Saviour could do so; and in grace, and infinite love, He did so perfectly. Yea, He Himself bore the judgment which their sins deserved, as well as ours, that we might be saved. Blessed be His holy name.

Referring again to Deuteronomy, it is most interesting as well as instructive in this connection to see that the very words which are spoken there, as to the coming "Prophet," are applied to Jeremiah, though they distinctly and primarily refer to the Lord. It is said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee

(Moses), and will *put My words in His mouth*; and He shall *speak unto them all that I shall command Him*" (Deut. 18. 18). Of Jeremiah we read, "The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put *My words into thy mouth*" (1. 9); and in verse 17, "*Speak unto them all that I command thee.*" It is easily understood, therefore, why the prophet Jeremiah had such a pre-eminent place in the mind of an Israelite; and why when our blessed Saviour was here some thought He was "*Jeremias*, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16. 14); and why as giving character to the other prophets it should be said in Matthew 27. 9 that what was foretold in Zechariah 11. 12, 13 came under the title of "*Jeremy the Prophet*"; because he stood at the head, just as David does with the Psalms; though many stand under other names. Jeremiah, unlike Isaiah and others in this respect, becomes himself a distinct type of CHRIST AS THE PROPHET foretold in Deuteronomy.

It was "because of the *word of the Lord*," he could say, It was made "reproach unto me, and a derision daily"; "Every one mocketh me" (20. 7, 8). It is the Gospel of John which gives us in a very special way the precious Antitype, the Prophet raised up by God, perfectly fulfilling what was foretold and foreshadowed as to Himself.

"ART THOU THAT PROPHET?" they ask John the Baptist, in a manner that showed they all expected His coming. "And he answered, No" (John 1. 21). They then question him why he baptized if he was not "*that Prophet*" (ver. 25); but he tells them, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not." When the Lord fed the five thousand in chapter 6, we read, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth *that Prophet* that should come unto the world" (ver. 14). Through Moses God had spoken to them, and fed them in the wilderness; and they would be reminded of the promise of the Prophet, who should surpass Moses, and still be "like unto" him. And in the next chapter, when He spake of the "rivers of living water," we are told, "Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is THE PROPHET" (7. 40).

In Moses' day the water flowed to them from the rock; "that Rock was Christ"; but He spake of "the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." He Himself is the giver of the living water now.

When speaking as the eternal Son to the

Father, in the blessed intimate converse of chapter 17., He said, "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me" (ver. 8). Here He stands alone in His divine supremacy. Promises and prophets may foretell and foreshadow Him; but as it was on the holy mount, at the presence of "the excellent glory,"—Moses and Elias withdrew, and "They saw no man save Jesus only"; so here. As THE ETERNAL SON who could speak of the glory He had WITH THE FATHER BEFORE THE WORLD WAS, He is beyond type and shadow, although fulfilling them all.

He indeed spake what was given to Him by the Father to speak; for He had become flesh to draw near to us. He was truly a Man amongst men, walking in grace and in dependence upon God. As the promised Prophet, the people had been told to *hear Him* (Deut. 18. 15). They had been afraid of the voice of divine majesty, speaking amidst fire and tempest, from the smoking mount of *law giving*; God therefore promised to raise up One "from among their brethren,"

who should speak in *divine grace*. He came to His own, but His own received Him not. All through John's Gospel we find Him speaking as "that Prophet." He could say, "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak"; and "As the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12. 49-50). Peter, in Acts 3. 22, referring to the promise in Deuteronomy 18. 15, said, "HIM SHALL YE HEAR." Stephen also quotes it in Acts 7. 37, "*Him shall ye hear.*" Upon the mount which we have mentioned, from the excellent glory, when the bright cloud overshadowed them, a Voice is heard, saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM*" (Matt. 17. 5). Here Jeremiah and all others must stand aside. Favoured and faithful servants of the Lord all gladly give place to the PRE-EMINENT ONE, THE SON. We might well have esteemed it a privilege to listen to Moses or Jeremiah; but what high honour is ours, to be called to hear the Son; to receive His words, to listen to His well-known voice, speaking in divine grace. May our ears be attentive to His communications, as His were to the Father (Isa. 50.).

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—III.

(JAMES GREEN).

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven. (Matt. 13. 31-33.)

PROBABLY no portion of Scripture has been the subject of so much divergence of thought as that which we are about to consider. This difference has been brought about by expositors starting their studies with preconceived ideas which they have sought to find in the parables. It is important to observe that our Lord separated these two parables from those that follow (vers. 34-36) and closely connected them with the previous one in which the tares grow with the wheat. If that parable be borne in mind it will be seen that *no thought of gradual improvement until the whole was good* (as is so often asserted) is conveyed by the Lord's words. Rather did He seek to impress His hearers with something very different, for the tares were to be left to grow until the harvest. The kingdom of the heavens was to have two characteristics: (1) The development of the children of the kingdom; (2) the growth of a foreign element, the children of the wicked one. The latter is unfolded in the two parables now before us, and becomes dominant as to outward appearance; the former we shall find indicated in the parables of the treasure and the pearl, the hidden secret of the kingdom.

First of all, in the mustard seed we have that which was small in its inception, but

assumed a growth that was absolutely abnormal. The sower of the seed expected it to produce a herb after its kind and never intended a mighty tree to grow from it. So the seed of the kingdom was designed to produce a little flock, who should occupy an obscure and hidden place in the world, producing the fruits of lowliness, meekness, and grace, seen in the Master and the disciples who had received His word. A small beginning surely, but other influences have been at work by which a growth has been produced, as unnatural as a tree to a mustard plant. It has become like the kingdoms of the world, often likened to the trees of the field, as was Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4. 20-22), so also the Assyrian, and Pharaoh, King of Egypt (Ezek. 31.).

Following the same figure, Satan has sought by the tree-like proportions of the kingdom of the heavens to anticipate the millennial kingdom, and has persuaded men that by the gradual spread of goodness, and the outward profession of the name of the Lord they may have the world-kingdom without the presence of the king. Subtle have been the tactics of the foe, and around us to-day is the full-grown result. Christendom is a huge tree, its offices are filled by the great men of the earth, kings and prelates, rulers

and statesmen are concerned with the direction of its affairs. Nations go to war in support of it, and blood has been shed in abundance to maintain its supposed rights. History bears witness to the fact that soon after the apostles were called home leaders of the church began to assume a position of dignity and lordship over the flock. Speedily was a union formed between church and State, and the prelates of the church were given a voice in the direction of the world's affairs, and largely partook of its riches and honours. Need we dwell upon the avowed object of world dominion which Ecclesiastical Rome has ever sought, assuming, as it has done, the right to crown or dethrone monarchs, and use their armies for the attaining of its own end of earthly supremacy.

In later days this object has to a great extent been nullified by the prevalence of rationalism, but nevertheless Rome is at the present time seeking to combine the sects of Protestantism into a unity in which she, of course, is to hold the chief place. Surely in the midst of all this the fowls of the air have found a home. Evil principles from the world without combined with Satanic agencies have taken possession of the branches. In Revelation 18. 2, 3 all this is described with terrible detail, and upon this vast system of confusion the judgment of God shall fall (Rev. 18. 8).

But not only from the outside has the evil come, for the kingdom of the heavens is likened to leaven, an awful simile indeed. Not like three measures of meal, for this is a figure of that which is Christ-like, but like leaven which a woman put therein. The order of the statement should have preserved any one from the idea that the leaven set forth the good that in due course would permeate the whole mass. On the contrary, leaven is a type of inward corruption, and in consequence its presence was forbidden in any sacrifice typical of the Holy Person of our Lord Jesus Christ (Lev. 2. 11). The woman also sets forth an organized system

of ecclesiastical evil by means of which the leaven was introduced (*cf.* Rev. 2. 20; 17. 5; Eph. 4. 14). This leaven of malice and wickedness has spread through the three measures of that which should have borne witness to the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Holy Ghost. The whole has been leavened by corrupting doctrines undermining the foundations of the truth concerning the Son of God (1 John 4. 1-3); teachers say that the resurrection is passed already (2 Tim. 2. 18). Evil men speak perverse things (Acts 20. 30). The second chapter of 2 Peter and the Epistle of Jude bear painful witness to the fulfilment of the parable, while 2 Timothy 3. 13 adds the solemn warning that nothing better can be expected.

Black indeed is the picture and hopeless the outlook had not the Lord taken His disciples aside into the house and there told them the secret of how in the midst of all the corruption there should be found that which was of immense value to His heart; that God at last should be triumphant, but that it would be by the destruction of evil and not by a process of growth of good, as many have believed, and to whom the advancing years and the march of events have brought only bitter disappointment. This must ever be the case if happiness and peace are expected from the wrong source. The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens were never intended for the betterment of the world; it could not be so, seeing that this form of the kingdom was established consequent upon the fact that the world had murdered the Son of God. No, the earth must wait for its peace, the inhabitants thereof must wait for happiness, until the rightful King shall have His rights. Then, when His world-kingdom shall be displayed, the leaves of the tree of life shall be for the healing of the nations, and men, beating their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, shall learn war no more.

“Where Two or Three.”

To the Editor of "Scripture Truth."

MAY I be allowed to add a word to the remarks on Matthew 18. 20 contained in your April issue? I will begin by a quotation from a letter by a well-known teacher dated April 14th, 1847: "Ruin is found in this, that the church, such as God formed and fashioned it, does not exist at all (*i.e.* as a matter of visible testimony), save as He sanctions two or three meeting in the name of Jesus. When this is done, if it be in the spirit of the unity of the whole body (woe to them if it is not), the Lord will be with them."

I think this point is of real importance, for it should be remembered that the passage referred to in Matthew 18. is the carrying out locally of the truth of Christ's assembly spoken of in chapter 16. The separation in practice of these two chapters has led to the sorrowful result that every sect in Christendom claims the Lord's presence in their midst in spite of the obvious truism that He will never lend Himself to become the centre of any party.

C. E. H. W.

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalm 119.

THIS very long Psalm is as remarkable in its structure as in the extraordinary detail of its diction. It is composed of twenty-two stanzas, each stanza contains eight verses, and every verse of the same stanza begins with the same letter, the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet being employed acrostic fashion for the twenty-two stanzas. The number eight, which is thus imbedded in the structure of the Psalm, has the significance of a new beginning and corresponds with the subject matter, which illustrates the results of God's new beginning with Israel in a future day. His promise is: "I will take you from among the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land; and I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean . . . a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezek. 36.). Jeremiah speaks to the same effect: "I will make a new covenant," etc. (Jer. 31.). The whole Psalm will accordingly be found to be the expression of the delight of the people of God in His law, which no longer entails wrath, but finds in them a true correspondence to itself. As regards the subject and the structure, another has remarked: "Every letter of man's language is taken up with the praise of that which was but an intolerable yoke before." Historically it is very probable it was written after the return from Babylon, at the time when, under Ezra and Nehemiah, the reading of the Scriptures was so diligently encouraged. In accordance with the prophecies cited above there will be an analogous work of the Spirit in the future.

Aleph: Stanza 1.—In order fully to enjoy the blessing proposed in the first two verses regard must be had to "all Thy commandments." In these there is a complete provision to walk in a perfect way. But in response to the revelation of God's will, "the whole heart" should be engaged in seeking Him. The same expression occurs in verses 10, 34, 58, 69, 145. The word "judgments" (ver. 7) occurs very frequently and is used for the judicial decisions of God in matters relating to men.

Beth: Stanza 2.—This portion gives us cleansing by the Word and its proper consequences. In order to express the efficacy of this cleansing the young man in whom nature is strong is taken as an example; "the whole heart" is set right and Jehovah is sought, yet with fear as to self "let me not wander from Thy commandments." But if Jehovah is thus sought, the soul quickly reaches a true sense of what He is, so here "blessed art Thou, O Jehovah." Testimony to others

rightly follows, while joy and delight in what tells of Him is known.

Gimel: Stanza 3.—Here the circumstances of the writer are for the first time mentioned, "I am a sojourner" (Lev. 25. 23): reproach and contempt are experienced from the proud and from princes (Neh. 4. 4). Such conditions invite the bountiful dealing of Jehovah, that the soul may be encouraged to obedience: the enlarged intelligence desired in verse 2 follows and "Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors."

Daleth: Stanza 4.—Here the effects of the trial are more felt inwardly: "My soul cleaveth to the dust," an allusion to mourners sitting in dust and ashes; also, "my soul melteth for heaviness." Yet there is true uprightness: "I declared my ways" with the desire that the way of falsehood (not lying, as in A.V., but unfaithfulness in contrast to "the way of faithfulness" in the next verse). From this state, first quickening and then enlargement of heart are desired, in order that the faithful one may run in the way of Jehovah's commandments.

He: Stanza 5.—This section contains eight distinct petitions, but their force is concentrated in the two first: "Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of Thy statutes"; God has always a path according to His purpose. In the New Testament this may be seen in the three exhortations to "walk worthy" (1 Thess. 2. 12; Col. 1. 10; Eph. 4. 1). The Psalmist adds, "and I shall keep it unto the end," literally "to the heel," meaning throughout his whole being. In the next verse the whole heart is engaged in this blessed obedience. How true is the Lord's word: "If a man love Me, he will keep My word"! The petitions which follow are all subordinate to these. The last, in verse 40, is for quickening in, "Thy righteousness," a plea arising from a real knowledge of what God is.

Vau: Stanza 6.—The first two verses indicate the need for which the Spirit provides these petitions; mercy and salvation are sought, and that "according to Thy Word," and also with a view to testimony being rendered even before kings (ver. 46). The line of thought evidently is that the sure word of Jehovah being pledged to the deliverance of His saints, if that deliverance did not reach them, their enemies would be able to cast reproach on God, as if He were helpless to do what He had promised (Num. 13. 16; Ezra 8. 22). Thus it is clear that no selfish motives are at work in these prayers, but God's honour is sincerely sought. Testimony having been rendered the soul returns to its delight in the word and will of God (*cf.* Mark 6. 30).

Answers to Correspondents.

Subjection to the Higher Powers.

J.F. AND OTHERS.—It appears to us that the fact has been overlooked by many that God has connected the conscience with *subjection* unto the higher powers, and not with *resistance*, either active or passive, of them or their institution, “WHEREFORE WE MUST NEEDS BE SUBJECT . . . FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE” (Rom. 13. 5). Nothing could be clearer or more emphatic than that. And to accept with simplicity so plain a word about which there can be no question will clear away at once many difficulties. And if we obey the Word of God we may count upon the care of God, and His intervention on our behalf, but if we choose the way that we think right, apart from the Word, we may have to prove that we are not wise.

There is great danger in taking a one-sided view of things; the truth is many-sided, and we shall fail in our testimony if we lose sight of this. We have received the *grace of God* and are to be the exponents of it before men, yet we must not forget the *government of God*, by which the sword has been put into the hands of the authorities for the punishment of them that do evil (Rom. 13.). We have to maintain our *heavenly calling and character*, and yet meet to the full all the obligations that belong to the *earthly relationships* in which the providence of God has set us. We are disciples of the Lord, *whose kingdom is not of this world*, and yet we must submit ourselves to every institution of man for the Lord's sake,

whether to the king as supreme, or to governors as unto them that are sent by him (1 Peter 2. 13, 14). We have to recognize that *the whole world lieth in the wicked one*, that the devil is its prince and god, its originator and deceiver, and so be separate from it, and yet acknowledge at the same time that the *powers that be* are ordained of God, and consequently give them due honour. We must render to God the things that are God's and not withhold from Cæsar the things that are his. It may seem at times as though these things clash one with the other, but for those who desire to do the *will of God* the Word of God will always be a sure guide if it is rightly interpreted and applied.

In your letter you ask if Romans 13. supposes *unqualified* subjection to the powers that be, and state that if it does it seems to you “that God had handed over to them that which you have always considered the divine prerogative.” The passage does not contemplate any intrusion on the part of the higher powers between the individual conscience and God. If the authorities commanded what God had forbidden, or forbade what God had commanded, or decreed that all should blaspheme the name of God and deny Christ and the truth, then, of course, the way would be plain. Every faithful Christian would say: “We ought to obey God rather than man.” But such a contingency as this has not yet arisen, and for this we ought to be profoundly thankful to Him.

Grieve not the tender heart of Christ by doubting Him. The gold and the silver are His, and the cattle that feed upon a thousand hills: He sits above the water floods, and He does as He will amongst the armies of men. No decree can be made or edict sent forth apart from His permission. He is to us the revelation of the Father the sure,

declaration to us of the Father's care, and we may be at all times without anxiety, for “WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, AND TO THEM THAT ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE” (Rom. 8. 28).

The Deity of Jesus.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE central truth of all truth is that concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was man on earth and His life here closed upon a malefactor's cross, and He is a man now at the right of the Majesty on High, having been raised again from the dead by the glory of the Father. But He who was man in humiliation on earth, who is still a man in exaltation in heaven, and who will never surrender manhood for ever is also God, eternal in being and omnipotent in power. He was God before He took up manhood, He did not cease to be God when he tabernacled amongst men, and what He was, He is, and shall for ever be.

The necessity of Deity of Jesus meets us first in relation to men being brought to God in righteousness, for no purpose of God in regard to them could be realized if men were not brought to Him righteously, and established before Him according to His eternal justice and the holiness of His nature. How could this be done, and who was able to do it? The question is not a new one. It was asked by Job long centuries ago when he cried, "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9. 2). And the question was not one of passing interest that engaged his attention for a moment merely, it received his most earnest consideration, for he realised how vital a question it was. In the ninth chapter of his book we find him testing one by one the suggestions that arose in regard to it, and finally, apparently hopeless of finding an answer, breaking out in that soul-stirring lament, "HE IS NOT A MAN AS I AM, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. NEITHER IS THERE ANY DAYSMAN BETWIXT US, THAT MIGHT LAY HIS HAND UPON US BOTH. Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me: then would I speak and not fear Him; but it is not so with me."

Do you perceive where he stood, and can you interpret his feelings? He said

in effect: "I know that I have sinned against Him, and if He were a man as I am, I could, having the feelings of a man, understand His displeasure; I could estimate the extent of my offence, and I could go to Him and make restitution for the wrong that I have done, and so be at peace with Him. But He is not a man as I am, and I cannot enter into judgment with Him, I do not know where to begin the argument, I cannot measure the demands of His justice. I have no ground upon which to stand before Him; the gulf between us is immeasurable from my side; He is almighty, holy and just, and I am weak, sinful and guilty; His very holiness is a terror to me; it makes me afraid."

Only could Job have hope if a daysman, or mediator, appeared in the case, fully qualified to take it up; and see how accurately he had gauged the situation: He must be one who can stand betwixt us—between God, infinitely holy and just, and the sinner, guilty and conscience-stricken—and put his hand upon us both; and, says he, I know no one who can do it. I have felt the need of such an one, longed for Him, sought for Him, but I have not found Him.

Mark well the qualifications that the needed mediator must possess: He must stand betwixt God and the sinner, and by so doing *declare His willingness to take up the case*, and He must be able to put His hand upon both; and I beg of you not to miss the meaning of that. I might come to you and lay my hand upon your shoulder and talk familiarly with you, for we are equals, but I could not stand beside His Majesty the King and lay my hand upon him, it would not be proper even if I had the opportunity; how much less could a man lay His hand upon God, or upon the throne of God! It is recorded that when David would bring the ark to Zion, that ark being God's throne in Israel, and the symbol of His presence there,

that Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it, and the moment his presumptuous fingers touched that throne of God he fell to the earth a corpse. Learn from that solemn incident that no man could put his hand upon God, or upon the throne of God and live. And yet the mediator for whom Job cried in his despair must be able to put His hand upon God, He must be God's equal, none less could intervene, or be of use to Job or to us. But he must also put His hand upon men; He must be one of us, able to take our part and to identify Himself with our vast indebtedness. **HE MUST BE GOD AND MAN.**

It should be evident to us all, as it was to Job, that such an one we cannot produce, for no man, even the best, could exalt Himself to Deity; the attempt to do so, which will be made by the coming superman, the beast of Revelation 13, will be the climax of all blasphemy, and will result in that impious and devil-inspired personage being cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19.). Men cannot bring forth the needed mediator; here they come to their wit's end; they have no hope except in God, the one whose glory has been challenged by their sin. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, and the one whom Job could not find on earth has come from heaven, and our part is to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

The New Testament is the book of the Mediator. In its first chapter there stands twice over in capital letters the name of its great subject, its true title, **JESUS**. "Thou shalt call His name **JESUS**: for He shall save His people from their sins" (ver. 21.). "She brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name **JESUS**" (ver. 25.); and Jesus is Emmanuel: **GOD WITH US**. The prophetic Scriptures, to cheer the faith of those who lived in those dim days, had foretold His coming: "But thou, Bethelhem Ephratah, though thou belittle 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). That word was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem; then He appeared who was able to speak to man on God's behalf, and to speak to God on man's behalf, for He is God and man.

Being God, He knew according to God's perfect estimate what the effect to the universe of man's disregard of His will was: how and to what extent God's glory was jeopardized by man's sin; what the demands of the eternal throne were in regard to the violation of its just decrees. He knew how completely man's self-will had made him the slave of Satan, how great was the gulf that separated him from God; how utterly powerless he was to rectify the awful wrong that he had committed. He knew the penalty that had to be paid, the conflict that had to be waged, the work that had to be done. It was the will of God that every problem that man's sin had raised should be taken up and settled in a way in which every attribute of His should be glorified and salvation secured for us, and He, the Son, came to accomplish the will of God. He said, "A body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 5-7). He became man to stand in our place before God; to take the bill of our terrible indebtedness, and meet it to the full, so that God Himself could write "Settled" across the account. This involved for Him the sorrows of Calvary; and there, as the holy Substitute for men, He "gave Himself a ransom for all." The sacrifice that He made has met all the claims of the throne, and He is now "**THE ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.**" But only one who could estimate things according to God's own measure of them could do what He has done.

What a Saviour is Jesus! How fully worthy is He of our fullest praise! He stooped to us that He might put His

hand upon us, degraded though we were, and He has done it tenderly and graciously, so that we are not afraid. There is no terror for us in His hand, we do not shrink from Him. He has touched us with the touch of a man, and bound us with the cords of love. Yet he was never less than God, and God has touched us in Him. He has put one hand upon us and the other is placed upon the throne of God, and He is the one mediator. With the one hand He has offered the fullest satisfaction to the righteous claims of God and with the other He has bestowed fullness of grace upon us. He brings us to God and gives us a place in His presence without fear, and in everlasting peace, a peace established upon the infallible and immovable foundation of divine righteousness, secured for us by a divine person for the eternal glory of God.

Thus are we justified before God, and all our fear is removed, and we are free to behold the hand that has been placed upon us, and to mark the fact that it is a wounded hand; a hand that was nail-pierced for us when He identified Himself with us, as we stood subject to the judgment of God, that He might save us. We know the power of this hand too; it has smitten death for us and will not relinquish its hold upon us for ever. As He is now a man in heaven, so shall we be there: He the first-born among many brethren, we His associates identified with Him in an everlasting oneness. He will never surrender that true humanity which He has taken up, and as He is so are they also who are His. The purpose of God is that we should be conformed to His own image. And so we shall be, and yet never shall we forget that He is "over all, God, Blessed for ever more."

The Chiefest among Ten Thousand.

"What is thy beloved more than another beloved? My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea he is altogether lovely" (Cant. 5. 9, 10, 16).

WE defraud our spirits of much sweetness, because we go no further in our desires than to creature excellency; we rest on mediate comforts, because mediate; painted things do but work objectively: only a painted meadow casteth no smell, a painted tree bringeth forth no apples; the comforts and sweetness of the creatures have somewhat of daubing in them, in comparison of Jesus Christ; all reality and truth of excellency is in Him.

Convene all the little pieces of the creation; summon before Christ fair angels, all the troops of the sinless glorified spirits; the broad skies, fair heavens, lightsome stars; all the delicious roses, flowers, gardens, meadows, forests, seas, mountains, birds; all the excellent sons of Adam, as they should have been in the world of innocence, and let them all stand in

their highest excellence before Jesus Christ; the matchless and transcendent glory of that great ALL should turn the worlds all into pure nothing. What wonder, then, that this same Lord Jesus be the delight of heaven and all in it? The Lamb hath his throne in the midst thereof (Rev. 7. 17).

He is love itself; lovely as a babe in the manger, the ancient of days became young for me; lovely on the cross, even when despised and numbered with thieves; lovely in the grave, lovely at the right hand of God, lovely in His second appearance in glory; yea, all desirable (Cant. 6. 10, 11). Yea, all creatures are weak, and Christ is strong; all base, He precious; all empty, He full; all black, He fair; all foolish and vain, He wise, and the only Counsellor, deep in His counsels and ways.

(Rutherford.)

“God, and the Word of His Grace.”

(JAMES BOYD).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20. 32).

THE great Apostle of the Gentiles—than whom never has arisen a man on earth so close a follower of Christ, so ardent a lover of his Saviour, so decorated with the moral characteristics of Jesus, so devoted to the interests of his Master, so jealous of the honour of his Lord, so faithful to the sacred trust committed to his keeping, so rigidly separate from this world, so zealous a propagator of the gospel, so vigilant in his oversight of the flock of God, so hostile to corrupters of the truth, so severe in denunciation against any departure from the faith, so valiant on the field of battle, so truly a lover of peace, so self-sacrificing, and so patient in the tribulations which accompanied the proclamation and the defence of the testimony of our Lord—in his address to the elders of the Ephesian Assembly, a company which had been by his means gathered out of the world to Christ (and among whom he had laboured with indefatigable zeal for three whole years, but which he was now leaving in the midst of a ruthless and God-hating world), commends them to God and to the Word of His grace.

His penetrating and prophetic vision could discern in the surrounding gloom the grievous wolves, who only waited his departure in order to make a merciless raid on the flock of God who were so dear to his soul. Cowards at heart they dare not attack while that man of God stood sentinel on the outpost of the territory claimed by the gospel of Christ, but waiting would not slake the passion of their blood-thirsty appetites; they could bide the time when the flock would be left without his protection, and the feeble opposition of his subordinates had for them but little terror.

He had, during the three years that he was with them, set these Ephesian

elders a fine example. In his manner of life they had seen livingly portrayed the Christ he had preached to them. For their sakes he had endured all things. Every saint in Ephesus had felt the pressure of his kindly hand. From his lips they had heard the encouraging word that strengthened the pulse of divine life in their souls. The gentle but firm reproof had fallen upon their ears, not as from one who had dominion over their faith, and who aped at lordship over God's heritage, but as from one who was of like passions to themselves and who counted himself less than the least of all saints. From those same lips came the word of warning when the danger was to be taken account of, while the tears streamed over a face furrowed with anxiety and care in his concern for the churches.

And they had seen those tears, tribute of a heart divinely impressed with a sense of the infinite mercy that had been extended to himself, when the saints had been the victims of his insane wolfish malice, but who were now the objects of his most tender solicitude. His enmity against them because of Christ had been great, but now his affection for them far more than counter-balanced all fleshly malevolence.

In his service for his Master his earthly happiness was flung to the winds, the comforts of life were discarded, scorned was all worldly position, wealth was despised, friends forgotten, home abandoned, poverty embraced, hunger and nakedness welcomed, stripes and imprisonments patiently submitted to. How closely he followed in the footsteps of his Master, who said: “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.”

He worked with his own hands, earning his bread by the sweat of his

brow. He preached to his own countrymen in their synagogues, he preached to the Gentiles the same Word of life in their public places of resort; he went from house to house where he could find an open door; he reproved, rebuked, comforted, edified, and fed the saints. He was at it night and day. His labours were Herculean and ceaseless, His enthusiasm boundless.

He upset ancient institutions in every city into which he entered. He made nothing of their religion, their idols were iniquity, the day of Judaism was over, God was going to judge the world by the Man that it had rejected and gibbeted, and He was commanding all men everywhere to repent. Greek philosophy was falling before the gospel, the shadows of the legal system were fading away in the presence of the substance. And there was much to encourage.

But the activity of the enemy knew no abatement. The cunning of the old serpent, the powers of the infernal regions, the hatred of the world: all these combined their energies together against the results of gospel activity on earth, and the sect of the Nazarenes was everywhere spoken against. Here and there the wall of separation between the assembly and the world bore traces of successful assault by the enemy, and in many instances the stealthy foe had taken the watchmen unawares and had found a foothold in the midst of the saints.

All this had a weakening effect upon the whole Christian community. One after another of Paul's companions fell away from his side. The ecclesiastical edifice that he had set up as a wise master builder already bore traces of worthless material in its structure, and general decay spread itself over the whole profession of Christ.

And all this comes before the mind of the Apostle as he stands up in the presence of the Ephesian elderhood, and makes his voice for the last time to be heard in their ears. He foresees the ruin of that which, as far as the eye of

man could see, was his life work. It had not come at that moment to the state described above, but it was fast approaching it, and the Apostle knew that no earthly power could stay its progress.

He knew the reality of the things of which he spoke. He had seen the Lord: he had tasted of His grace: he knew His terrors. How the human heart could deceive itself, serve the devil and all the time think it was serving God, he well understood; for he had been in that state himself.

Hence he trembled for the saints of God. He saw that out of the elderhood perverse men would arise to draw the disciples away after them. Not around Christ, but around themselves would they draw the people of God. He knew this, for he knew that the flesh was always bent on sect-forming. Even certain precious truths can be used in this way. When the Lord was here upon earth the Jews were formed into many sects: even the priests were a kind of sect among themselves. And now Christendom is filled with sects. And there are but few believers who are not firmly persuaded that they must join themselves to some one of the various denominations, and that it is even the right thing to do.

How far this was foreseen by our beloved Apostle I cannot say. This he does tell us, that perverse men would arise speaking perverse things to draw the disciples after themselves. And later on his sphere of vision is enlarged to such an extent that he makes known to Timothy the whole state of the profession until the close of the dispensation.

It was a black outlook, and beyond measure distressing to the tender heart of the Apostle. But through grace he is ready for it, for he has his panacea, which is more than a match for all the maladies that the people of God are liable to. He says: "And now, brethren, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, which is able to build you up, and to give you

an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Thank God, there is that which cannot fail; that which has never failed the trusting heart. Will there ever rise up a soul throughout all eternity that will be able to say, I trusted God, and He has failed me? These elders are not thrown back upon their own resources. They are not told to await the developments of science. They are not exhorted to help the world to work out its own salvation by the resources that lie in itself. They are not bidden to trust in man at all. Their trust is directed elsewhere.

I commend you to God. What more is wanted? It was just what his beloved Master did when leaving His disciples alone in this world. He commended them to the care of His holy Father (John 17). The disposal of His own person, His work, His disciples, His justification: all is committed to His Father. And so as regards Paul. He had coveted no man's silver, gold, or apparel; his own hands had ministered to his necessities, and to them that were with him. He had ever kept in his memory, and desired others to do the same, the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

He could not commend these elders to the church, for already decay had set in; and to whom were they to go? The wolves were only waiting to leap the barriers and spread havoc in that sacred enclosure. The perverse men would soon be the recognized teachers of theology. Soon there would be nothing here to rest in. The darkness of the world would soon be creeping over the only spot on earth where there was the light of God. To whom could saint or sinner direct his anxious gaze?

I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace. That will do. Let me turn to Him. There is none other fit to be trusted. There is none other needful. He is sufficient for the darkest

and most difficult day that ever yet had to be faced, or that is yet to come. He was enough for Paul, He was enough for those elders of Ephesus, He is enough for reader and writer.

But we have also "The word of His Grace." This we are told is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. The word of His grace has reference to the revelation that has come to light in Christ. Timothy is directed to "all Scripture," and is told that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2. Tim. 3. 16, 17). In Timothy the subject is light for his path in very difficult days, and all Scripture, both Old and New Testament, is referred to. But here in Paul's address to the elders it is the word of His grace, and it is for our edification in the knowledge of God, and to make sure to us the inheritance that is ours in Christ.

Let us, then, turn to God and to this word of His grace, with all our hearts, and with all confidence, knowing that He will not fail us in this day of great difficulty. But let us also keep well in mind that which we have on record concerning the ways of the Apostle to whom under God we owe so much; for he has set us an example that has been set us by none other, except the Lord Himself.

No wonder the leave-taking from such a man was unspeakable distress to those who had reaped such advantage from his doctrine and his manner of life. His own sobs and tears were, we may be sure, mingled with theirs. It was a scene never to be forgotten, nor does the Spirit of God desire that it should be forgotten; and that *we* might have it in our remembrance He has caused a record of it to be made. May we not forget it, but in every difficulty may we hear him say to us: "I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE."

The Contradiction of Sinners.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

QUESTION.—In the *Revised Version*, Hebrews 12. 3, is translated, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against themselves." To me this seems neither sense nor grammar; should be glad if you could give some light on it.—Mc. E.

IN considering such a verse it is well to review the connection in which it occurs. The division of the chapter at verse 1 seems, as often, to obscure this for the ordinary reader, and here with more than ordinary loss. A "great cloud of witnesses" had been adduced from Old and even New Testament times to illustrate the principle of the Christian's practical life, stated in chapter 10. 38 (from the prophet Habakkuk), that "the just shall live by faith." But there was One, pre-eminent above all, who was yet to be presented to us—"Jesus, the author (in the sense of 'leader') and finisher (or 'completer') of faith." In a great variety of testing circumstances the saints of chapter 11. had proved and expressed the power of faith, in what is recorded of them. But the Lord Jesus had gone through the whole career of faith; in His path as man He had begun, gone through, and completed it with the outlook of His soul upon God ever perfect. There was no trial His people were called to that He had not experienced, and beyond them all He had endured the cross, despising the shame: this was the last crucial test He had met in the path of the accomplishment of God's will, and for the joy set before Him He had endured it, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For it is thus that, in the Epistle where the cross, in the atoning aspect of the work wrought therein, has such a central place,* now, as it draws to a close in practical exhortation, the crucifixion is presented. In every way He has been the Leader in the path His saints have to tread: "When He put forth His own He goeth before them." The main characteristics are

marked in the Epistle: dependence (chap. 1. 13), obedience (chap. 5. 8, 9), faith as here—Himself the perfect example in all. It is the path in which He lives to maintain us in infinite grace by the exercise of His Priesthood. The cross, or perhaps more strictly "crucifixion," which He endured (ver. 2), is not here what He suffered from God for sin, in which we had no part—"despising the shame" could not be said in such case—but what He had to encounter at the close of His life from man's hand, the sinners of verse 3, the contradiction and opposition of every principle of man and his world against Him, in which His perfection only shone out the brighter: who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

But looking back at verse 1. for a moment, we must not think of the cloud of witnesses, as if they were overlookers of the scene of our conflict like spectators in the amphitheatre. Our English word "witness" indeed conveys this sense, but has another, namely, one who bears witness. The Greek word has the latter meaning only: they are witnesses by the testimony they bore, or that was borne to them in Scripture. And now they are summoned, as it were, each in the special circumstances in which by faith they triumphed, to encourage us in the race.

For we are exhorted to lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset, and to run with endurance the race set before us. A weight is not then something necessarily sinful, being distinguished from it. It would be anything that impedes in running on to the goal, only discovered perhaps in

* Chap. 1. 3; 2. 9, 10, 17; 7. 27; 9. 11-15, 25-28; 10. 1-18; 13. 11-12.

the energy that presses on. With uncompromising decision it is to be put off, as also sin—all sin; for it is not here that individually we may have some special form of besetment, however true that is. But we are warned against sin generally, as lying all around so as easily to entangle the feet, which is the force of the expression. We have to lay it aside, for the Epistle contemplates nothing short of the true liberty of grace for the Christian, and indicates at once whence power is found to carry out what would be impossible in any natural way: "looking unto Jesus"—free for this simple blessed exercise of faith in occupation with Him instead of with ourselves; and this not that there might be an occasional spurt now and again, but to run with endurance the race that is set before us, on and on through the day and every day whatever the opposing circumstances.

The word for "looking" is found only here in the Greek Scriptures, having the force of turning the eyes away from other things and fixing them on one. Much blessed encouragement for faith may be found in the testimonies of chapter 11., but none of the witnesses could be an object for the eye of faith to rest on. There is but One who could take that place, and He must have it exclusively: "Jesus, the leader and completer of faith"—"Jesus the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And it is His, not only in the divine glory of His Person (compare chap. 1. 12 and 13. 8), but as having become Man and run the race before we were called into it—our Fore-runner indeed—and having reached the glorious goal at the right hand of God. Nothing could bring Him more wonderfully before our hearts in His tested path as man than the thought that He was sustained in it by the joy set before Him. In John 14. 28 He gave us an intimation of what that joy was: it was that when

His work was done He was going to the Father, which would not exclude that He would have His own with Himself there. Only that it must be something personal to Himself first, and He would have those who love Him enter into this, His joy.

It is in such association of thought that the Spirit of God would keep before the saints addressed what Christ had endured (ver. 3), in view of what they had gone through (chap. 10. 32-34) and might have still to face.

Using a word only found here in New Testament Greek, and difficult to represent in English, He would have them and us "Consider well" ["ponder" in the early sense of it—weigh in seeking to estimate] "Him that endured so great contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." But here the unhappy Revised Version confronts your correspondent with a rendering that if it could be sustained would seem not a little to affect the power of the passage for our hearts. The Revisers read "against themselves." In this they differ from the American revisers (see list of their differences at the end of R.V.) who accord with our version, though admitting in the margin that "many authorities, some ancient, read Himself." The fact is that our version is well attested and supported by the editors Lachman, Tischendorf and Tregelles. The passage in Numbers 16. 38: "The censers of these sinners against themselves," may have accounted for the variation. But as the late Mr. Kelly says of our text in his commentary on the Epistle, 'they were sinners against themselves undoubtedly, as read the Sinaitic and the Clermont MSS., etc., but the far more solemn fact is that they were "the sinners against Himself," who endured all to win them to God.'

Why should I fear? The path I tread
Is of God's choosing, and no dread
Can chill my soul, for I am led
By Him, my Guide.

And when on that eternal shore
I shall behold Him evermore,
I still will praise Him, and adore,
My faithful guide.

A Twofold Exodus.

(H. P. BARKER).

A STRANGE question arises in connection with the life of our Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. It seems, at first sight, to imply a contradiction between one part of Scripture and another. I say "seems" because, of course, Scripture, being the Word of God, cannot contradict itself. That which is an apparent difficulty is really an invitation to more diligent study, and to a greater measure of reliance upon God's help in understanding what we read. When we take up a difficulty thus, in the fear of God, it generally vanishes and leaves us filled with wonder at the divine perfection of the written Word. May it be so in the case of the question to which I refer!

I shall not state the question until we have considered certain facts which lead up to it. May I ask you, first of all, to notice the way in which the Lord's coming into the world is spoken of in the Gospel of John? We read that "He came unto His own" (chap. 1. 2).

His Own.

Mark these words—"His own." They occur in other connections in this Gospel, and we shall have occasion to notice them later on.

They occur twice in the eleventh verse of chapter 1., and with rather different meanings. When it says, "He came unto His own," it means His own *things*.

What were these? The throne of David, the sceptre and the crown of Israel. The prophetic word clearly indicates that these were His right (Ezek. 21. 27). He was born King of the Jews. But His rights were wider still, for all things were made by Him, for His pleasure they existed. He was Lord of the whole realm of God's creation.

To these things—things that were His by sovereign right and unquestion-

able title, He came. Now notice the latter clause of John 1. 11: "His own received Him not." This means that His own *people* refused Him.

The nation of Israel was in a very special sense *His own*. He had redeemed them from the iron bondage of Egypt; had loved them with an everlasting love; had borne them as on eagle's wings; had cared for them as the apple of the eye, and at length had come into their midst to bless them with the best of heaven's gifts. They were indeed "His own," as no other nation ever was, but they, privileged beyond all, would have none of Him. "His own received Him not."

Those that Did.

But there were exceptions. Individuals here and there, with hearts divinely wrought upon, received Christ. Verse 12 tells us this. And to these, poor fisherfolk and the like, a marvellous favour was granted. They became, in a very special way, "His own." To them the right was given to stand in the place of God's dear children and to call Him Father. To them should belong a relationship more intimate, more wonderful, than anything that had been known in Israel of old. For what lay at the root of their blessing was nothing that the will of man had wrought—they were *born of God*.

Such as these the Lord Jesus began to attract to Himself. They were His true sheep, and He, their Shepherd, who had come into the (Jewish) sheepfold, was finding them, and linking up their faith and affection with Himself.

But we are anticipating somewhat. The gracious ministry of the Lord in the midst of Israel fell, generally speaking, on ears that were wilfully deaf. Strong antagonism to both His words and Himself arose in the blind hearts of the leaders of the nation. It

soon became apparent that the Son of God who had sought their blessing must turn from them and leave them to their unbelief.

The First Exodus.

This is what I mean by the first exodus—the going out of the Shepherd from the sheepfold where He had found His sheep. This is how the *tenth* chapter of John puts it. But in the last verse of chapter 8. we have the same thing hinted at, by means of a highly significant act on the part of the Lord. We read that “*He went out of the temple.*”

The Jews had just asserted that they *knew* He was possessed with a devil! (8. 52). They had accused Him, too, of blasphemy, and in accordance with the law against blasphemers had taken up stones to cast at Him! Could their rejection of the One who stood in their midst be more complete?

We can well understand with what sorrow of heart He must have turned from them! His exodus from the temple was but a picture of His abandonment of that wicked generation. His links with them were henceforth severed. He would no longer occupy Himself with the nation, as such, but would devote Himself to the welfare of those who were, in a truer, deeper sense, now His own.

The First Question.

In connection with this, a question presents itself. It is not the question to which I referred at the beginning of this paper. We shall come to that in due course. *This* question is a simpler one, but it is of great importance.

Stated briefly, it is this: If the Shepherd is going to take His place outside the ecclesiastical and national fold of Judaism, *what will He do with the sheep?* They are in the fold. Will He leave them there, and minister to their welfare from the outside?

The answer to this question is given in the clearest of terms in John 10.: “He calleth His own sheep by name, and *leadeth them out*” (ver. 3). Out from whence? From the sheepfold of Judaism where He had found them. Thus “He putteth forth His own sheep.” But He is Himself the first to step outside the fold. “He goeth before them.”

The sheep recognized His voice as that of the Good Shepherd, whose love to them was great enough to make Him willing to give His life for them. Their affections found in Him their centre and their object, and Him they followed in full confidence, knowing that He would lead them right.

A Case in Point.

The story of the blind beggar, whose sight the Lord restored, comes in very significantly between the exodus of the Shepherd in chapter 8. 59 and the exodus of the sheep as described in chapter 10. It was a case in point, a sample of *how* the Shepherd leads out His sheep. The poor man, now the subject of Christ’s healing grace, confesses his indebtedness to Him. The discovery he immediately makes is that there is no more room for him in the fold. “They cast Him out” (ver. 34).

We learn, then, that the violence of men may be the means which the Shepherd uses for the putting forth of His sheep from that enclosure, that fold, out of which He Himself has gone.

He sees to it, moreover, that the sheep are not losers through being deprived of the various conveniences and privileges of the fold. The blessing which they now enjoy in Him far exceeds all that they possessed before. He becomes to them the channel of salvation, liberty, and continual sustenance (chap. 10. 9). He gives them, too, eternal life and places them in eternal security. They are brought into holy and intimate acquaintance with Himself, an acquaintance only to be measured by that which exists between Himself and the

Father (for I suppose we are all aware of the true rendering of verses 14 and 15). Happy, blessed position!

The "Other Sheep."

But a position of such full and heavenly blessing could not be narrowed down to those who had been brought from the confines of the Jewish fold. The Shepherd, in the breadth of that love that would lead to His giving His life for the sheep, looked out upon those who had never known the privileges of the fold. Sinners of the Gentiles, dwelling in the lands of darkness, they were nevertheless in the Shepherd's thoughts. He spoke of His "other sheep" (ver. 16), and declared the necessity of bringing them also, not to form them into a new fold, but to unite them in one *flock* with those who had belonged to the fold, with Himself as their one Shepherd.

"His own" they should ever be, the cherished objects of His increasing care and eternal love.

The Stranger; the Thief; the Wolf; the Hireling.

In contrast with the Shepherd, we have these and others mentioned in John 10.

There had been "strangers" who had come into the fold. Men like Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5. 36, 37) had arisen, and had lured hundreds to destruction. But *the sheep* had not followed them. With divinely given instinct they had discerned the siren voice to be that of "a stranger," and had paid no heed. "They know not the voice of strangers."

The Thief too had been busy. Thieves and robbers had found entry into the fold, and in the form of scribe, and priest, and Pharisee had "devoured widows' houses," and preyed upon their victims. But again, "*the sheep did not hear them.*" Their assumed

authority weighed nothing with those who really feared the Lord. Their words were unheeded by those whose ears were on the alert for the Shepherd's voice.

There was also the Wolf, no doubt Satan himself, the incessant enemy of the sheep. It was in his power to inflict damage upon them; he could catch them and scatter them. There was nothing in the fold that could serve as a safeguard from his attacks.

The Shepherd, however, is a protection from the wolf. He can never *catch* them (same word as in verse 12) out of His mighty hand (verse 28).

Finally, there was the Hireling. He, to a certain extent, served the sheep. He guided and fed them, but it was all from interested motives. The day of emergency found him wanting. He had no real care for the sheep. Thinking only of his own safety, he fled, and left them to the wolf. It was because *the sheep were not his own* (ver. 12). What a difference this makes! Even the world cares for "his own" (John 15. 19). A man cares for "his own" (Eph. 5. 29). How much more is the constant and faithful care of the Shepherd for His sheep ensured by the fact that they are *His own*, His very own, His own for time and eternity, His joy, His delight, His supreme treasure!

The Second Exodus.

Turning over a page or two from the tenth of John we find that the Lord Jesus is about to make His second exodus, not this time from a religious enclosure to a position that lies outside of it, but from the world itself. "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father" (13. 1). His testimony in the world had reached its climax and been definitely refused. Nothing remained now but that He should lay down His life, in accordance with the "determinate

counsel and foreknowledge of God." But in John 13. 1 He is not thinking so much of His death, of Calvary with all its sufferings, but of what lay beyond. The fact of His departure from the world, to be with the Father, was what occupied His mind.

The Second Question.

It is this fact that gives rise to the question at which I hinted at the beginning. The Lord had Himself declared that it was the act of a hireling to flee at the approach of the wolf and to leave the sheep. Was *He*, then, about to leave them?

There was no doubt that the wolf was coming. In the very next chapter the Lord declares: "The prince of this world cometh" (ver. 30), and the sheep, equally with Himself, would be the object of Satan's fierce attacks. Was the Shepherd after all going to desert His sheep? It is written: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Does John 13. 1 contradict these words? In the face of the certain onslaught of "the wolf," was the Shepherd really about to depart and leave His defenceless sheep to the mercy of their foe?

It is no answer to the question to say that it would only be for "a little while," and that He promised to come again, and receive "His own" to Himself. The question is, What about the sheep during His absence? How will they fare in the interval, while they await the realization of His promise? The hope of His return would sustain them, would nerve them to suffer and stimulate them to labour, but would *that* be a true fulfilment of His promise never to leave them?

The Twofold Solution of the Difficulty.

A twofold answer to the question was forthcoming. The immediate solution of the difficulty was this: the Lord

did not intend to leave "His own" in the world out of which He was going. It was His gracious intention to have them with Him in all the joy of the place whither He went.

This is the great thought that lies at the back of the touching incident recorded in the first seventeen verses of John 13. It was in view of His approaching exodus from the world, to return to the Father, that He girded Himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. They were, as verse 1 reminds us, "His own," the objects of love that knew no end. If He had surrounded them with His love while with them in the world, He would not fail to do so still. The way He would still serve them, and manifest His tender affection for them, was set forth in a symbolic way by what He proceeded to do. The seventh verse shows clearly that His act of lowly service had a significance which was not understood at the time. If it had been merely an exhibition of the grace and humility which were found in such perfection in the Lord Jesus, there would have been nothing in it that could not have been understood at the time as easily as it would be "hereafter."

The key to the understanding of the incident lies in the three words with which verse 8 closes: "Part with Me." It was the Lord's desire, and to this end He would work, that all the affections of "His own" should accompany Him to the place to which He was going, there to find their full portion in that which would be (even as it ever had been) His own joy—the Father's love.

With the Father He had ever dwelt, knowing all the depths of those divine and infinite affections that had Himself as their Object. But in that He was alone. Now, however, having attached to Himself those who were peculiarly "His own" (not only as the subjects of His call, but as the gift of the Father Himself—John 17. 6), He was returning

to the Father to dwell in His affections *as Man*, so that He could have companions, the fruit of His soul's deep travail, to share with Him the joys that were His. Oh, place of ineffable delight; of joy too high, too deep for words! He who knew so well all the depths of the Father's love would associate "His own" with Himself in full participation of it all. This is indeed to have part with Him.

Observe that it does not say "part in Me." We have part in Christ, it is true, but this is another line of thought, and is rather the subject of Paul's ministry than what we have in John 13. *That* is a question of the full Christian position, as now revealed, before God in Christ risen. *This* is a question of entering, along with the Son of God's love, into all that is the portion of His own joy, in the Father's love.

Is it not wonderful that He should not only *want* us to share it all with Himself, but that He should *work* to bring it to pass?

For this we take to be the significance of the feet-washing. He would constantly be ministering to "His own"; washing, as it were, their feet by the application of the word which He had brought them, the revelation He had made known to them. And He would do this, not only with the object of preserving them from defilement, but in order to remove from their affections all that would divide their hearts with Him, all that would hinder their having *part with Him* in the Father's world, the Father's things, the Father's love.

All this belongs to the present. Surely, for all eternity we shall have part with Him in all the fullness of joy and glory into which His coming will usher us. Of this we are assured in John 14. 3. But we are not kept waiting for that day in order to have part with Christ—His ministry to our souls from day to day has this very thing in view: that we might be free in spirit from the world and its entanglements, and even

now be *at home*, in spirit, with Him, before the Father.

The Second Solution.

I have dwelt at considerable length on the first solution with which the Lord Himself met the difficulty of the situation, for the matter is not one with which the mass of Christians is familiar. May God graciously exercise us all as to how far we are really enjoying what the Lord Jesus called "part with Me."

I must not defeat my own desires by unduly lengthening this paper, so with all brevity I would point out that a second solution of the difficulty is found in John 14. 18.

Here the Good Shepherd again emphasizes the fact that *He will never desert His sheep*. "I will not leave you orphans," He says (see margin). An orphan is a defenceless, resourceless person. Not thus would He leave "His own." If He Himself would serve them, night and day, from His place with the Father, He would also *come to them*, that, in a spiritual way, they might still have the joy of His presence.

Moreover, that "other Comforter" of which He spoke, the Holy Spirit, should abide with them for ever, and should be their guide, their power, and their comfort. Happy people!

Have I succeeded, kind reader, in showing you the exceeding blessing that is ours in being numbered amongst those whom Christ treasures as "His own"? As such, we have been chosen "out of the world." The world has "his own" (John 15. 19) and loves them in a way, gives them its places of honour, fills them with its transient joys.

Poor consolations these! For the pleasures of the world go hand in hand with the judgment of the world which is to follow. But to be of the number of "*His own*" is to have our cup of joy running over, now, and through eternal days.

The Christ.

(E. CROSS).

Psalm 16.

THE special character of this Psalm is the reality of the humanity of Christ. Other Psalms are jealous of His divine nature, His absolute deity. There is not a word in this Psalm that transcends the place He takes as man. From this Psalm alone there would be no ground for concluding that He is more than a man. A special and exceptional man, no doubt; but a man in the verity of humanity, holy, spotless, undefiled; but a man, and limited in the scope of His life and actions, His feelings and experiences, to what is purely human. Other scriptures, and Psalms elsewhere, set forth with equal emphasis other truths that go to make up the full picture of the Christ; but this Psalm is confined to His humanity. Both sides are set out in Philippians 2., the fullness and absoluteness of His deity, with the glory of which He was rightly invested—"subsisting in the form of God, he did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God," on the one hand, and on the other hand, the reality of His "kenosis," when He divested Himself of all that belonged outwardly to His high estate and "humbled Himself, taking on Him the form of servant, becoming in the likeness of men." There, the object of the Apostle is to show the great example of humiliation as a Christian pattern; here, in Psalm 16., it is the great and simple fact of the Christ-life in its beauty and perfection, free from the pride of self-sufficiency, and untainted by the corruption that appertains to fallen man. "Crucified and slain by the hand of lawless men, God raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death, inasmuch as it was not possible that He should be held by its power," and "life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the gospel," while all the aspirations of that life are voiced by the Spirit in the presentation of One among them who

was absolutely all that the Spirit could provoke in their desires, all that God Himself could give to direct and satisfy the desires thus provoked.

And here, at once, on reading this Psalm, we are confronted with a 'fear' expressed in the opening words of it, which at first might be regarded as inconsistent with what He was in Himself, as necessarily superior to any occasion for fear, as a Son abiding in a Father's love, where fear is not. But while this is so, yet also we read, "He was heard for His piety," or "in that He feared" (Heb. 5. 7).

That fear was His piety.

εὐλάβεια, the accurate and scrupulous performance of that which is prescribed, with the consciousness of the danger of slipping into a careless and negligent performance of God's service; and the need of anxiously watching against the adding to or diminishing from, or in any way altering that which has been by Him commanded, lies ever in this word in its religious signification. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament (Heb. 5. 7 and 12. 28), and on each occasion signifies piety contemplated on the side in which it is a *fear* of God. The image on which the word rests is that of the careful taking hold and the cautious handling (*εὐλαμβάνω*) of some precious yet frail vessel, which with ruder or less anxious handling might easily be broken (Archbishop Trench). It represents foresight, caution, religious solicitude, the fear of God, holy anxiety of behaviour and godly fear (Cremer). It is the mildest term that could be used for the fear of God (Delitzsch).

Such a fear is a necessary quality and of prime importance in man in his relations with God. The creature must subserve the will of the Creator. It

must be in every sense at His disposal to fulfil the purpose of its being. Inanimate creation lies passive in His hands, as the clay is formed by the potter. But, endowed with a will, its deflection is the enemy's triumph; while on the other hand its conformity to the Creator's mind is the object of necessary solicitude to the faithful. Into the pathway of human responsibility the blessed Lord stepped to fulfil, in the perfection of His own life, the first duty of man, and to recover from the hand of the enemy the prize of man's lost obedience to God. An essential element of the character necessary for the accomplishment of such an undertaking was a due appreciation of the magnitude of the task and of the issues that were contingent on its success, involving a godly fear in view of the difficulties that lay in the way, thus casting the soul on unqualified dependence upon God along the whole pathway to the end. Such is the Christ as presented to us in this Psalm. Such is the way "the Spirit led Him" (Luke 4. 1).

Verse 1: "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." Thus the psalm opens, and this is the spirit that conducts Him right on to the end. Previous Psalms speak of Him; this is the first Psalm in which He speaks Himself; and these are the first words He utters as He comes to tread the path of faith. In Hebrews 2. 13 this "trust in God," quoted probably from Psalm 18. 2, is connected with His being "Son of Man," as Hebrews 1. sets forth the full glory of His Godhead.

How suitable it is to hear Him thus give utterance to these first words of entire dependence upon God, as He enters upon this career of obedience and of trust. In it Jehovah was to show Him the path of life, and this was in due course to be consummated in "abiding pleasures at His right hand."

It is not His divine glory that shines out here, but His human perfection,

and He takes that place at once in this Psalm. "Thou (my soul) hast said to Jehovah, Thou art the Lord; my goodness extendeth not to Thee, *i.e.* does not reach up to Thee—I do not stand on the same level as Jehovah. Thou art my Adon, my Lord, my Master: to Thy will and good pleasure I am here subservient in every way."

Not so is the way of fallen man in haughty pride and independence. He neither fears God nor trusts Him. Corruption and misery are in his ways; they afford him neither pleasantness nor peace; and in the time of trouble he has none to call upon for deliverance.

How different is the spirit that breathes in this Psalm. What humility of mind and what trust in God; what joy of heart and what confidence of deliverance in the presence of the greatest dangers; and while nothing can be more attractive than the picture presented to us here, no words can be more inspiring than what we read in Psalm 91. 14-16 as to the place of the Messiah as thus fully trusting Jehovah, with the reward of immunity from all fear, in the presence of danger of every kind. "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

This is the great mystery unfolded in the Gospel of John, the Son co-equal with the Father, come here "a man," in the humiliation of manhood, so that He can do nothing of Himself (John 6. 19; 8. 28); says nothing of Himself (John 14. 10); makes Himself as nothing, that God may be all in all He says, in all He does. He comes, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him, and having so done it, He leaves behind in the world that has refused Him the unchallenged proof that He loved the Father, and as the

Father commanded Him so He did (John 14. 31).

A man indeed. Yes, verily; a real man in every essential element that belongs to a true and proper man; in all the nothingness that belongs to the creature as having nothing in itself but what it receives from God; in all the fullness that belongs to Him in whom all fullness dwells (Col. 1. 19; 2. 9). Truly the mystery of piety is great, "God has been manifested in flesh." There are mysteries many, and mysteries great; but this mystery transcends them all. At neither end of it do we readily believe it; and in our feeble minds, and with the best intentions, we are prone to make Him at once a little less than God, and a little more than man, where, through lack of faith, He is not wholly refused as either one or other.

To Jehovah He says, "Thou art my Lord"; to the Saints He says, "They are my whole delight." But it was not merely that He found delight in them.

It was because Jehovah was His All, and He did it all to Him.

This was pleasant work. It was the joy of heaven upon earth. The same word is used in verse 6 and verse 11. There is no joy here greater than serving the Saints for the Lord's sake. What the special pleasures of heaven are we don't know; but we know that we "shall serve Him" (Rev. 22. 3), and we shall "by love serve one another" (Gal. 5. 13). "Behold, how good and how pleasant" (*s.w.*) "it is for brethren to dwell also together in unity" (Ps. 133.). Here is the climax of the blessing promised in the preceding Psalm, "even life for evermore"; the culmination for His people of "the path of life" pointed out to Him by Jehovah, as He trod that pathway here.

How good and pleasant it is to dwell on these things, to retire from the contentions of this lower world, and to entertain our souls in "the garden of the Lord," with the excellencies of Him, who forms the delight of God!

The Coming of the Bridegroom.

(ARNOLD).

The Song of Songs 2. 8-14.

THE voice of my Beloved!
He cometh! Lo! behold!
Upon the hills He leapeth,
From glory-clouds of gold.

Swift as the hart He cometh,
Now I can hear Him say,
Outside my winter prison,
"My fair one, come away!"

"For lo! the blasts of winter
Are gone, the rain is past;
The flowers on earth are blooming;
The song-bird sings at last.

"The goodly land re-echoes
With voice of turtle-dove;
The fig-tree quickly ripens;
The vines their fragrance prove.

"Come thou, My love, My fair one,
Arise! and come away.
Leave thou that rock whose covert
Has kept thee till this day.

"Thy face I fain would gaze on;
And thy sweet voice would hear;
Come to My home of glory,
Where bridal joys appear!"

The worthless sparrow does not fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge, and the believer is of more value than *many* sparrows. So the Lord said, and so we are privileged to believe.

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. VI.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

The Divine Pattern.

"And let them make thee a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exod. 25. 8-9).

AFTER the instructions are given as to the materials to be furnished for the making of the tabernacle, and prior to details being given as to the different parts of the tabernacle and its furniture, we get these two significant verses.

No two verses could emphasize points of more vital import to the Christian.

(1) *A sanctuary, a dwelling place, was to be made for God.*

(2) *It was to be made strictly to divine pattern.*

(1) *A sanctuary, a dwelling place, was to be made for God.*

Could anything be more wonderful—God desiring to dwell among His redeemed people? But if this be so, it must be a sanctuary—a *holy* dwelling place, suited to His own nature. It must be agreeable to *Him*.

If the hand of the Creator were withdrawn for one instant from His material creation, what utter chaos and destruction would be the result. Sun, moon and stars—the whole universe—would be utterly destroyed. Similarly if God's moral creation gets estranged from Him; what moral chaos, darkness and destruction supervenes.

And this is just what has happened in regard to the latter. But God cares for His creature, and has now to assume another relationship beside that of Creator, that of Redeemer, if man is to be blest. There can be no *true* happiness for the creature apart from the Creator.

A Saviour-God, how astonishing! And yet not content with that, wonderful as it is, He desires to dwell among His people, to find a place of rest in their midst.

How one's mind overleaps all the ages of time with its tale of failure and feasts on that vision of the eternal state, that the Revelation gives us. We can in faith hear the great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21. 3). There shall be seen the fulfilment of God's desires.

But even now He desires to dwell among His people, and this scene in Exodus 25 foreshadowed this.

The great truth stamped on this wondrous thought of God dwelling among His people is *holiness*. "Holiness becometh Thine house" (Psalm 93. 5), is ever true. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29. 2). May we ever remember this.

(2) *The sanctuary was to be made strictly according to divine pattern.*

Nothing was left to the imagination or will of man. Everything—big and little—was to be the outcome of divine direction, whether it was the ark itself, most sacred of all symbols, or the smallest vessel used in the service of the sanctuary. All was to be according to the divine pattern.

Is there not here a wonderful lesson to be learned by each Christian? Is it not often said that once saved, the Christian can decide where and how he shall worship, according to his personal tastes? Can anything be further from the truth?

I remember the feeling of utter amazement that possessed me when I saw a

doctor in America praying with his hands in his trouser pockets, and thanking God, in a free and easy way, that in America Christians could worship God as they liked.

It should therefore become a matter of lively exercise with each one of us how far we are governed in thought and practice in such matters by divine pattern.

How different would be the state of Christendom if all Christians had been so governed.

There are two dangers to be avoided. First, that of believing that one is right in choosing what is suitable to oneself, and allowing others the liberty of doing the same, and adding to the word of God one's own ideas, it may be of distinctive doctrine, or of human organization.

The second danger lies in the saying that it is no longer possible to walk in the truth of God's assembly; that henceforth all that remains for us is to live our lives as unattached units regardless of the communion of the body of Christ.

The way to meet both dangers is to keep the eye on Christ. Could one who finds all-sufficiency in Christ admit human organization, expediency or makeshift. Seeing that everything in Christianity takes its character from Christ, Christ becomes the touchstone for everything. Does a Christian look to Christ as Head in practical reality?

then the first danger is avoided, that is, of making a fellowship founded on human ideas, organization and expediency.

Does a Christian look to Christ as Head? then the second danger is avoided, for He is the Head, in this connection, not of an individual member only, but of the body, and from the Head the one who desires to walk in the truth will receive grace and help to do so. He makes provision for meeting even two or three who gather in His name. And if He thinks it worth while to meet two, we may well think it worth our while to be one of the two, who form this divine quorum.

Amid all the confusion of Christendom, there must be, and is a path for faith. But for this there must needs be, to take it up intelligently, a knowledge of divine principles—of the divine pattern laid down in His word.

In short there is no ground for independency or expediency—"after the pattern of the tabernacle" precludes this; nor, on the other hand, is there any ground for ceasing to walk in the truth as though it were all hopeless and lost, for to do so is to admit that the great Head in heaven is not equal to directing even two of His members.

Oh! to have better faith in Him than this. May there be in these very closing days a revival of fidelity to Him—a holding of the Head, which will bring its happy result in increased fellowship among His people and that according to divine pattern.

"March on, my soul, nor like a laggard stay!
 March swiftly on! Yet err not from the way
 Where once the holy feet of JESUS trod—
 The path of faith, made for the sons of God."

Christ is a sure Friend, and even if we begin to sink in the water (like Peter) He will stretch out His hand and lift us up. It is sweet to have His hand in any case, even if it is our failing foot that has led Him to stretch it out.

Do not be afraid of consequences. If we do right God will take care of them.

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 5.

(H. J. VINE).

Other Names in Jeremiah.

IT is only needful to say a few words on some of these. Their use shows what is prominent in this book. "*Nebuchadnezzar*," who is called by the Lord "My Servant," is spoken of about forty times. He is raised up to execute His judgment upon Israel; and upon other nations too. The Lord says, "I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, My Servant: . . . and all nations shall serve him." Dominion is given to him of God; it is taken away from Israel.

"*Zedekiah*," of whom we have already spoken, is mentioned about forty times also. He has a prominent place, as being the immediate cause of the judgment falling upon Jerusalem. The other kings who reigned over Israel in Jeremiah's time are not so much in evidence. *Josiah* was the first, he is named eighteen times. Then came *Jehoahaz*, but he is not thus mentioned at all. "*Jehoiakim*" followed, and is spoken of twenty-three times. After him came "*Jehoiachin*," and he is named twice in chapter 52. Lastly *Zedekiah*, to whom we have referred.

Before leaving these kings a notable and significant fact must be pointed out. Jeremiah spoke of *Jehoahaz* and *Jehoiachin* under changed names. Why was this? *Jehoahaz* meant "The Lord shall hold"; but he calls him *Shallum* (22. 11), meaning "Recompensed"; judgment was to fall upon him (ver. 12). *Jehoiachin*, which means "The Lord will establish," was called by Jeremiah *Jeconiah*, meaning "The Lord establishes." This is doubtless to indicate that it will be done, not in *Jehoiachin*, but in our Lord Jesus Christ, as he explains in chapter 23. 5-6; for just previously he had contemptuously called him "*Coniah*" (22. 24-28), "A despised broken idol; a vessel wherein is no pleasure." In Christ alone, raised from among the dead, of the seed of David, can the Kingdom be established permanently.

This remarkable use of names by Jeremiah is interestingly illustrated for us in the case of *Pashur*, as recorded in chapter 21. He smote the prophet and put him in the stocks. Jeremiah expressively tells him that the Lord had not named him *Pashur*, meaning "*Prosperity round about*"; but *Magor-missabib*, which means "*Fear round about*"; for he should be a terror to himself and others about him.

A beautiful and cheering contrast to this is given to us in chapters 38. and 39. *Ebed-melech* ("Servant of the King") delivers Jeremiah from a dreadful dungeon. Thus

he served the true King. Promise of deliverance is made to him from that which he feared; because, it is said, "Thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord" (39. 17, 18).

Baruch, meaning "Blessed," cleaves to the prophet of the Lord, and labours along with him among God's people. He receives a similar promise (chap. 45.). But he is not to seek exaltation for himself. It is the exaltation of the Lord which must be put first.

It should be pointed out that the army of *Nebuchadnezzar*, King of Babylon, is spoken of as the "*Chaldeans*" some forty-two times by Jeremiah. *Pharaoh*, on whom Israel was in constant danger of relying, eleven times. The evil and dark state of the times is indicated by the frequent mention of *Baal* and *Baalim*; also of "*Molech*" and "*Tophet*"; and "*The Son of Hinnom*"; and even "*The Queen of heaven*" (44. 17-25).

A bright contrast to the covenant-breaking princes and people of Israel is seen in the *Rechabites*, of whose constancy we are told in chapter 35.; while the latter performed faithfully their father's commandments, Israel disobeyed the Lord's commandments. "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; *Jonadab* the son of *Rechab* shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever" (35. 19). God's approval of faithfulness is thus shown.

Enough has been said under this heading to indicate the general trend of the book.

Oneness with the Rest of the Bible.

¶ We have already noticed that the same Spirit which pervades the *book of the covenant* breathes afresh in the Book of Jeremiah. The deep moral tones of Deuteronomy especially, and frequently the very same words, find their place in this remarkable book. The thought of "*Covenant*," which flows through the whole Bible, finds an unique as well as prominent place here. He not only mentions *the ark of the covenant*, when showing that it will be surpassed by the splendour of that which is to come in Christ; but he alone of the prophets speaks of circumcision, *the sign of the covenant*; showing, however, that it should be a matter of the heart, and thus linking with the truth of the gospels and epistles. Reference indeed is made to it in Romans 2. 28, 29; and the

new covenant involves, as Jeremiah and the letter to the Hebrews tell us, the law being written in the heart, as well as in the mind; so that they shall all know the Lord. This oneness as to the matter of the covenant is important for us to notice in these days. Christ, as foretold in Isaiah, and as shown in the New Testament, is personally the Covenant, as well as its Surety and Mediator.

The temple, too (and the house of God in a wider sense, linking the thought with Shiloh where the tabernacle was), Jeremiah shows in harmony with Old and New Testaments, becomes a den of robbers, and is to be made desolate. A hypocritical set may "enter in at these gates to worship the Lord," trusting in "lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these" (7. 4); but such *sayings* did not take the place of *inward reality* before God. It only made their case worse. "They that handle the law knew Me not," saith the Lord (2. 8); and though "the oracles of God" were committed to them (Rom. 3. 2), and they said, "We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us" (Jer. 8. 8), yet again we hear an answering echo in Romans, "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God" (2. 23). Indeed the whole context breathes the one Spirit.

The Bible story of the sorrows of Israel¹ and their future fullness of joy; the wrestling, travail, and trouble of Jacob's night, giving place to the sun-rising of Israel's princely glory and dignity, when brought to Christ, finds a special place in Jeremiah. The Lord in the Gospels told us that the darkest, if the shortest part, of their night of sorrow was yet to come, before the dawn of deliverance (Matt. 24., etc.). The Book of Revelation shows us the same thing. Jeremiah alone calls it "*The time of Jacob's trouble.*" "But he shall be saved out of it" (30. 7). It is similarly told by him in the next chapter, illustrated by the weeping of Rachel for her children; but with the reward of blessing and joy to follow (31. 15, 17). This affecting story, beginning in Genesis, and carried on through the pages of the Scriptures of truth, finds its culminating centre in Christ, as is well known, in the opening of the New Testament. God's dealings in judgment and mercy also with other nations, as well as with Israel, has a place in Jeremiah in harmony with other Scriptures. They are to be judged righteously, according to their sins; nevertheless abundance of mercy awaits them. When

Israel is restored to the Lord, and own "The Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness"; then "THE NATIONS SHALL BLESS THEMSELVES IN HIM, AND IN HIM SHALL THEY GLORY" (4. 2).

This is Jeremiah's main theme, consistent with the meaning of his name—"The exaltation of the Lord." And yet it is the theme of Scripture, the theme of the Holy Spirit. His name is to be exalted; He is to be glorified. Let Him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. Man's sin and failure, Israel's sin and failure, become a means for Him to be exalted in His forgiving mercy, grace, and love; as well as in justice, truth, and holiness. Here Jeremiah and all the rest of the Bible are indissolubly one. How utterly unlike, how absolutely different, to the corrupt myths, legends, and stories of Grecian and other gods. How bright and blessed the contrast! We may well glory in the Lord! and magnify the grace that has called us to find our satisfaction in Himself; in Him who is so beautifully named by Jeremiah, in unison with the rest of Scripture—

"THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS"

(Jer. 2. 13; 17. 13; Ps. 36. 9; Rev. 21. 6, etc.).

We will here close our remarks under this heading. If the Divine Names and Titles previously spoken of are compared with their use elsewhere, additional witness to the oneness of Scripture will be found.

In the Gospels, quotations and citations from Jeremiah are made in Matthew 2. 17; and 21. 13; Mark 11. 17; and Luke 19. 46. References are found in Matthew 19. 26 to Jeremiah 32. 17, 27; Luke 13. 35; and Matthew 23. 38 to Jeremiah 22. 5; Mark 13. 5 to Jeremiah 29. 8. Also Romans 9. 21 to Jeremiah 18. 6; Romans 3. 28, 29 to Jeremiah 4. 4; 1 Corinthians 1. 31 and 2 Corinthians 10. 17 to Jeremiah 9. 24. Finally to Jeremiah 31. 31-34 in Matthew 26. 28; Mark 14. 24; Luke 22. 20; 1 Corinthians 11. 25; 2 Corinthians 3. 6; also Hebrews 8. 8-13; 9. 15; 10. 15-18; and 12. 24. All these final quotations are regarding the New Covenant. Anyone who attempts to break the Word concerning the covenant, found all through the Bible, proclaimed by the Holy Spirit in the gospel, and remembered in the cup at the Lord's Supper, according to the Word of God, does so at his peril.

"Are you standing at 'Wits' End Corner'?
Then you are just at the very spot
To learn the wondrous resources
Of Him who faileth not.

No doubt to a brighter pathway
Your footsteps will soon be moved,
But only at 'Wits' End Corner'
Is 'the God who is able' proved."

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN)

Psalm 119. (*continued*).

ZAIN: Stanza 7.—There is much instruction for us in verse 49. Jehovah had spoken, His word had been received in faith and had excited hope, but the answer seemed to be deferred, so that the suppliant ventures to remind Jehovah of His word, which, he adds, had comforted and quickened him. By the proud he is derided, but remains constant to Jehovah's law, the departure from which on the part of others excites indignation.

Cheth: Stanza 8.—Following verse 55, the great subject of this section is obedience. In such a pathway "Jehovah is my portion." This leads to seeking His favour with the whole heart, and thus power is found, when thinking on "my ways," to turn "my feet unto Thy testimonies." Had the law not been written in the heart this power would have been lacking, but here follow these notable words: "I hastened and delayed not to observe Thy commandments." In verse 63 for the first time companions are mentioned: "All them that fear Thee." In perilous times "the fear of the Lord is a true bond" (Mal. 3. 16).

Teth: Stanza 9.—While the whole Psalm constantly asserts the sanctifying virtue of the word, the present section deals with the happy results of affliction. The Psalmist is near enough to God to appreciate that the affliction of verses 67 and 71 is the way He deals well with, and does good to His servant (65, 68) (see Romans 8. 28).

Jod: Stanza 10.—This section seems to be referred to in 1 Peter 4. 19, for the Psalmist, owning God as Creator, confesses: "I know . . . that in *faithfulness* Thou hast afflicted me." The opposition, as so often in this Psalm, comes from "the proud" (78), while on the other hand "they that fear Thee shall see me and be glad" (74), and "turn unto me, and they shall know Thy testimonies" (79). How often have we found spiritual intelligence deepened in holy associations, and a darkening of our souls when it is otherwise!

Caph: Stanza 11.—Here tribulation deepens, as indicated in verses 82, 83, 87, and more earnest prayer arises for deliverance, while at the same time obedience and loyalty to the word are maintained.

Lamed: Stanza 12.—Verse 94 is here the rock from which the soul looks out to God, whose word is settled in heaven, outside the range of man's puny malice. Thus encouraged, in spite of the dire hostility of the wicked, who sought his destruction, the righteous one refuses to be turned from

occupation with "Thy testimonies." If defect is inherent in all on earth, he finds Jehovah's commandment exceeding broad (Job 2. 7-9).

Mem: Stanza 13.—When the soul can truly say, as in verse 102, "Thou hast taught me," there is little wonder that he is wiser than his enemies, his teachers, or the aged. Moreover, this wisdom gives spiritual insight into things, so that every false way is properly hated, while at the same time the word which instructs is enjoyed: it is sweet to the taste, yea, sweeter than honey to the mouth.

Nun: Stanza 14.—In this section troubles are pressing: "I am afflicted very much" (107); "My soul is continually in my hand" (109), and this danger was from the snares of the wicked. In all such trials the word of Jehovah proves a lamp to the feet, for it discovers the tendency to stray; but at the same time it is light to the path, for it points out the way of His will. The result is expressed in words found also in Jeremiah 15. 15: "Thy testimonies are the rejoicing of my heart."

Samech: Stanza 15.—The heartfelt fear of God so forcibly expressed in verse 120 (see also Hab. 3) leads to a deep sense of right and wrong, and this section begins, "Double-minded men I hate: but Thy law do I love." So far removed is this reverential fear from the guilty terror which seeks escape that Jehovah is known as "my hiding place and my shield." From this secure resting place divine judgments are seen to be overtaking the wicked, while salvation is realized for himself, in dependence on Jehovah (117).

Ain: Stanza 16.—In this section the servant of Jehovah still holds to his uprightness and looks for deliverance from the oppression of the proud; at the same time he realizes the futility of his testimony in view of the breach of the law on the part of the wicked, *therefore* it is time for Jehovah to act (the same word is found in Jeremiah 18. 3 and Ezekiel 31. 11). A very important principle is thus disclosed, that when testimony through the ordinary channels fails, it becomes necessary for God to manifest Himself by judgment against evil, and thus to vindicate Himself before the eyes of His creatures (see Jer. 19.).

Pe: Stanza 17.—In verse 130 in place of "entrance" we should read "opening" or "unfolding," literally "door." Such unfolding is the work of the Spirit by whomsoever it may come (1 Cor. 2. 10-13). This

should settle a fundamental question at issue between Catholics and Protestants; the former asserts the church to be the interpreter of Scripture and the latter claims the right of private interpretation; the fact is that the Spirit alone can guide into the truth. It is one thus Spirit-led, who, in the expressive language of the Psalm, opens his mouth and pants for more.

Tzade: Stanza 18.—The trouble and anguish of verse 143 seem to be the accompaniments of the tears of verse 136. The departure of those who call on the Name of the Lord from His Word is ever a distress to those to whom that Word is precious, and in no wise lessens their delight in it. If judgment falls on the adversaries, the soul is comforted because it is in righteousness.

Koph: Stanza 19.—The eager earnestness and whole-heartedness of supplication gives a claim to be heard. This accords with James 5. 16: "The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working." An immediate answer may be happily realized in the nearness of Jehovah (ver. 151). If the wicked are near to persecute, He also according to all His Word declares Him to be.

Resh: Stanza 20.—In this section the dangers feared in the previous one have overtaken the man of prayer; he is under affliction from persecutors and treacherous dealers, yet it is not merely deliverance that he seeks, but in a special way, three times repeated (154, 156, 159), for spiritual reviving or quickening. This proves the real desire to be right with God.

Shin: Stanza 21.—Here we find the results of the quickening previously desired. Although still under persecution from "princes," the Word produces godly fear and at the same time rejoicing; abhorrence of evil, love to the Word, praise to God, superiority to occasions of stumbling are all seen in due order.

Tau: Stanza 22.—The last section sums up the whole, with this significant addition, the confession of the repentant in Israel, according to Isaiah 53. 6: "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost." The prayer is added that Jehovah should seek His servant. The answer is given in the songs of degrees which follow, but above all in the mission of the Saviour Himself (Luke 19. 10). Peter applies this to the believing remnant in his day (1 Peter 2. 25).

Answers to Correspondents.

"The Saviour of All Men."

1 Timothy 4. 10 speaks of "the living God as the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." Does this mean that all men will finally be saved?

The teaching of this passage is not that God saves the souls of all men with an eternal salvation, but that He cares for them and *preserves* them in this life, as the context will show; otherwise what would be the sense of the words, "specially of those that believe"?

Paul is warning the saints against those who were the mouthpiece of demons, who were forbidding marriage, and commanding to abstain from meats. Now these things God had created for the comfort and good of mankind, and "those who believe and know the truth" receive them with thanksgiving (vers. 1-3), accepting them as God's good gifts, the evidence of His care for His creatures. And "every creature of God is good; that is, every provision that He has made for the well-being of men. The abundance of earth and sea are placed within their reach by His preserving care, and if He withheld these things

from us mankind would perish. But He does not withhold them, He cares, first and specially, for those that believe; for they are His household, His children, and He provides for His own. Thence the striking word in this same epistle, chapter 5. 8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." And such a passage ought to yield great comfort and remove all care from the minds of God's children, for He will sure provide for His own. But He does not confine His beneficence to these. He is kind to the unthankful, and sends His rain upon the unjust as well as upon the just. "He is the *preserver* of all men." "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things . . . in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17. 25-28). This is the meaning of the passage, "We trust in the living God, who is the *Preserver* of all men, specially of those that believe."

Reconciliation of All Things.

A. F. writes: "May I ask whether Colossians 1. 20, or any other scripture teaches that all men, whether saved or unsaved, believers or unbelievers, are reconciled to God? Is there any sense in which the unbelievers are reconciled? If not, will they be reconciled in a future state if they die unbelievers?"

We hope to take up the truth of reconciliation in our next issue, and so we give only brief answers to these questions now. As reconciliation involves being brought to God for His own pleasure, as the prodigal was brought from the far country into his father's house, it should be evident that unbelievers are not in any sense reconciled to God; how could there be reconciliation on the part of those who are still "alienated and enemies by wicked works"? Further, if all were now reconciled, God would no longer need to beseech men, through His servants, to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5. 20).

Neither does this passage hold out any hope that unbelievers will be reconciled in a future state. Note well, this reconciliation is of *things in earth and things in heaven*, and those who have died in unbelief are neither in earth or heaven. There is no mention of things *under the earth* as in Philippians 2. 9, 10, 11, where it is a question of every creature—unfallen, redeemed and damned—owning the rightful supremacy of Jesus Christ. If for those who refuse to be reconciled in this life there was hope in the next, would it not have been told us in such a passage as this?

The silences of Scripture are significant.

"Baptised for the Dead" (1 Cor. 15. 29).

G.V.B.—It will help to the understanding of this passage if it is first seen that verses 23 to 28 are a parenthesis, and that verse 29 links on with the Apostle's argument, that if Christ be not raised from the dead then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (vers. 17, 18). "If the dead rise not at all why are they then baptised for the dead?" he asks. It is by baptism that a person is outwardly and by profession identified with the Christian company, and that company, when Paul wrote, was being devastated by persecution; many were dying as martyrs; gaps were being made in the ranks, and those who were baptised filled up these gaps in the full knowledge that they were taking the places of those who had fallen asleep in Christ. At their baptism they renounced prospects in this world, identified themselves with what was unpopular, and placed themselves in jeopardy of death by martyrdom. What folly all this would have been if they had not had resurrection in view: if the dead rise not!

And there is a still deeper thought in

the passage which brings the truth home to us who are not called upon to die for our faith. "As many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised into His death" (Rom. 6. 3). So that as many as have been baptised have been baptised for, or "*in view of*," which is the force of the word, the dead; for by baptism we are identified with a dead Christ, for He is dead as far as this world goes. What gain would there be to us in that if the dead rise not? We should have linked ourselves up with one who had perished by an ignominious death, without any prospect beyond it. But it is because we know that He is raised again from the dead that we can submit to baptism, and be true to its meaning after having submitted to it. The argument throughout is to emphasise the truth of resurrection.

To say that a living person may be baptised in order that one who has died may benefit is utterly repugnant to the whole truth of Christianity, and this passage gives no ground for it.

"The Time of the Dead, that they should be Judged."

G. S. B. asks for an explanation of Revelation 11. 18, and whether the judgment spoken of refers to the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. 20).

The seventh trumpet (vers. 15-18) declares what the end of God's direct dealings in judgment with men shall be. Those dealings after the opening of the seventh and last seal of the sealed book (chaps. 5-8), indicating that God's purposes and ways with men are now laid fully open, issue in all opposition to Christ being overthrown and the kingdoms of this world becoming His. But He will not merely reign as long as those kingdoms last, *i.e.* for one thousand years, but for ever and ever. His is an eternal kingdom. In connection with this final solution of all questions, God gives to all men their just deserts,

according to His own righteous judgment. There is wrath and judgment for the dead, and only those who have died impenitent will then be dead, for all who had died in the Lord will at that time have been raised. But He will not forget those who have served Him, and rewards will be given to His servants and saints, and to all who fear His name, small and great.

We are carried on by this seventh trumpet to Revelations 20. and 21., to the great white throne and eternity. Verse 19 returns and commences another series of events that will run concurrently with those already recorded.

"Restitution of All Things."

G. V. B. asks: "Does Acts 3. 21 hold out the hope that evil will cease to exist? That God will somehow not allow evil to exist for ever in His universe, or the doomed to suffer endless punishment?"

The verse speaks of "the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." And to discover what these all things include we must turn to the Old Testament Scriptures, for there are the things that God hath spoken by His prophets. These things refer exclusively to millennial blessedness, to the peace and prosperity and blessing that shall come upon the earth, and to Israel and the nations who are alive on the earth, at the personal return of the Lord to it; blessing wide as the earth's bounds and enjoyed by all who yield to the Lord within it.

They make no reference to those who have died either "in faith" or "without mercy" (Daniel 12. 2 may be an ex-

ception to this, but as we have received a question as to this passage, we must take it up in another paragraph). The New Testament enlightens us as to the state and portion of these.

Yet even in that time of millennial peace and gladness, for which the earth groans and waits, there will be an awful witness to the holy judgment of God against the wicked, and of His abhorrence of sin (see Isa. 66. 24). And Peter, in the address from which the verse is taken, shows that it cannot mean the final blessing of all men, for he says, verse 23, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet [Christ], shall be destroyed from among the people."

**"Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold on Thee—
In this alone rejoice with awe,
Thy mighty grasp on me."**

Redemption.

(JAMES BOWD).

Isaiah 50.

IT cannot be denied that man, according to the measure in which God has endowed him with wisdom, has in his fallen condition accomplished marvels. He has dugged deep into the bowels of the earth; he has torn up the mountains by the roots; by him the everlasting hills have been disembowelled; he has sawn his way through the granite ribs of the planet, from the dust of which his primal parent was formed, brought its entrails to light, and examined post mortem its pre-Adamic inhabitants.

His inventive genius has made it possible for him to mount up into the heavens; to explore the starry systems; to measure the greatness, the density, the weight, the movements, and the orbits of suns, planets, satellites. In imitation of God he tells the number of the stars, and calls them by their names (Ps. 147. 4).

Nor are the secrets and resources of nature hidden from him. The electric current will faithfully carry a message for him to the utmost limits of the world. He can rival the eagle in his airy flights and the deep-sea monster in his watery pilgrimages. He is fearfully and wonderfully made, and his inventions also are both fearful and wonderful.

And in these works of his are brought to light his moral characteristics, for when we examine the use to which his inventive powers are dedicated, we have to admit that there are very few of his achievements that are not with a view to the destruction of his own unhappy race. Every power of nature is by him requisitioned with a view to the overthrow and annihilation of his fellows, and for no other object than the satisfaction of his own wretched ambition. How horrible it is to have to contemplate the human race as the ardent disciple and imitator of that old anointed cherub, the fell destroyer of

our race, and rivalling him in wickedness and cruelty! In his works the fallen nature of man comes clearly into evidence, but how terribly to his disadvantage.

Yet the most awful engines of destruction, while casting upon the soul the fearful gloom of the infernal regions, are able to give one an unspeakable impression of the marvellous inventive genius of the human mind. And in these inventions men pride themselves, seek to make themselves a name, to ascend into the firmament of earthly splendour, and to get a little worship from their fellows. And in measure they are successful; for God, who made man at the beginning and endowed him with all the wisdom needful to make him happy, is of no account in the struggle for human greatness.

The things most sought after and admired are the things in which man in his fallen condition comes most into light. The reign of a tyrant is more interesting reading than the kindly government of a beneficent monarch. "Paradise Lost" is much more engaging to the natural mind than is "Paradise Regained." "Harrowing details" of some terrible crime or catastrophe will have thousands of readers, while the fair history of a patient life of well-doing lies utterly neglected on the shelf. The strong hand of the law is needed to keep the printing-press from pouring its bestial corruption into the bosom of the people; and we must keep in mind that it is the customer that makes the article, and the supply is always limited by the demand.

I mention this because it is in all these things that what is in man's moral nature is manifested. Men themselves come to light in their actions. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good and an evil man out of the evil treasure

of his heart brings forth that which is evil (Luke 6. 45). And the evil that the soul lusts after finds abundant supply in an evil world.

And men persuade themselves into thinking things are not so bad because they seem to have an appreciation for that which is good and beautiful. Philanthropy, natural affection, kindness and mercy have their quota of praise. The eye and the ear desire pleasant things, things that are beautiful and harmless. The music of a Mendelssohn, the lines of a Shakespeare, the conception of a Rubens, such things as these have an indescribable way of delighting the senses, and for the moment removing from the soul the burden of life's anxious cares; for man, as I have said, is a marvellous being, equally delighting in that which is most vicious and degrading and in that which is naturally good and beautiful.

But whether it be that which is naturally good, or that which is evil, it is really all evil together, for all these things are but the outcome of what is in the fallen sinner, and his pleasure in them is but the pleasure a man may have in beholding his natural face in a glass; he sees his fallen and godless life set before him objectively, and in that which he sees himself to be is all his delight. From that life God is rigidly excluded. This is why I say it is all evil together. Such is man: fearfully and wonderfully made at the beginning, but more fearful, if not more wonderful, in his fallen condition. To contemplate him in his present best makes one shudder.

But has not God also brought Himself to light, first of all in creation, but above all in redemption? How awe-inspiring to hear Him in the thunder of His power, to feel the rustle of His robes as He passes by upon the wings of the wind, to see Him in the lightning flash, the pouring rain, the cold of winter, the heat of summer-tide!

In what a multitude of things are His power and wisdom displayed! Uncountable their number, incompre-

hensible their greatness, and bewildering their glory! What thought could comprehend the smallest of His worlds? or understand one of His atoms? The covering of the earth with fertile soil, the gentle rain, the verdant vales, the purple hills, the wildering forest, the polar frosts and snows, the equatorial warmth, the changeful seasons, the silent movements of the heavenly bodies, the fiery flames that gird the lord of day, the mellow light that clothes the queen of night, the orbits and the order of the worlds: these display before our admiring eyes His eternal power and divinity, and minister to us His mercy everlasting.

How marvellous and how interesting are these works of His! How wonderful to be permitted to draw near and to contemplate the works of His fingers! All around us we can see the works of man, and we can hear His loud and fulsome boasting in the triumph of his skill, as though he was the author of his own existence, and that his cleverness was all self-created. But with what holy awe we draw near to contemplate the work of God! We see Him moving in creative power, and we feel Him all about us in His preserving might and infinite mercy: for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17. 28).

But there is one work of our God that far exceeds anything He ever has previously done, and beyond anything He ever can do again; and that work is the work of *Redemption*. His creature was lying in sin and under the righteous judgment of death, a slave also of his fell destroyer, the devil. This put God to the test as He never had been put before, and never can be again. It is not now, Can He create worlds? but, Can He redeem men?

And this is the question He asks Himself: "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?" (Isa. 50. 2). That man had no power to work deliverance for himself had been well proven. Every attempt that he had made, even

with the assistance of God, had but strengthened the chains that bound him, and had made his miserable and undone condition more hopelessly evident. Every dispensation under which he had been placed had, in spite of the overtures of divine mercy extended to him, done nothing but bring more clearly into evidence the melancholy fact, that the very fountain of his life was corrupt, that he was the slave of sin, and the victim of his pitiless oppressor the devil. He could do nothing for himself, nor could his neighbour render him the slightest assistance (Ps. 49. 7).

But is God as powerless as man? The latter has shown that he is very inventive, and that he can do very wonderful things; but to deliver himself from the dominion of sin, death, and the devil is beyond his powers. What can God do? He says: "Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness." Here the creature is left far behind, nor is able to touch the utmost fringe of everlasting might. Nor is His power limited to earthly manifestations. He says again: "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." The heavens are under His control as well as the earth. He created both at the beginning. He made the heavens by His Word, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. And as to the earth: "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33.). At these manifestations of His power we read that: "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job. 38. 7). Creation was brought into existence by His Word, and by His Word it is upheld (Heb. 11. 3; 1. 3). He has no need to ask Himself the question, Can I do this? or, Can I not? He has but to speak, and the thing is done.

But the work of redemption is another thing altogether. It shall require the putting forth of the whole might of God, and it will put His infinite wisdom to the supreme test. He cannot speak, and bring it about. He cannot command

the thing to come to pass, and lo, it is done. In this work His every attribute is engaged to the utmost of its power. Not only does His might come into evidence, but His weakness also: not only His wisdom, but, from a human standpoint, His foolishness. His righteousness, His holiness, His truth, His majesty, His authority, His wrath, His mercy, His goodness, His severity, His hatred, and His love: all these must be brought into evidence, for all that can be known of God by the creature must like the noonday sun shine out in this work before the eyes of the whole intelligent universe.

The first thing brought to light by the undertaking of this work is the triune existence of the Divine Being. This comes to light when the Son, who became Man, takes His place in testimony for God (Matt. 3. 16-17). Hence we have the eternal Son in manhood in this world, the Father declaring His delight in Him from the opened heaven, and the Holy Spirit coming upon Him in the form of a dove. This is God come forth in the power and blessedness of His own essential Being to take up the redemption of His poor fallen and degraded creature. But it is only the beginning of this work.

In days gone by He had sent angels to speak to men; and from the fallen mass He had prepared vessels to carry glad tidings of mercy to the rebel race of Adam. But all such workings of His grace and such overtures of mercy were, as far as the creature could see, only arbitrary acts, and done without regard to the claims of righteousness, holiness, or the majesty of His Person. Men were sinners, and their sins were passed over. His name had been dishonoured, His rights disputed, His laws broken, His claims ridiculed, and no atonement made. This was to be now brought to an end, and men were to see God in the truth and reality of His nature and attributes. Men were to behold the wonderful works of God: they were to see the Father and the Son,

God, in the person of the Son, had come into the scene where man was toiling under the cruel oppression of his hard taskmaster the devil. It might be that men would resent His intervention on their behalf, and they did, but before redemption could be wrought for sinners it was necessary that they should be manifested, not only as having no power in themselves to effect their own recovery, but as utterly averse to the intervention of God in their behalf; for their deliverance from the power of the enemy meant their being brought back to God, and the thought of God was obnoxious to the human mind; for the carnal mind is enmity against God.

Therefore the pathway to Golgotha, where redemption was accomplished, teemed with sorrows for the Son of Man. He was here to speak a word in season to him that was weary, but His voice had no charms for the haughty leaders of the people, nor for the thoughtless multitude. John the Baptist had mourned to them, and they had not wept; Jesus had piped to them, and they had not danced. In His presence the innate evil of the human heart came out into full display; but it was the revelation of God's grace in Jesus that brought it out. Nothing but good in God, nothing but evil in man. Perfect love to man on the part of God met by unmixed hatred on the part of man.

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. Every indignity that the human heart could invent was heaped upon Him. For His love He had hatred. And in Him there was no more cause for their hatred than there was cause in them for His love. Their hatred of Him was just what was native to their own hearts, as His love to them was only what was native to His: for God is love.

But nothing of all the persecutions that He endured entered into the work of redemption; no, not even His crucifixion at the hands of men. It

required something deeper than the wrath of the creature to accomplish this mighty work. Man was a sinner under the righteous judgment of God, and this judgment must be executed, and if it came upon the sinner he was lost for ever. But He gave Himself for our sins. The Just stands in the room and stead of the unjust, and in Him our sins were dealt with, and also our whole sinful condition. The state in which we were by nature has been judged, and in His death all that God is has been brought to light and has been glorified. The question of what the believer had done and of what he is has been gone into, settled, and closed for ever. It can never be reopened, for if it were it would be reopened with Christ, and would be a reflection upon the value of His work.

The redemption that is ours necessitated the revelation of God's love, for in order to accomplish it the only-begotten Son of God had to die our death, but if this was a divine necessity we rejoice that the love of God was equal to the demand made upon it, and it declares itself in the giving of that Gift; for in this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that He gave His only-begotten Son, that propitiation might be made for our sins.

This, the love of God, is the glory of redemption, and it will fill the whole universe of blessing. The love of God: it is God Himself, God in the truth and blessedness of His being: for *God is love*. This shall fill the vision of every redeemed soul, and the whole redeemed creation shall rejoice with the praises of it. It was all declared amid the darkness of Golgotha; it centres in the risen Son of God; it is in the hearts of believers in the power of the Spirit; and the day is fast approaching in which we shall sit down in His presence in that home of spotless purity, in the perfect enjoyment of the Father and the Son, and know as we have never known before the deep blessedness of that glorious truth, that **GOD IS LOVE**.

Precious Stones of Scripture.

The Chrysolite.

“The seventh, chrysolite” (Rev. 21. 20).

THE harmony which any simple believer is enabled to trace all through the Bible confirms him as to its divine inspiration in a way that no mere literary study could do. And that beautiful harmony in which he rejoices also provides him with interesting instruction, as he recognizes everywhere the righteous consistency of his God and Father.

In the closing book of the Bible, where every religious and political matter is seen to reach its complete development; where the manifested righteousness of God is confessed again and again, it is noticeable that the number “seven” is very prominent; and in chapter 21., where the glory of God shines out, we are told that the heavenly city’s wall has twelve foundations, and the seventh is chrysolite. Let us see if we can discover in the writings of the Holy Spirit the reason, and also the meaning of this; for it surely shines there as a symbol of special significance. The city itself is of pure, transparent gold; and that the seventh place in the foundations of its jasper wall is given to the gold stone, or chrysolite, has some important instruction for us.

It might be thought that the most brilliant, the most beautiful, and the hardest of all the precious stones,—the diamond,—would occupy this place. For that, however, we should have to examine the symbols of Christ’s glory; not those of the well-loved bride, the Lamb’s wife. The chrysolite is a soft stone comparatively. Its nature is exceptional. Its colour, in accord with its name, is yellowish; and it yields a lustrous polish, with a golden green hue. It is called chrysolite from *chrysos*, gold; and *lithos*, a stone—the gold stone. It is transparent—a feature

of the city of God, and also of the saints of God now, when they are walking rightly.

Turning to the Old Testament we find there are three large groupings of precious stones. They occur in Job 28., Exodus 28., and Ezekiel 28. The second is repeated in Exodus 39. In the first, the *creation* group, the chrysolite is not mentioned. In the second, of *grace*, it is the first of the last three: “*the chrysolite (not beryl), the onyx, and the jasper.*” In the third, the *government* symbol, it is the first of the second three; and, remarkable to notice, the same three precious stones are placed together again as before. (There is a small group in Isaiah 54. 11, 12 illustrating the blessing of the *earthly* city, but as in the creation group the chrysolite is not mentioned.) Ezekiel, however, when he sees the glorious cherubim and their wheels, tells us that the appearance of the wheels and their work was as the look of a chrysolite (1. 16 and 10. 9, N.T.). These wheels of God wrought His righteous work like a wheel within a wheel. Daniel, too, observed that the heavenly messenger sent to him on matters of grace and government was clad in linen, and girded with pure gold of Uphaz; and that his body was like a chrysolite (11. 6). Finally, in the Song of Songs, when the Beloved is described, we are told that *His hands were as gold rings set with chrysolite* (5. 14). Here we may find the answer to our inquiries.

We can only discover this precious stone mentioned in the Old Testament in the above scriptures. It will be noticed they are exactly seven. When we come to the New Testament we find it but once, and that in the scene of *glory*—“the seventh, chrysolite.” It is well known that the number seven in

Scripture stands for completeness and divine perfection. For instance, the seven days making a complete period of time. But even in the numerical system in daily use, seven stands in perfect harmony with its use in the Bible by the Holy Spirit. Others have pointed out that in 1 to 10 (the foundation of numerical sequence) only 7 combines these *two* peculiarities: multiplication does not produce it, nor does it produce any other number within those limits by multiplication. It is therefore called the virgin number. In the dual or binary system $III=7$; thus, $I^1I^4=7$; and every seventh number thus reached is always a square and a cube; for example, 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64^2 . We find this in Revelation 21. when completeness and perfection in glory is reached. It is the completion and repose of all progressive labour. The city has the glory of God; and it is four-square and a cube. Seven seems to be the complete unfolding of the thoughts of the Trinity, $III=7$. And with this also agrees the sevenfold mention of jasper—the stone used for divine manifestation by the Spirit. In the Old Testament 3 times+4 times in the New (Ex. 28. 20; 39. 13; Ezek. 28. 13; Rev. 4. 3; 21. 11, 18, 19).

Doubtless we noticed that the chrysolite, the gold stone, is nearly always found associated with that which speaks of divine righteousness—the well-known symbol of gold. Ezekiel is the only exception, and there we have the cherubim, the executors of divine righteousness. Now our blessed Lord, who knew no sin, was made sin for us upon the cross that *we* might become God's righteousness in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). He, blessed for ever be His holy name! stooped to be made what *we were* that we might become what *He is!* What grace! What love! The *hands* of the Beloved—expressive of His work—are as *gold rings*, we are told. All His work is in perfect righteousness. But mark the settings for display in those

golden rings: "His hands are as gold rings SET WITH CHRYSOLITE." Here the gold of divine righteousness and the gold stone are found inseparably together. This speaks eloquently to the hearts of those who know the love of Christ; to those who are of His assembly—His body and His bride. If HE is called Jehovah-tsidkenu, *the Lord our righteousness*, in Jeremiah 23. 6, SHE is also called by the same name in chapter 33. 16; that is the city.

We are the work of *His hands*. Even when in glory we shall say: It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We shall shine then for His glory. His name shall be on our foreheads. We shall show forth His praises. He shall be glorified in His saints, and admired in all that have believed. The woman shall indeed be then the glory of the man. But the golden ring speaks not only of righteousness, it tells us also of His deep and endless love for the assembly. In making her His own, righteousness and love are found together; and she can say in truth: "I am His and He is mine." The gold, the ring, and the chrysolite set speak of this; and in glory she is the bride, the Lamb's wife. The beautiful and lustrous radiance which softly shines there from the chrysolite, the gold stone, shows forth God's righteousness in this blessed and completed result. God counselled it; and so great was Christ's love for her that He gave Himself to make her His own; and being His, He now nourishes and cherishes the assembly; and soon He will present her to Himself all glorious, as the result of His own love and of His own labour. Then when her shining is seen by universal intelligences, that which "every precious stone" symbolizes shall be her adorning, and THE SEVENTH IS CHRYSOLITE.

*Fruit of wisdom without measure!
'Tis a bright, eternal treasure!*

(H. J. V.)

The Father's Glorified.

OH, Jesus, Lord, Son of the Father's love,
 Exalted high, o'er all things Head, above:
 Thrones, powers, dominions—put beneath Thy feet,
 Shall soon Thy glory great with gladness greet.

Yet even now we have our part with Thee,
 Ere yet *the nations* wake Thy power to see:
 There in the Father Thou art glorified,
 And in His love our hearts may now abide.

Once far from God, in darkness, dead in sin,
 We spurned the grace that sought our hearts to win:
 But Thou, blest Lord, did'st break the fatal spell,—
 Die for our sins, and save our souls from hell.

Raised from the dead, ascended now Thou art!
 With Thee before the Father we have part:
 In His great love and favour we are blest
 In Thee,—His Well-Beloved, His Joy and Rest.

He lovèd Thee before the world was made,
 Amidst a glory which can never fade:
 Now Thou hast brought Thine own that love to share,—
 The Father's love, whose Name Thou did'st declare.

And 'tis the Holy Spirit who dost guide
 Our willing hearts to see Thee glorified:
 We honour Thee, the Father's glorious Son,
 Whose sufferings great redemption's glory won.

All things are Thine! the glory He has given
 Into Thy mighty hands,—in earth and heaven:
 And Thou hast given that glory great and wide
 To those the Father did to Thee confide.

We worship here, before that day doth break
 In shining splendour, when each tongue shall wake
 To sing Thy glories through creation vast,—
 Nor shall it end while Thy perfections last.

(H. J. V.)

The Preaching.

“THAT I should preach, the gold mine of the riches of the glory of Christ” (Eph. 3. 8). So deep are those riches that none can find them out, and so large, that when they are found out, men and angels shall not find their bottom. Oh, what foldings, and turnings, and inextricable windings of glory, are lapped up in Christ! Year treasures, all treasures are in Him (Col. 2. 3), so it is called, *baros doxes*, a weight of glory. A weight eternal, a weight aged, and full of ages of glory. An exceeding great weight, and not that only; but a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (*Rutherford.*)

Hostile Angels.

(HAROLD P. BARKER)

A. In continuing the subject of angels can we learn anything concerning those that we speak of as fallen; have they any influence upon nations?

B. In speaking of these things we must guard against what Scripture calls "intruding into those things which he hath not seen" (Col. 2. 18). This warning very significantly stands adjacent on the sacred page to a reference to angels. We shall do well, therefore, to confine ourselves strictly to what is revealed. Within these safe limits we may profitably consider the subject.

A remarkable passage in Daniel will perhaps help us with regard to your question. We learn from chapter 10. that angel powers connected themselves with different nations. The great angel Michael is spoken of as "your prince" (ver. 21), that is, the prince of Daniel's people, the Jews. In a subsequent passage he is referred to again as "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (Dan. 12. 1).

Here, then, we have a certain angel who had a special place in connection with the nation of Israel, its guardian and defender. We also find another great angelic personage mentioned as "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (ver. 13). This angel was hostile, and was able to withstand the heavenly messenger that appeared to Daniel, and prevent him from accomplishing his purpose, until Michael came to his aid. A third angel personality is mentioned in verse 20 as "the prince of Grecia."

We may gather from this that angels, either good or bad, have received, or have assumed, certain charges in connection with various nations, and that tremendous conflicts go on in the unseen world between the powers of good and of evil. And in all probability between the powers of evil themselves, for being

wholly evil they can have no love for one another.

A. Does Satan himself take any part in these conflicts?

B. The evil angels are spoken of as HIS (Rev. 12. 7). They are evidently more or less the instruments of his will. But Satan seems to have enthroned himself as the unseen ruler of different nations at various times of the world's history in order, no doubt, to express through men his own character in opposition to God's character as expressed in His people. Thus, in contrast with the "*prince of Tyre*," who is distinctly said to have been a mere man, one is spoken of as "*king of Tyre*," whose description shows that he could have been no less a person than Satan. (See Ezekiel 28.) Under his leadership Tyre became one of the leading powers of the world, a leader in wickedness as well as in commerce and wealth. Later on it would seem that Babylon was the seat of satanic influence; and we are informed that at a critical period of the church's history Satan's throne was in Pergamos (Rev. 2. 13). From this seat he exerted his terrible influence to defile the church by means of an unholy alliance with the world. The mention of the "depths of Satan" in the address to Thyatira (portraying the period of the church's history when it was characterized by the dominance of Rome) suggests that the seven-hilled city afterwards became the seat of Satan.

A. Is there anything to indicate where Satan's seat is *now*?

B. Not, as far as I know, in Scripture. He is the prince of the whole world (John 14. 30) and no doubt controls things beyond all that men imagine. But his angels are the means by which he largely obtains his ends in the world-conflicts that he originates, and we cannot say from whence he operates personally.

A. Is it likely that Satan has his seat in Berlin at the present moment ?

B. I cannot say. But there seems to be some agency at work with the Germans which can hardly be considered human. And in saying this I am not only thinking of the part they have played in the great war and in the events that led up to it, but more particularly of the fearful influences that have emanated from Germany, and have spread all over the world, undermining Christianity, and overthrowing the faith of millions. I refer to that which generally passes under the name of "Modern Theology," with its ally, Higher Criticism. These have indeed been the very breath of Satan. We must remember that Satan's chief activity is seen in blinding the mind of men to the truth (2 Cor. 4. 4), and nothing has done this more effectually than modern theology.

A. Do we not read of Satan giving his seat to a man in the future ?

B. We do. The passage which speaks of it is Revelation 13. 2. In the day that is coming Satan will not enthrone one of his mighty angels in the seat of his power, but will place a MAN there! He will give him "his power and his seat, and great authority." This man will not be the Antichrist, the pseudo-Messiah of the Jews, but the great western Cæsar, the head of the revived Roman empire. He will reign as the very deputy of Satan and will be aided in his diabolic schemes by the second "beast" of (Rev. 13.), who will be possessed of miraculous powers and who may be identified with the "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2. 3), whose coming, we are told, is the direct result of Satan's work.

When the time arrives for God to deal in judgment with the evil with which the earth will be filled, the seat of the beast, given him by Satan, is specially mentioned as coming under the stroke of divine wrath (Rev. 16. 10).

A. We may conclude, then, that

the powers of Satan and his angels are very real. And it would seem that these evil angels support various nations in their conflicts, for their own diabolic ends, or rather the ends of him under whose sway they are. Do the angels of God likewise take part in the conflicts of earth ?

B. A great conflict of angels under the respective leaderships of Michael and Satan is foretold in Scripture, and I see no reason to suppose that warfare between the good and evil angels is altogether future.

A. Have we any further light in Scripture as to the fallen angels and their doings ?

B. Let us turn to the Scriptures and see. The first mention that we have of sinful beings beside the Serpent and the race of Adam whose ruin he had brought about, is the somewhat mysterious passage in Genesis 6. 2. Some have thought that the "sons of God" referred to here were merely the children of Seth's line, who began then to intermarry with the daughters of the family of Cain. But this is not the interpretation which reliable expositors like J. N. Darby, W. Kelly and others give. The last named writer says in his *Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch*: "The true key to this account is supplied in the Epistle of Jude. It is hardly so commonplace and ordinary a matter as many suppose. When understood, it is really awful in itself and its results. But the Holy Spirit has veiled such a fact in the only manner that became God and was proper for man. . . . This only may be remarked in addition, that the 'sons of God' in my judgment, mean the same beings in Genesis as they do in Job. This point will suffice to indicate their chief guilt in thus traversing the boundaries which God had appointed for His creatures. No wonder that total ruin speedily ensues. It is really the basis of fact for not a few tales of mythology which men have made up. Any one who is acquainted with the chief

writings of the old idolatrous world, of the Greeks and Romans especially, will see that what God has veiled in this brief statement . . . is what they have amplified into the Titans and the giants and their greater deities. I do not, of course, enter into details, but here is the inspired account, which shines in the midst of the horrors of that dark scene which fabulists portrayed."

These "sons of God," angels that kept not their first estate but left their own habitation (Jude 6.), are not to be confounded with those angels of Satan of whom we have spoken. These latter are free to take part in the affairs of the world, but the angels of which Jude speaks are reserved in chains under darkness. God has "cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2. 4). The word translated "hell" in this passage occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It is really Tartarus, "the deepest pit of gloom" (Darby). Here the apostate angels are imprisoned "unto the judgment of the great day." Our inquiry does not therefore concern them, for their activities in evil are ended for ever.

In contrast with these, there are other fallen angels who are still active in evil. We read of them in Ephesians 6. 12: "the rulers of the darkness of this world," or "the universal lords of this darkness" (Darby), "the world-rulers of this darkness" (Kelly) "the various powers of evil that hold sway in the darkness around us" (Twent. Cen. N. T.), "the Sovereigns of this present darkness" (Conybeare).

A. It seems terrible to think of these mighty potentates of evil being the real rulers of the world. It would make one tremble if one did not know that the power of God is sufficient to preserve us from their malice. Does the Apostle Paul refer to them elsewhere in his Epistles?

B. Yes, he speaks in several passages of the "principalities and powers,"

both good and evil. Let us turn to them.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8. 38. 39).

How comforting is this assurance that no existing power of any kind can tear us from the grasp of eternal love! These great personalities may be able to sway empires, but not all of them put together, and supported by their prince himself (Matt. 12. 24), can ever separate the feeblest saint from the love of God, brought near and secured to us in Christ.

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1. 21).

Whether this refers to good or evil powers, the glorious truth is that a place has been given to CHRIST which far surpasses theirs. No doubt Satan's great object has been to seize the earth and make himself man's lord. How overwhelming has been his defeat, in that the highest place in the gift of God has been given to a MAN; that in the person of Christ MAN has been raised to a height of glory that no angel, fallen or unfallen, can ever fill.

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3. 10).

We referred in a former paper to the lessons angels learn in contemplating how the wisdom of God has been displayed therein. According to this passage this has been an object that God has had in view, and not only that *men* should be instructed in His mind and purpose.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"

(or, "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," R.V.) (Eph. 6. 12).

This is an important scripture in connection with our subject, as showing the character of the conflict which Christians have to engage in. It is not here a question of the lusts of the flesh, but of hostile forces, directed against those that are the subjects of God's purpose and blessing, and exerted from the heavenly places whence Satan and his angels are not yet cast. To war against enemies of flesh and blood, as did Israel in the days of old, we should need day by day the mighty help of God. How much more do we need this, and every part of the armour described in this chapter, when our foes are angelic potentates, excelling in craft and power! With reference to this scripture we cannot do better than quote a couple of paragraphs from Darby's *Synopsis*, Vol. IV, page 429:

"They are principalities and powers, beings possessing an energy of evil which has its source in a will that has mastery over those who do not know how to resist it; they have also strength to carry it out. Their energy they have from God, the will that uses it comes from themselves; they have forsaken God; the spring of their actions is in their own will. In this respect it is a source of action independent of God, and the energy and the qualities which they have from God are the instruments of that will, a will which has no bridle except from outside itself. They are *principalities* and *powers*. There are good ones; but in them the will is only to do that which God wills, and to employ in His service the strength they have received from Him.

"These rebellious principalities and powers rule over the darkness of the world. . . . But if these principalities rule in the darkness of this world, they do not possess merely an outward force; they are in the heavenlies, and are occupied with spiritual wickedness there. They exercise a spiritual influence, as

having the place of gods. There is then, first, their intrinsic character, their mode of being, and the state in which they are found; second, their power in the world as governing it; and third, their religious and delusive ascendancy, as lodging in the heavens. They have also, as a sphere for the exercise of their power, the lusts of man, and even the terrors of his conscience."

A. Then do you gather that the temptations of everyday life, temptations to sin, come from these evil angels?

B. Not necessarily, nor from Satan, their leader. Sir Robert Anderson has some very good remarks as to this in his book, *The Silence of God*. He says: "But this kind of satanic influence involves no knowledge of the inner experience of each life, no possession of divine attributes. It implies no special action directed simultaneously against millions of individuals scattered over all the globe. That the devil does deal with individuals we know; but Scripture indicates that such cases are exceptional. The warning of the Twelve that Satan desired to have them, though intended for all, was specially for Peter. It is but natural that he should seek to drag down those who stand out as champions of the truth. Nor can even the lowliest disciple be sure of immunity from his attacks. . . . Of the devil's aim and methods I have already spoken. No one, I repeat, may assert that he might not use the basest means to ensnare a minister of Christ, and thus mar his testimony and destroy his usefulness. But it cannot be asserted too often or too plainly that his normal effort is not to tempt to the commission of such sins as lead to contrition, and teach us how weak we are, but, by drawing us away to mere human morality, or religion, or philosophy, to deaden or destroy our sense of dependence upon God. For sin may humble a Christian; but human philosophy and religion can only foster his self-esteem. And pride is the 'snare of the devil,' not humility."

I have quoted this rather long extract as to the way in which Satan works, because his angels work on the same lines and for the same ends. I may remark here that we must not confound these great angelic potentates with the "unclean spirits" of which we read in the Gospels.

A. Are there any further references in the Epistles to the great angelic powers?

B. Yes, they are mentioned three times in Colossians. In chapter 1. 16 and 2. 10 it is evidently the powers of good that are referred to, but in chapter 2. 15 we have a remarkable passage which shows us that it is the cross that has brought about the overthrow of the evil ones: "*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*"

The angelic powers controlled by Satan little anticipated what the cross would mean for them. But by His death He who had espoused the cause, not of angels but of men, gained a complete victory over the hostile forces, for ever delivering from their power those for whose sakes He died.

A. You do not mean that their power to work is broken?

B. No; as we have seen, they are still active in their wicked designs. But their defeat is secured. There can be no question of their final success. Of course it was impossible from the beginning, for God is stronger than Satan, but the way He has wrought their overthrow is by a MAN, His own beloved Son, Who has gained the victory by His death on the cross, and now enables His saints to be more than conquerors through Himself.

It is not for us, however, to be occupied with evil angels, nor to count on good angels, though they are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, and may often stand between us and the evil ones that seek our hurt. Our trust is to be in the living God. When we think of all that HE is to His people, and of the sure resource we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, we need fear no foe. Satan himself is powerless to touch those who hide in HIM. But it is well that we should bear in mind that great powers of evil are in intense activity round about us, and that tremendous conflicts are going on in the unseen world.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6. 10, 11).

The Need for Watchfulness.

WE are very apt to become stereotyped and materialized. We are very liable to become worshippers of ideals and to live in a fairy land of our own creation. But if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves (1 John 1. 8).

The mark of the young men was that they had overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2. 13). It is, however, important to see that it is he that is begotten of God that sinneth not but keepeth himself, and that the wicked one does not

touch him (1 John 5. 18). But every Christian still carries that which is born of the will of man and of the flesh, and no matter under what refined conditions flesh may have been cultured, its original characteristics remain and are ever ready to break forth. There is, and ever will be throughout life, so much in our flesh which answers to our surroundings that what is born of God is apt to become obscured, and only constant watchfulness and an abiding communion with God can preserve us.

A Preacher of Righteousness Ensnared.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels).

“**A**ND Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken” (Gen. 9. 20, 21).

In the whole Word of God there is no more solemn lesson for the Christian than this terse statement about Noah. Noah was one of the most highly favoured men whose deeds are recorded in Scripture. Evidence of this is afforded in the following passages:—

(1) He was the tenth in the chain of worthies descended from Adam. Of these he alone was the special subject of prophecy at his birth: “This shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed” (Gen. 5. 29).

(2) He found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6. 8).

(3) He was an obedient servant, he did according to all that the Lord commanded him (Gen. 7. 5).

(4) Of that generation he alone was found righteous before the Lord (Gen. 7. 1).

(5) As a coping-stone to his blessings he and his house were invited into the ark. There he spent over a year in communion with God, undistracted by the allurements of earth. As the window of the ark was in the top, his outlook was heavenwards.

Notwithstanding all this high favour and special experience, as soon as Noah was left to the devices of his own will, under the influence of Satan he became a slave to lust. He turned his attention wholly to the earth and became ensnared by the fruits of it. As a consequence grievous failure ensued. So it is often in Christian experience. As soon as we become occupied with the earth and earthly things—and the vine speaks figuratively in this connection of pleasure and joys that are earthly—Satan traps us in one of his snares.

Although Noah lived 350 years after he began to be an husbandman, his name is never mentioned again. He was alive throughout the whole of that godless period which culminated in the erection of the Tower of Babel, yet his presence had no restraining influence on his descendants. They quickly caused the cleansed earth to exhibit the features which had played such a prominent part in Cain's world, and there is no record of his remonstrance. Men did not take knowledge of him that he had been with the Lord. Satan had gained the victory over “the preacher of righteousness.”

With what living power this episode comes home to every Christian, the oldest as well as the youngest. We do well to be watchful. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10. 12). Spiritual progress is no occasion for self-glorification; but that God should be glorified for His matchless grace and mercy. A Christian who has been forty years with the highest privileges, and under the most favourable conditions for expansion of soul God-ward, is not immune from failure, and is liable to fall into the snares of the enemy, even as righteous Noah did after six hundred years with God.

Of all the assemblies to which the Apostle Paul addressed epistles, the Ephesians had made the greatest spiritual progress, yet he repeatedly admonished them to avoid the lusts of the flesh.

“Be ye not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5. 18). “Let no man deceive you with vain words: because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph. 5. 6).

Wherefore the watchword for everyone is, “Ponder the path of thy feet” (Prov. 4. 26).

“O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.”

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. 7. (A. J. POLLOCK).

The Ark, illustrating the Deity and Humanity of the Lord Jesus.

(Read Exodus 25. 10-16.)

IT is a matter of deepest significance that the first article to be made in connection with the tabernacle was the ark. The ark is clearly a type of Christ. This brings out the fact that nothing can be right unless we begin aright with Christ.

A lady wrote me some time ago for advice as to replying to a Christadelphian. I advised her to refuse to touch any further matter till her correspondent admitted the deity of the Lord Jesus, for if he refused that, which he did, even outward orthodoxy as to minor details must be barren and useless.

So in this typical teaching we get this lesson emphasized as to the central truth of the Person of Christ.

This ark—a box $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ —was to be made of shittim wood—shittim wood being the hard imperishable acacia of the desert. This illustrates clearly the *humanity* of the Lord Jesus. Now most professing Christian bodies teach the humanity of the Lord Jesus. The Christian Scientists alone nowadays, so far as I know, deny the humanity of Christ, for they deny the existence of flesh and blood as material, and believe there is no such thing as matter. The Unitarians, Christadelphians, Millennial Dawnists, New Theologians, etc., admit the humanity of the Lord Jesus, but in refusing the truth of His deity, His humanity is rendered perfectly useless. He claimed again and again to be equal with God. Equality with God must perforce be Godhead, and there can be only one God. Could He be a good man then, and make such claims, which, if false, must brand Him as the most audacious of impostors? Impossible! And yet by common consent He was the best of men, even those who deny His deity

clamouring loudest of all for this. How inconsistent and illogical.

But we find the shittim wood was to be covered with pure gold. "Thou shalt overlay it [the ark] with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it" (ver. 11). In the shittim wood and gold we get the mystery of the person of Christ typified—shittim wood typifying His humanity; pure gold, His deity. Thus we get the twofold nature of the Lord Jesus presented in type—very God and very man, yet one Person.

Wondrous mystery! Inscrutable enigma! In Matthew 11. 27 we get the decisive statement, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." As to the knowledge of the Father, we find that this is shared by the Son with those to whom He reveals this knowledge. But the Father *alone* knows the Son. This is the "thus far and no further" for us—the *ne plus ultra* of our knowledge.

The great heresies that have rent the church of God from the days of Pentecost to this present time have almost invariably been occasioned by the transgression of this notable statement made by the Lord Jesus Christ of Himself. Who could speak thus but He!

Yet how sweet it is to hear Him say immediately, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11. 28-30). We may not know the inscrutability of His person. But we know Him. He gives rest, and His yoke is easy and His burden light. We bow to what transcends the creature's grasp. The great facts are presented in Scripture—His absolute deity, His true

manhood, the unity of His person. We can well sing in adoring worship—

“The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creature’s grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend.”

The gold had to overlay the ark within and without. What was out of sight corresponded to what was seen. How often we act for show, and then throw off all reserve when in privacy. Not so with the Lord. He is always and ever the same, whether publicly preaching, or privately with His disciples, or still more when in seclusion alone with God. Perfect manhood never acted in the slightest disparagement of what was essentially divine. The shittim wood was entirely covered by the gold.

Next, a crown of gold ran round the ark, illustrating the truth that God would carefully guard the great truth of the person of Christ. We may well give heed to this in these days of ever-increasing subtleties of error. Christ is the great test of everything.

As that monument of grace—John Newton—wrote—

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

The Apostle John sharply divides the Spirit of God and the spirit of anti-christ. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4. 2-3).

Words cannot adequately enforce the solemn necessity of right thoughts as to the Son of God. All true blessing now and for ever comes from Him.

Finally rings of gold, and staves of shittim wood covered with gold, were to be made, so that the ark might be borne by them. In this we are reminded in type that Christ was here as a stranger, passing on until His work was done: and the church of God, still in the wilderness, partakes of His character. We are strangers and pilgrims—travellers not yet home. The ark was to be the guide for the people. When it moved, they moved: when it rested, they rested. So with the believer to-day Christ is to govern Him in relation to what is connected with His people. It is not here the question of *individual* direction, but that which affected the whole camp.

So when the Christian wants direction as to his relation to all believers, he will find it by being in right relation to Christ. For this the Word must be studied, and the rich unfolding of Christ as Head of the church His body, the truth of the assembly, directions for a day of ruin, etc., will have their own blessed place in the heart of the subject believer.

Thank God, we shall not always be in the wilderness. The time came when the ark found its resting-place, its objective, and the staves were drawn out, symbol that the wanderings were over.

So we wait for that summoning shout which shall lift our feet off the weary, burning sands of the desert, and in one moment we shall be in His blissful presence, like and with Him for ever, at rest, at home.

And that may be

PERHAPS TO-DAY.

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 6.

(H. J. VINE).

Kings and Prophets.

THE KINGS who reigned in Jerusalem during the forty years of Jeremiah's labours were Josiah, Jehohaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. We have already spoken of these. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, with whom "the times of the Gentiles" began, comes into God-given prominence in Jeremiah's time. Dominion is given to him, and taken away from Israel. There is a remarkable date given in Jeremiah in relation to this. It is probably the most important date known to any chronologer in any ancient records. It enables him, as far as possible, to bring into order events up to that date, and from thence to our own time. It is mentioned no less than four times by Jeremiah, in 25. 1; 36. 1; 45. 1; and 46. 2. It is the synchronism of 25. 1 which is so striking and useful. "The fourth year of Jehoiakim" is the "first year of Nebuchadnezzar." This chapter gives us a formal, solemn, and impressive declaration from the Lord. He gives up Jerusalem. He forsakes "His covert, as the lion" (ver. 38.); and evil goes forth "from nation to nation." King Nebuchadnezzar is His servant to punish them. The date of verse 1 also fixes the twenty-third year of Jeremiah's labours (ver. 3) "from the thirteenth year of Josiah." It also fixes the time of the important prophecy of the seventy years' captivity given in this same chapter. It is the year he was told to write his book (36. 1), which Jehoiakim destroyed (ver. 23). It was also the year of his word to his secretary Baruch (chap. 45.); and likewise the fulfilment of that against Egypt, as recorded in the next chapter (46. 2), when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, smote them. The preservation of these dates by the Holy Spirit so exactly, confirmed, as they have been, by records recovered from the dust of ages, has great significance to the thoughtful believer, and especially so, seeing they mark the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, which are now swiftly reaching their close.

When that close comes it will be found that the kingdom and dominion will

revert again to the royal line of David. It may seem to have disappeared; but the fact is, the Man Christ Jesus, the Seed Royal of the house of David, although cut off by Israel as was foretold, was raised from among the dead; and is now hidden in the heavens, till the time comes for His being shown again to the nation. It was prefigured in the hiding of Joash, when it was thought that all the Seed Royal was massacred. But in due time he was shown to the nation, crowned and anointed amid joyful cries of "GOD SAVE THE KING." In a greater and more glorious way this is to be fulfilled in the true King, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is doubtless one reason why God has so carefully preserved in Scripture the record of the line of the Seed of promise. How thankful should our hearts be, that we have been called and justified through grace, and built into His assembly, while He is rejected, and hidden in the heavens, the bright prospect being ours, that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4).

"The heavens shall glow with splendour, but brighter far than they,
The saints shall shine in glory as Christ shall them array.
The beauty of the Saviour shall dazzle every eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by."

Jeremiah shows us that the Lord is the true Potentate. Above all earthly kings, He is "*the King of Eternity*" and "*the King of nations*" (10. 7-10). "Who would not fear Thee?" asks the prophet. "At His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation." In chapter 46. Pharaohnecho, King of Egypt, is punished, according to the word of "the King whose name is the Lord of Hosts" (ver. 18). And though he executes this through the King of Babylon, who is also used to carry Israel into captivity, yet Babylon's punishment also must surely follow, and Israel be again set free, "saith the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts" (51. 57). And this overturning of kings and nations and empires has gone on, and will go on, until He comes and establishes justice

and equity in the earth; and reigns as universal Emperor—the Prince of the kings of the earth, the king of kings, the Lord of lords.

“Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee,
High on Thine exalted throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdom for thy own.”

It is foretold of Him in that day: “He shall judge the poor of the people”; “He shall deliver the needy” (Ps. 72. 4, 12). Josiah in his early days was a beautiful type of Him in this respect. Jeremiah touchingly refers to it: “He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him” (22. 16). The prophet adds a word of great practical import to those who understand the great importance of the true knowledge of God: “Was not this to KNOW ME? saith the Lord.”

THE PROPHETS in Jeremiah's time included some of the very best, though there were also some of the worst. These latter, though moving among God's people, “prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit” (2. 8); “The prophets prophesied falsely” (5. 31) and yet used the Lord's name, though He “sent them not” (14. 15). Therefore “by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.” Jeremiah's heart was broken within him because of these prophets (23. 9). Adultery, lying, profanity, false dreaming, lightness, and lewdness characterized them; they were “as Sodom,” so debased had they become (23. 14). “Therefore, behold, I am against the prophet, saith the Lord” (23. 30). In chapter 28. we read of *Hananiah*, who prophesied falsely in the Name of the Lord. Opposing Jeremiah, he made the people to trust in a lie. “Therefore thus saith the Lord; behold I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month” (28. 16, 17). This is a sad illustration of these false prophets.

Turning away from this dark picture we find on the other hand some of the most distinguished and honoured prophets of all time, contemporary with Jeremiah. Some of them were doubtless influenced by the word of the Lord through him; perhaps truly converted.

Daniel as a lad lived at Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time. He was carried away to Babylon; and there he still heeded the prophet's words. *Ezekiel* was another who was taken off to Babylon later on (Ezek. 1. 2 and 40. 1). He laboured similarly to Jeremiah, only among the captives. *Habakkuk* probably served the Lord in Jeremiah's days. *Zephaniah* prophesied “in the days of Josiah” also. He spoke much of “the day of the Lord,” a day of wrath and distress, a day of wasteness, desolation, darkness, and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness (1. 15). But like Jeremiah he foretold the future day of grace and glory, peace and plenty; the day of praise and prosperity; when the pride of Israel should be removed, and walking in lowliness and love they should “no more be haughty” because of the Lord's Holy mountain (3. 11), the centre of earthly blessing. The Lord Himself will then joy over them with singing (3. 17).

One more true-hearted servant of the Lord must be mentioned here—*Huldah the Prophetess*. In the early years of Jeremiah, when the book of the covenant was found, they sought the word of the Lord from her lips. Her answer breathes the same tone and spirit which marked Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the King of Judah hath read, because they have forsaken Me, and have burned incense to other gods” (2 Kings 22. 16, 17). Nevertheless, because Josiah's heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord, he should be spared from seeing the evil to come. He read to the people “all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord” (23. 2); and the King commanded them, “Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant” (ver. 21); and from the days of the judges “there was not holden such a passover.”

Another true prophet, even if a timid one, is often overlooked among those who let their light shine before men at this period. Jeremiah alone records his story in chapter 26. 20–23. His name is *Urijah*, which means “Light of the Lord.” He spoke as Jeremiah had done, but was afraid and fled into Egypt. He was brought back and slain by Jehoiakim.

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 120-129.

WE come now to the fifteen "Songs of Degrees," or "Ascents," which were probably put together in their present form at the return from the captivity in Babylon. Viewed prophetically, they have reference to the restoration, yet to come, and will be sung, when the ascents to Jerusalem will be renewed, according to Hosea 1. 2 and Ezekiel 46. 9 (see also Ps. 122. 4). The last Psalm ended with the prayer, "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant." In these "Songs of Ascents" an answer is given, and in the last of the series (Ps. 134.) we find the saints in the sanctuary blessing Jehovah and receiving blessing from Him out of Zion. The scene of the first is far otherwise. In this the righteous man, representing the faithful remnant of his time, is seen in the distress of dwelling among savage enemies; not the inhabitants of Meshech and Kedar literally, for the places mentioned are at opposite ends of Israel's land, but people of such a character. Their opposition is by false charges, as in verse 69 of the preceding Psalm, the object, we may infer, being to embroil the relations of the faithful with the Gentile powers. This hostility is deeply felt, it is like sharp arrows and hot coals of broom (the root of this plant is used for fuel and is noted for the length of time it retains its heat). Against this hostility prayer is the saints' only weapon: "I cried—and He answered." It is thus that "tribulation worketh patience."

PSALM 121. The pilgrims are here regarded as drawing near Jerusalem; looking up they see the mountains surrounding the city where Jehovah dwells, and from Him, the great Creator-God, does their help come. The last six verses form the answer to the prayer in Psalm 120.; in these the painstaking and ever-watchful care with which Jehovah ministers to His own is emphasized by the repetition of the word "keep" six times (see R.V.). How plainly does this tell us that God would be known as the refuge of His troubled saints in all their distresses!

PSALM 122. Now they have reached the city, their feet are standing within its gates and the peace and prosperity of God's centre on earth become the chief desire of His people. What a lesson is here presented for our instruction! Sorrowfully does the great Apostle in captivity at Rome testify, "All men seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." A contrast is found only in Timothy, who genuinely cares for the state of the church. Such as he find encouragement in this Psalm, which tells us, "They shall prosper that love thee." How can any prosper whose love runs not in the direction of their Lord's? It is His Spirit who would lead us to pray for the peace of His people.

PSALM 123. In the next triad, of which this is the first, deliverance from enemies is sought for and obtained; their character of pride and scorn is that so often referred to in Psalm 119. Under such circumstances the attitude of the faithful here presented is very beautiful, unreserved dependence upon "Jehovah OUR God, until He have mercy upon us."

PSALM 124. This Psalm in the Hebrew is ascribed to David, but in the Septuagint and Syriac versions it is anonymous, so that the inscription must be regarded as of doubtful authority. In substance it is a plain answer to the prayer of the preceding Psalm. Jehovah has manifested Himself on behalf of those who waited for Him, and the sufferers have escaped. The name of Jehovah, the faithful Creator, is still their help.

PSALM 125. Here we reach a second climax in this series of Songs. The faithful are established in secure and permanent blessing. They are like Mount Zion, the seat and witness of grace to the house of David. As the mountains surround Jerusalem so Jehovah shelters His people by His power. The rod of wickedness will never again dominate the land or lot of the righteous. The assurance of permanence in this security makes it clear that the Psalm looks on to the estab-

lishment of the kingdom; till then we must learn the prophet's lesson, "The just shall live by faith."

In PSALM 126, the first of another triad, we begin again with tears, but still there is considerable advance on the three preceding Songs. The captivity of Zion has been turned, and so happy are the restored ones in their freedom it seemed like a dream. Even the Gentiles were congratulating them on the great things Jehovah had done for them. But the return thus joyfully celebrated is evidently only partial. Immanuel's land was waiting to be re-peopled just as the South country, parched by the drought of summer, awaits the winter rains to fill up the water-courses and introduce life and verdure into its arid wastes. But before the complete restoration comes, a time of sorrow must be passed through, during which the ministry begun by the disciples in Matthew 10. but interrupted at verse 15 by the rejection of Messiah must be renewed under more trying conditions. It is of this time that the Saviour declared, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." These sorrowing sowers are seen again in Daniel 12. 3, 10 as the wise who instruct many in righteousness. How perfectly this was anticipated by the Good Shepherd Himself it is well to remember.

Most suitably does PSALM 127 follow, assuring the servants that none of their labours can prosper except Jehovah work with them. Success comes even as He gives His beloved ones sleep. (The translation "in sleep," though attractive, seems not to be justified.) The ascription of the Psalm to Solomon is open to question, as in the Septuagint it is anonymous, and the Syriac attributes it to "David concerning Solomon, but also concerning Haggai and Zechariah, who urged the building of the temple." This is obviously self-contradictory and throws doubt on the reference of the house and the city to the temple and Jerusalem. Our chief lesson is the deep importance of so knowing the purposes of God that our activities are in accord with them (Haggai 1. 12, 13). The closing verses do not assert simply the blessing of a numerous progeny, but that the sons of a man's youth, who will naturally have

grown up when he is old, will be like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, a protection against enemies. The gate is mentioned as the place where judgment was administered (Deut. 21. 19).

PSALM 128. We reach in this Psalm another climax of blessing, in the uninterrupted domestic felicity of the man who feareth Jehovah, who is regarded as having come to Zion, and thence His servants are blessed. For a further description of the time here foretold see Isaiah 65. 19-25. Now alas! sin and death continually wreck this fair picture, and merely for our own comfort it is essential to realize, as another has well remarked, that the hope of the Christian faith "is not earthly prosperity, a numerous posterity, the earthly blessing of a people whom God acknowledged as His own. It is life eternal, promised of God in Christ before the world was, outside the world and divine government of the world and the development of the character of Jehovah in that government." Peace upon Israel concludes this section, as also the last (125. 5).

PSALM 129. The section ending with Psalm 131. appears at first sight to be on a lower spiritual level than that of the three immediately preceding; in reality deeper questions are dealt with, and though the climax to which we are brought is only the state set forth under the figure of a weaned child, it will probably be felt by many that even this is seldom reached. It is seen in Psalm 131. as the result of the chastening and repentance of the two which precede. The first of these teaches us the proper attitude to take up when the instruments of Jehovah's government are "ploughing up my back and making long their furrows." These afflictions are attributed to His righteousness which, while permitting them to suffer under Gentile enemies, so sustains them that no hostile power is able to prevail against them (2 Cor. 1. 4). But the Psalm goes further than this, and shows that the object of discipline having been accomplished in the faithful, according to the same righteousness, Jehovah turns to punish their oppressors (Is. 51. 22, 23; Zech. 1. 18-21). He cuts the cords of those who held them captive, whose prosperity would shortly wither like the short-rooted grass upon the house-tops.

What is the Cross ?

(F. B. HOLB).

WE must "hold fast" the truth of the Cross, for it lies at the very foundation of all our faith and blessing, and there is a certain phase of popular "Bible teaching" which is well calculated to rob us of the true meaning of it.

This subtle teaching may best be indicated by a short extract put into our hands the other day. It is based upon a curious and we believe untenable rendering of Hebrews 12. 3, and runs as follows:—

"The deepest note of the Cross is not what our Lord suffered within His own person, but that which He suffered in comradeship with those who were sinning against *themselves*. He saw how their opposition to His high ideals was reacting upon themselves for their own harm and ruin. . . . He 'endured' the 'gainsaying of sinners against themselves.' That is the Cross."

Is that the Cross? If it be, it is a very much less wonderful thing than we had supposed! No *divine* Saviour is needed for such a cross as that, the Christ of the Unitarian will easily

suffice! The fact is that statements such as this weaken the whole arch of truth, and no surprise would be felt if any of its stones dropped out. Only, blessed be God, *that is NOT the Cross*; and the truth as to the Cross is far too firmly embedded in Scripture for it to be rooted up—unless indeed the whole fabric of Scripture be destroyed.

Let us appropriate the skeleton of the above extract and clothe it with a scriptural body. It then runs as follows:—

The deepest note of the Cross is not what our Lord suffered as seeing the sin and degradation of men, great as that was, but what He suffered in His own person at the hands of a holy God when, to accomplish propitiation, "His soul" was made "an offering for sin." He saw indeed how men opposed the light He brought and ruined themselves, but far beyond that. He "poured out His soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." **THAT IS THE CROSS.**

Our Race.

"God of our life, God of each day and night,
Oh keep us still till life's short race is run,
Until there dawns the long, long day of light,
That knows no night, yet needs no star nor sun."

"**L**ET us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12. 1). This race is, by our Lord, set before us in His Word; it is of God's choosing, and not of our own; and the ill roads, the deep waters, the sharp showers, and the bitter, violent winds that are in our face are of God's disposing. We will not get a better road than our Lord allows us. He has called us to suffering, and not a stone is in our way by chance. But by His wise

providence all the waters are told; all the streams, the storms, and stones that are in our way are written in His book.

It is our comfort that our Lord is looking on. . . . He sets down the race in His Word, with all the way-marks, and sets His Son at the end of the way, holding up in His hand the crown of glory, and crying to the runners, "To the gate with speed!"

(Rutherford.)

"In His shadow I have rapture." For His name
Was "poured forth" like sweetest ointment; and I came,
Drawn to find, through weary wanderings, this retreat,
And sit down, in calm contentment, at His feet.

Difficulties of a Missionary.

Comments on a letter from the Foreign Field, in which certain perplexities are stated, and a complaint uttered over the dearth of manifest blessing. While the paper is submitted in the first place for the consideration of missionaries, yet it should yield help and interest to all who serve the Lord.

My dear Brother,

Your correspondent in China "would like to see something in your pages dealing with the difficulties we as preachers of the Word face, in the failure to see the signs following which from the Scriptures we are led to expect." After suggesting that a good deal of declension on the part of missionaries and native helpers may be due to this, and commenting on his own long service and scant success, he proceeds: "I would like to know what others have found revealed in God's Word about this. Because I feel many drift into error, when overwhelmed by the startling apathy of heathendom and the continual disappointments in really spiritual results." Finally, with a message of thanks for the valued "bits" in your magazine, he finishes by saying rather sadly: "We keep on sowing in faith, but I cannot but sympathize with some who have turned aside in face of the curious contradictions they find—promises pleaded that don't seem to hold good,—and so on."

I have selected the above as giving the tone of his letter, and will seek grace to answer some of the perplexities he names in detail.

One can hardly have been for nearly twenty years engaged in arduous work among heathen in Central Africa without feeling most sympathetic toward the writer in the difficulties he finds in his distant field. You have suggested that I compress within a short compass any considerations that might help; and though brevity is at times taken for brusqueness, I will endeavour to set out the thoughts that arise while pondering over his communication.

(1) By whom is the Servant Sent ?

The first inquiry would naturally be on the lines of our Lord's question to His opponents: "*The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?*" (Matt. 21. 25). A servant of God will not shrink from asking himself, "Was I sent here by God? Or is my appointment of and from men?" All confidence in our after-life and experience may be said to turn on the answer we are able to give. If one be able humbly to reply, "I know that God sent me where I am," then—come long waiting for success, or come success speedily—we are encouraged to go on. But if otherwise, and our movement be on the initiation, and under the dictation, of men, who though servants of God are not the Master, maybe God has a controversy—not with our preaching of the gospel everywhere, but—with our state of soul which waited not on Him. It will be noticed that there are two Hormahs in the Book of Numbers. Both are concerned with the heathen Canaanites. In the first case the Israelites went against them on their own initiative; and the Hormah in chapter 14. 45 referred to their own cruel disappointment and discomfiture. In the second case they first placed themselves in the Lord's hands, and then were sent by Him; then the Hormah in chapter 21. 3 was the discomfiture of the enemy. Be it remembered that for a messenger sent of God to the heathen it is written, "*To whom He was not spoken of, they SHALL see; and they that have not heard SHALL understand.*" We have personal experience of this. We were seven years working with our Congo tribe ere we could baptize a convert. But God fulfilled His word, broke down the

apathy and the opposition in numerous directions, and encouraged His servants in widespread interest and much blessing, continuing at this day.

(2) The Effect of the Condition of Christendom.

The second thought that impressed itself on me as I weighed your correspondent's perplexities was that we cannot escape from the results of the general condition of the Christian profession. We are part of it; and the Spirit who dwells in us is He who dwells in every true Christian, and in the house of God as a whole. His power is undiminished, and He is working as distinctly for the glory of Christ as on Pentecost's memorable day. But the mode of His activities is very decidedly affected by the state of things amongst us. The rule in apostolic days was immediate blessing with the preaching. The rule in Laodicean days is for the mass to be heartless, and the individual, after some knocking, to be awakened to the voice of Christ and blessed. We have certainly passed out of the first; we are almost as certainly in the second. Man asserts his self-sufficiency, and alas! his steady progress towards Divinity; and can the Holy Ghost *trust* blessing into the hands of men whose trend is practically anti-Christian? Happy those who are delivered in spirit from this age, and seek to do the Lord's will in dependence upon Him; yet they must bear the sorrow of the state of the people of God, as did the prophets and men of God of old. Even Joshua and Caleb, with all the individual faith they possessed, and the readiness to go on that they showed, were required to identify themselves with the people of God as a whole, and the success they longed to see was in their case postponed for thirty-eight long years because Jehovah was grieved with that generation. But it came. The experience of most missionaries who look for new birth and true discipleship in their converts is that the Spirit of God keeps them

waiting for a more or less extended time ere blessing takes a widespread form.

(3) The Need of the Fear of God.

With the third consideration I have to offer all may not agree. But it is put out as a personal conviction, and—speaking as to wise men—your readers may judge what I say. The gospel was not presented in the ways of God till the testimony of His Creatorship, and of His righteous law, had had their place. The approximate result in souls who were affected by these testimonies was the fear of God on the one hand, and moral exercise on the other. The truth that "God is" has its corollary in this, that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The ever-present thought of God before the mind leads it into exercise as to the difference between good and evil. There is no inherent power in man to attain the good or to conquer the evil; hence soul distress, which it is the genius of the gospel to meet. Applying this to the question of labour in a heathen field, broadly speaking we may find ourselves led to press primarily the truth of the Being of God, His majesty, and power, His Omnipresence, and Omniscience. Later the way may open more clearly to show how the questions of good and evil are raised by such a Being in relation to men who have revolted and rebelled against His goodness. Here the searching claims of His holy law may be brought to bear, showing how holy He is and how sinful sin is. "*By the law is the knowledge of sin.*" Finally, scope will be found for the application of the gospel's healing balm where sin-wounded souls are found. All this requires time, perhaps years of plodding, patient work. It is on the principle of "one soweth and another reapeth." The Lord gave a true value to all the prophetic basis that had been laid in the nation of Israel, as preliminary to the apostolic blessing about to follow (John 4. 38). Do not let your kind readers misunderstand me. While this general line of regular progressive

ministry may be followed, there may arise a hundred, a thousand, occasions for the servant to meet individual inquiries, to lead special cases right ahead into gospel light and liberty. But I speak on the one hand of the progress of God's ways in the Scripture leading up to the gospel; and on the other hand of the very reasonable inference that something corresponding to those ways should mould our dealings with the masses of heathen met with. In passing, one may commend the study of Peter's address to the Jew in Acts 2., to the Gentile seekers in Acts 10. (in whose case the fear of God and the working of righteousness were discernible), and Paul's addresses to the heathen in Acts 14. and 17.

(4) Satanic Opposition.

Fourthly, in reply to your correspondent's opinion, "For myself I believe the lack of better results is probably due to Satanic opposition, such as in the case of Daniel 10. 13," I submit that such opposition has least to do with it. "*All power,*" said the risen Christ, "*is given to Me in heaven and in earth.*" If He work, opposition is useless. Our part is to be in absolute touch with Him, in dependence upon His power. Of this dependence prayer is the tangible expression. Prayer is the link between the gospel commission of Luke 24. and Acts 2. The apostles, and the mother of Jesus, and the brethren are all found in the position and spirit of prayer in Acts 1., and so they made room for the putting forth of the might and power of Acts 2. Where was Pilate on that day? Where the Romans? Where the religious opposition? Where the power of Satan? The enemy may rage and fume and organize when the blessing has come, but he cannot prevent it coming. Hallelujah!

(5) The Practical Results.

Then comes the complaint in the fifth place, that converts have so little sense of sin, and so little intuitive

knowledge, apparently even by the Spirit, of what is becoming to Christianity. He says: "Years after our converts have been recognized as Christians we find that their consciences still seem dead as regards most glaring sins. We have to tell a man 'This is wrong,' or 'You must not do that,' about most ordinary things; as if even years of Christian exercises had developed no sense of spiritual guidance or inward perception." Now let us remember that there are cases where the grace of God refuses all method. In heathendom souls are at times undoubtedly converted who have had little previous self-knowledge, little light as to the absolute holiness of God, scant experience of the bitterness and heinousness of sin. They are suddenly snatched as brands from the burning, and handed over from the devil that sought their doom to the Saviour who loves them. These have a whole world of spiritual exercise to confront, the discovery of the perverseness of a natural will opposed to God's control, the diagnosis of every habit and custom of their lives in the light of a slowly growing knowledge of Scripture, the temptation at every turn to do what they have been accustomed to do in their heathen days without asking counsel of God, the immoral training of their generation which leads them to think many things meritorious which we know to be wholly foreign to the Christian regime. For all these things the grace of God provides; but souls are slow even in nominally Christian lands to lay hold of grace's provision for a godly walk. Let us have patience. Nearly all the epistles bring us up against the conditions in which the early converts moved, and many a sad fall was there, many a state that caused the apostles anxiety, some things that wellnigh caused disruption in the church (certainly compromising gravely the truth of the gospel) and deeply serious moral scandals. Some were met by discipline, and some by ministry; but all only served to bring out in more detail and in permanent form the

conduct suitable to that grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men. If the preaching of apostles had such setbacks, may we expect less ?

The Ministry of a Living Person.

Then in ministry, do we present the living personal *JESUS*? If we speak of the miracles or parables or incidents of the Gospels, do we expound *them*, or present Him? In telling of Him in His suffering, triumph, and present glory, do we ourselves throb with the reality of His love, realizing Him to be near and dear, and not only everything that *we* need for time and eternity, but also the Exponent of the Living and True God to us, His resource for all the requirements of the universe, and of the saints through all ages? Affections formed for Him, desire for His company, and His approval soon induce a distaste for sin, a keen instinct against it, which faith alone—even in the great verities of Christianity—will not do.

For what kind of Results do we Look ?

Further, be it noted that great writers, and thousands of prominent Christian workers, mistakenly look for the influence of Christianity in due time on the great unchristian faiths of the world, and suppose there is to be a great movement among religiously inclined people in the direction of a wholesale reception of Christianity. One such writer issues a book styled "Conversion by the Million," cherishing the vision of the total abolition of Poverty, Ignorance, War, and Devilry. Many seek to pave the way for a sort of ' rapprochement ' between Buddhism and the Christian faith, popularizing the latter by showing in how many features Buddhism resembles it! The true inward meaning of the Lord's coming

for His own, the present eclectic calling of the church, and the change of testimony after the church has gone, seem to be missed by such. Perhaps wilfully by some, for it involves the utter condemnation of man as he is, and the consequent uselessness at bottom of many of the philanthropic efforts to evolve him successfully in which they glory.

What is Success ?

Finally, being assured before our God of the divine character of the service to which we have been called, let us seek in every way to be conformed to God's ways and will in that service, knowing that when the Lord Jesus returns and all our deeds done in the body will be reviewed, and our work inspected, He will reward good and faithful work. Where there is this, the good and faithful work, *He* will find for Himself the kind of success for which He sent His servant. Was the cross success? Was His spending His strength for nought success? Was a cursing Peter, a cowardly lot of disciples, a betraying Judas, success? Was a compact of Jew with Gentile to crucify Him success? Yet said He, "*My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God*" (Isa. 49.). It was good and faithful work, and His God gave Him *in resurrection* a countless host of souls, the result of His sowing into loneliness and death. If we find long years after our earthly service is closed that God gave the greatest results to our sowing after we were supposed to be dead and done with, will the discovery not reward us amply for our *apparent* lack of success?

May the Lord encourage each tried worker in every part of His work.

Faithfully yours in His service,

Wm. Hy. Westcott.

Why?

(J. WILSON SMITH).

WHY this sorrow? Why should I be called on to pass through these waves of trial and suffering? What is the cause and the meaning of the dark clouds of adversity that hang so heavily o'er me?

It may be difficult to give a satisfactory answer to the question, which, being rather of the heart than of the mind, makes it all the more perplexing. That there is an answer, thoroughly satisfactory to the soul that is subject to the good will of God, is undoubted; but it is just this natural insubjection to the hand and will and purpose of God that creates the difficulty.

Let us look, first of all, at the root of the whole matter, and discover how that, at the very origin of God's moral dealings with man, the secret of the mystery is really disclosed to us.

Disobedience to God, at the instigation of the serpent, was punished by sorrow on the woman, and by sweat of the brow on the man, until they returned to the dust. This sentence has held good, and has never been reversed during the course of time.

Should the reason "why" be asked by either, the plain answer is found in the sentence passed on them at the beginning. It may be humbling, but it is inevitable. There is no possible escape. It has to be accepted.

It is safe, then, to affirm that disobedience to God is the secret; and that, but for sin, there would be neither sorrow nor suffering.

"By one man," we read (Rom. 5. 12), "sin entered into the world and death by sin." And again (Rom. 8. 20-22), "the creature was made subject to vanity," and that "the whole creation (not merely man) groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now."

Sin, with its dire concomitants of

death and groans and travail, has inverted and upset the entire course of nature, and is, without doubt, the parent of every human ill; nor has the curative machinery as invented by man, his education, science, civilization, etc., accomplished any radical improvement. The sore lessons we are learning, at the close of these six thousand years, should teach us that there is a worm at the root, a poison at the fountain-head, that the genius of the physician has never succeeded in reaching nor can reach. The disease is too deep-seated; it is ineradicable. Hence nothing short of a "new creation" can avail.

Well, let all this—humbling though it be—be admitted, the deep heart-craving remains. Why all this sorrow?

Has God not power to prevent? He surely has.

Is He not a God of love and pity for the creatures of His hand?

He is indeed! He "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." No greater proof could be given!

Does He afflict willingly?

No, He does not (Lam. 3. 33).

Then why these sorrows?

May I ask, from whose hand do you take them?

You reply, "From the hand of God."

Well, you are assured that that hand is one of love as well as power, and that, if it sees fit to chasten, it must be guided by love. Surely!

"The Lord gave," said the patriarch, "and the Lord hath taken away." He attributed both the good and the bad, the joy and the sorrow to God, adding, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no asking "why" as this avalanche of loss and bereavement was rolled in upon him. He simply and beautifully bowed in submission to God.

He had other lessons to learn in the same wonderful school, on which we need not dwell; but the absence of all question, when first the storm broke on him, is exceedingly interesting.

“I bow me to Thy ways, O God,
And all Thy ways adore;
Oh, that my great concern may be
To love and praise Thee more.”

This did Job.

You have a child whom you love better than your own soul. Yet you chasten him, and why?

For two reasons; first, if naughty I correct him; and second, if docile, I train him into my own wishes and ideas. The training does not necessarily imply opposition, but the design in it is conformity to my standard.

All perfectly intelligible; and yet no doubt the child, while undergoing this education, may sometimes say, “Why the rod, and the pain, and the tears?” He knows not the reason and longs for

an answer. But you know full well, and suffer so much, when administering the rod, as he does when bearing it. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him” (Heb. 12. 5).

And why not? Why should I not resent such chastening if I am not conscious of opposition to His hand?

Mark well the reason: “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Heb. 12. 6).

Ah! sorely afflicted child of God, can you take in this wonderful reason for your present sufferings? The reason is *LOVE!* Make the love of God the Father the key to unlock all your difficulties. His perfect love casteth out fear. You are being transformed now into the image of His Son, by all that through which you are passing, and will be fully confirmed by and by in resurrection glory. The work of the sculptor is perfect.

“He Leadeth Me.”

(J. J. ANNING)

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psalm 23. 3).

“**H**E leadeth me”—the Good Shepherd is the *object* of the heart and eye of the sheep; we, knowing His voice, follow HIM.

Follow HIM—where?—“in the paths of righteousness,” for in these paths He leads and in these alone: literally by the zigzag, winding, mountain path that the Psalmist so well knew. A path where that which is round the corner cannot by the human eye be seen beforehand, and therefore,

for the one who treads it, a path of absolute complete trust in the Good Shepherd. It is His vision and His wisdom upon which we depend, not our own.

The path, being a “path of righteousness,” is therefore narrow, and often difficult, and many a time the one *we* would not choose. But, “*HE* leadeth me” and therefore, without the shadow of a single doubt, all must be well because it is “for HIS Name’s sake.”

Be assured that if we are near enough to God we shall not be at a loss to know His will.

Christ can pity with the utmost tenderness, for He came into the very centre of our misery.

A broken heart is suited to a heart-healing God.

Comments and Communications.

(EDITOR)

A CORRESPONDENT suggests that the title that covers this magazine savours of presumption. He thinks that by it we claim that that which appears in its pages is the absolute truth, and consequently that all who do not agree with it have not the truth at all. We make no such claim.

Our motive in adopting "Scripture Truth" as our title was threefold: (1) we wished it to be clearly understood that we whole-heartedly accepted the Scriptures as the very Word of God, given by inspiration of God, true in every part and all-authoritative, the final court of appeal in every question of doctrine and conduct; (2) that all teaching appearing in our pages would be, as far as we were able, the unfolding of the truth of Scripture; (3) that we would not confine ourselves to one part of Scripture or to one line of truth, but as God gave ability and space permitted, we would minister the truth in its manifold character, believing that the whole truth is necessary to the well-being and edification of God's household on earth, and that "*all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 16). We believe that Christ is the theme of all Scripture, and that all Scripture is necessary to bring adequately before us "the things concerning Himself," and that if any part of Scripture is neglected we suffer loss thereby.

Every honest servant of God must be conscious of the feebleness of his apprehension of the unsearchable riches of Christ revealed to us in the Scripture, and how poorly he ministers even that which he has apprehended. Yet that will not deter him in the endeavour to bring forth from the inexhaustible treasury of the Scriptures the "things old and new." This is our purpose,

and in regard to it we count upon grace from God and upon the prayers of our readers.

That which appears in our pages month by month must be judged by our readers, not by any interpretation of it that they may favour, nor by any effect the truth has produced in themselves or others, but by the Word itself, for that alone is the standard. And this brings us to another important consideration.

Is the Truth or the effects of it the Standard?

Do we not often mistake the effects of the truth either in others or in ourselves for the truth itself, and set up the effects as the standard to be maintained and by which all must be judged? This certainly is a human failure, but a very serious one indeed, far-reaching in its consequences.

This failure may be best illustrated by the boy at school who starts with a copper-plate headline as his example, and who makes a tolerable copy on the first line of his book, but gradually, as he fills his page, he loses sight of that perfect standard and copies his own poor copy of it, until when he comes to the foot of the page there is very little resemblance between his work and the headline which he started to reproduce.

We have seen the effect that the truth has had upon others who have gone before us, and this surely is not without its value, for we are encouraged as we see what the grace of God did in and through them, and how faith triumphed in them; moreover, if we are wise, we shall be able to discern wherein they failed to fully reproduce the truth and so profit by their failure. But if we take their transcript of the truth as the standard, our eyes are off the headline and we move on a lower level, with the loss of the freshness and power which

contact with the truth itself imparts to the soul, and with a limited vision, and with a constantly hardening spirit which is intolerant of all that does not conform with the human standard which has been allowed to displace the truth of God in the soul, and which makes the truth—the Word of God—of non-effect. Herein lies the secret of nine-tenths of the sectarianism that has wrought such havoc in the church of God.

The last chapter of the church's history upon earth is being written, we have reached the foot of the page, and the contrast between that which we see and that which is set before us in the Word of God is intensely sad. Do we long for a revival at the very end? It can only come to us as we are delivered from the trammels of every false standard, as we take our eyes off the effect of the truth in others, and cease to make their ways or words our rule, and return to the truth itself. *We must return to the perfect headline.*

A further illustration of this failure may be helpful. We possess a faded photograph of an absent friend and reproduce it, retouching it here and there to bring into sharper outline the beloved features, and our reproduction passes for many months with us as an exact likeness of the valued original. But the time comes when we have the privilege of speaking face to face with our friend, and then are we astonished at the difference between the faded and retouched photograph and the one whom to us it had represented.

We appeal to our brethren and friends in Christ, and ask, are we not often busy retouching and reproducing faded photographs of the truth instead of looking upon the face of the most blessed Original? Upon Him whom we know is THE TRUTH? If so, it is little to be wondered at that there is often so much divergence of thought as to what is the truth, and as to how we should act in regard to it in times of crisis; and, also, that what we know and that to which

we testify moves our own souls so feebly and has such poor results in others who hear and see us.

To behold afresh, each one for himself, the glory of the Lord, not in books, however valuable and helpful they may be, but as the Spirit of God unfolds His glory to us as it has been made known to us in the Word of God, and to take that Word as our perfect standard, testing everything by it, discarding all that it disallows and walking in the way that it leads, *this is the way of revival, and the only way.*

Whatever true revivals have been in the church's history have resulted from this. We do not want to set to work to imitate the effects of these revivals, but we do want to get back to that which produced them, and which still has power to revive the saints of God.

If we do get back to the perfect headline, or to the original of the faded, retouched negative, it does not follow that we shall be applauded and find an easy path, for every revival in the past was opposed by those who had lost the truth in occupation with the effects of it, and those who called them back to the truth were often persecuted and refused, but we shall certainly be drawn into holy friendship with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and whose desire it is to walk in the truth.

We are not forgetting that the Word exhorts us to remember those that have spoken the Word to us, whose faith we must follow, but we shall only do this rightly as we consider the end of their conversation, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and for ever" (Heb. 13. 7, 8). Here is the perfect headline; to take the eye off this is to go astray.

Courage is needed, and grace, if we are to let everything go that has not an "It is written" as its authority, but these will be given to us if wholeheartedly we turn to the Lord to keep His word and do His commandments because we love Him.

The Christian Ministry.

(H. P. BARKER).

An Enquiry as to what the Scriptures say on the Subject.

A. I have been wondering whether in New Testament days there were those who held the office or position of ministers in the churches, and if so, what is said about them in the Scriptures.

B. We certainly read both of ministers and ministry. Epaphras was said to be a "faithful minister of Christ" (Col. 1. 7). Phebe was the servant, or minister, of the church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16. 1), and we find an exhortation addressed to Archippus to fulfil the ministry which he had received in the Lord (Col. 4. 17). Ministry simply means service; a minister is a servant. This being so it is the high privilege of every Christian to be a minister of Christ. Even the slaves in the church at Colosse, the humblest class of believers, were reminded that they served the Lord Christ (Col. 3. 24). They were, in very truth, His ministers.

A. Yes, I quite understand that. Perhaps I should have framed my question differently. I meant to ask, Was there a special class of persons, among the early Christians, set apart for the work of the ministry?

B. Let us open our Bible and see. In Ephesians 4. 11 we read: "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." Does not this passage show us that there were not a class, but several classes of persons specially designed by the great Head of the church for the work of the ministry?

A. How were they appointed?

B. Observe the exact language of Scripture. It does not say that they were appointed, but that they were given. Christ has loved the church well enough to give Himself for it, and knowing the various needs of His

saints He has made provision for them in giving helps of various kinds that they might be built up, cared for, and ministered to. Christ Himself, the glorious Head of His body, the church, is the Source from whence such gifts come; it is He who gives them to His church.

A. But may not these gifts be bestowed by means of some human channel? May Christ not act in the matter by means of an appointment by those competent for the purpose?

B. Can you point me to any passage of Scripture which would lead us to suppose so? On the contrary, Paul, speaking of the source from whence he derived his apostleship, not only affirms that it was "not of men" (a statement which perhaps might have room for a human appointment), but also that it was "neither BY MAN," an assertion which closes the door on any thought of appointment by men being the channel whereby he received his charge.

Nor do we read of prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers exercising their gift by reason of ordination or appointment at the hands of others.

We may go further, and affirm that the fact of a man being given to the church by its great Head for the work of the ministry, confers no human distinction upon him. Even the apostles were forbidden the title of Rabbi. They were to suffer no man to address them thus, so that they could not have approved of those who claiming to walk in their steps permit men to call them "Reverend"?

"Who am I," said the late C. H. Spurgeon, "a mere worm of the dust, that I should attach to my unworthy name an epithet that belongs to God alone? Holy and reverend is HIS name."

A. But do these various classes of ministers, if we may so call them, exist to-day?

B. The two classes named first—apostles and prophets—would seem to have served their purpose and to be no longer in existence. We learn from Ephesians 2. 20 that their place was at the *foundation*, that is, the *beginning* of Christianity. When a building is being erected the course of bricks or stones laid for a foundation is laid once for all. However many courses may be built thereupon the original course has never to be repeated. So with these two gifts. The apostles were those through whom the revelation of all that is characteristic in Christianity was made; prophets unfolded the mind of God for His people while the New Testament Scriptures were yet unwritten, or before they were available for the church at large. When the full revelation had been made, and the truth enshrined in sacred writings, apostles and prophets were no longer needed. Their ministry remains for us in the books of the New Testament.

A. What of the other gifts: evangelists, pastors, and teachers? Do these still exist in their distinctness or are they all more or less merged in the "minister" of to-day?

B. Before turning to the Scriptures for an answer to this question let me, in order to prevent misunderstanding, point out the very evident distinction between *gift* and *office*. We read of certain "ministers" who were such by reason of the office that they held. For instance, we read of the "bishops" and "deacons" that were in the church in the city of Philippi (Phil. 1. 1). These were local officers of the assembly and held their office by virtue of apostolic appointment.

A. What do you mean by *local* officers?

B. I mean that they held their office only in connection with the assembly in the city where they resided. For

example, a bishop in an assembly at Philippi would have no function as such in the assembly at Thessalonica were he to visit that place. So with a deacon. One appointed to serve at Corinth would not, by virtue of that appointment, have any service to render at Ephesus if he found himself there.

With *gifts*, however, the case is very different. No human appointment or ordination constitutes them such. They are given by the great Head of the church, not to serve in any particular locality, but wherever opportunity presents itself under the guidance of the Lord. An evangelist living at Colosse would be an evangelist at Rome, and on the ship by which he travelled thither, and wherever he found a soul in need of the gospel. Pastors and teachers would be such, not only in the town where they lived, but wherever they found saints who needed perfecting, work of the ministry to be done, and members of the body of Christ to be edified.

A. I should like to inquire a little further as to the *offices*, as you call them. You say men held these offices by appointment of the apostles?

B. Yes, or by appointment of men like Timothy and Titus, specially delegated by an apostle for the purpose. Look at Acts 6. 3, where we have the appointment of men to serve as *deacons*. The brethren were bidden to look out some men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom. But the brethren could not appoint them to the office. That lay with the apostles, as the last seven words of the verse clearly show.

Refer also to Acts 14. 23, where we find elders appointed in every city by the apostles. (Barnabas was reckoned as an apostle.—See Acts 14. 14.) "Elders" and "bishops" appear to have been identical. Note that instead of there being one bishop over a number of churches there were elders or bishops in each assembly (Acts 14. 23; Phil. 1. 1).

A. Do the offices of "bishop" and "deacon," in the spiritual sense of the terms, still continue?

B. How could they when there is no apostle to appoint men to these offices? For men who are not apostles, nor apostolically authorized, to arrogate to themselves the right to ordain others is an assumption that finds no support in Scripture. In 2 Timothy 2. 2, Paul, foreseeing the fearful declension that would set in (see chap. 3.), bids Timothy commit the things he had learned from him, not to men who should hold a certain office, but to men who should be marked by certain moral qualities: *faithful* men. These, in their turn, were not bidden to appoint others to an office, but to *teach* them. The whole trend of the epistles shows us that the Lord's provision for the safeguarding of true Christianity was not a line of official succession, but the maintenance (by the Holy Spirit's work and power) of faithful men who should impart to those around them the truths of the gospel.

A. You have not mentioned, in connection with either "gifts" or "offices," the order of *priests*. Are there no priests in Christianity?

B. Yes, indeed; but not as a distinct order or class. *All* believers are priests, and can unite in the song of praise: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and PRIESTS unto God and His Father" (Rev. 1. 5, 6). We have *all* been constituted "an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2. 15). We are expressly told that we, believers, in contrast with those who stumble at the Word, and are disobedient, "are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*" (1 Peter 2. 9). This high and holy privilege belongs to the youngest and feeblest saint as much as to the ripest Christian on earth. We *all* have part therein.

A. Will you now distinguish between the three "gifts": evangelists, pastors, and teachers?

B. Let us speak first of the evangelist. In Acts 8. we find Philip, the only man whom Scripture calls an evangelist (see Acts 21. 8), fulfilling his ministry. He is not acting as the agent of any society, nor is he sent upon his mission by any conference, synod, or assembly. He does not derive his commission even from an apostle (unlike the office of deacon which Philip also filled). He goes from place to place as directed by the Lord, moved hither and thither by the Holy Spirit (see ver. 39). His work was to preach the gospel, whether to the thronging crowds of Samaria or the solitary traveller in the desert. From city to city he went, from ancient Ashdod in the coasts of the Philistines, to the new Roman town of Cæsarea. The burden of his preaching was *Christ* (ver. 5); he spoke of "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (ver. 12). The blessed Saviour Himself was the constant theme of this dear man. To the Ethiopian officer of State we read that he preached JESUS (ver. 35).

A happy picture this, of a God-sent evangelist at work. Unrecognized by the religious officialdom of the day, sharing the hard lot of the persecuted Christians, he went his way bearing testimony to the One who had saved his soul, and winning others to faith in Him. Surely nothing that has happened during the centuries that have intervened between Philip's day and ours need prevent anyone, called of God to the work, doing as he did. It is as open to the evangelist of to-day, as it was to him, to hold himself at his Master's disposal and go from place to place at His bidding, preaching the glad tidings of grace.

A. Have we in Scripture a similar picture of a *pastor* at work?

B. We may take Paul himself as a sample. For though he was an apostle, and a prophet (Acts 13. 1); though none have surpassed him as an evangelist (see Rom. 15. 19, 20) and as a teacher (see Acts 20. 20), yet it is in his work

as a pastor that we find the great tenderness of his heart showing itself. Among the newly converted Thessalonians he served with all the gentleness of a nurse cherishing her children. Not only in the public ministry of the Word, but in private conversation, he exhorted and comforted and charged *every one of them*, as a father doth his children (1 Thess. 2. 7, 11). His prayers, too, for the saints in the various assemblies, whether known personally to himself or not, show a true pastor's heart that cared for the welfare of the beloved sheep of Christ, even to the point of shedding tears of loving concern about them.

A. Is not this the mark of a *teacher* also ?

B. It is difficult to draw the line between a pastor and a teacher. Scripture distinguishes them in that it names them both. But in Ephesians 4. 11 they are not named *separately*, but *together*. There are thus *four* classes, not *five*, mentioned. I am convinced that an immense deal of harm has been done among the people of God by men who have sought to be teachers without being pastors. Expositions of Scripture, without the loving gentleness and care for souls that expresses itself, if needs

be, in tears, and which pours itself out in earnest, fervent prayer and thanksgiving for the objects of its ministry—such expositions do real injury in that they misrepresent the *spirit* of God's revelation and tend to form a hard *framework* of the truth rather than to minister it with the tender compassions of Christ.

A. Which servant of Christ, among the many named in Scripture, would stand out as a model teacher ?

B. Besides Paul himself there is Timothy. Though exhorted to "do the work of an evangelist" in view of the heathen multitudes around him, his special charge was to maintain sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1. 3). He was to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ" among the brethren; to exhort and teach; and to give himself wholly to these things (1 Tim. 4. 6, 11, 15). But Timothy was a man who knew how to mingle tears with his prayers and his ministry (2 Tim. 1. 4). The compassions of Christ showed themselves in him, and the spirit given him was not only one of power and of a sound mind, but also of *love* (ver. 7). Surely this should mark every servant of Christ, especially those who devote themselves to the work of the teacher.

(To be continued.)

"He was Numbered with Transgressors."

"And when they came to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left" (Luke 23, 33).

THEY searched the prison cells of Jerusalem that morning for the most debased of all the criminals that that city contained, and they led them out to die along with Jesus. These men had been guilty of appalling crimes, and that was why they were chosen to hang one on His right hand and the other on His left; that was why they put Him upon the centre and highest cross. They meant to proclaim by

their well-considered and malicious plan that He was the worst of the three. Thus did they heap shame upon Him, adding deepest insult to deepest injury.

But I am glad that such men as these, and not James and John, were taken to be His companions on that day; in this the devil showed his lack of foresight, and in this he was outwitted, for if they had crucified the sons of Zebedee, one

on His right hand and the other on His left, it would have been said that they were helping Him to finish His work of redemption. The devil would have deceived men, now that Jesus is proclaimed as a Saviour, and would have said: These holy men, His disciples, had their share in His work, so that you must not trust in Him alone, but trust also in St. John and St. James, for they are worthy of as much glory as He.

Such a deception cannot now be practised upon weary, anxious sinners, those murderers who hung with Him could have no hand in the work that He was doing. They were suffering for their own crimes, He, the sinless One, for yours and mine.

“Alone He bore the Cross,
Alone its grief sustained;
His was the shame and loss,
And He the victory gained.
The mighty work was all His own,
Though we shall share His glorious throne.”

Yes, Jesus is the Saviour, and He alone. Behold Him there upon that cross, the darkness and shame of His surroundings only throwing into brighter relief the glory of His person. See Him “numbered with the trans-

gressors,” bearing the sin of many, and praying for His foes! How worthy is He of that name which is above every name!

Behold Him, the central object of man’s hatred; all the unspeakable enmity of men against God flung upon Him in scorn and shame and cruelty unrestrained, and, that, too, in the very hour when He stood forth as the infinite expression of God’s love to men. Truly, as we look upon Him there, every other actor in that solemn scene fades from the view and He stands out alone in the incomparable glory of His own divine and unconquerable love.

Yet what an evidence it is of the utter darkness of the heart of unregenerate man, and of His complete alienation from God, that he should have heaped shame and execration upon the One who is the most glorious and everlastingly blessed Person in God’s universe, that he should have condemned Him to die between two malefactors upon a shameful cross, in whom was centred the eternal delight of the heart of the Father.

(J. T. M.)

The Peace of God.

THE peace of God—how fathomless and wide!
Will aught disturb its calm tranquillity?

Yea, tho’ destruction come it will abide;

In wreck of worlds, and earthquake shock ’twill see
No terror discompose its peaceful rest,

E’en death, and sorrow’s tear, will not dismay;
Nor passion burn within a fever’d breast;

But self-composed throughout the endless day.

God’s peace—oh wondrous thought! Will such fore’er
My spirit keep, in infinite repose?

Will neither fear, nor death, nor gloomy care,

My heart and mind o’erwhelm? Tho’ hell oppose—

Oh, praise His name! His grace will never cease,

For God through Christ will keep my soul in peace.

Christian Workers’ Magazine.

The need of being “men of God,” letting everything go that has not the authority of Scripture, and walking with holy courage in the path therein set forth, is great.—J.G.

The Way of Deliverance.

(G. WINSLOW).

"Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 5. 14; John 4. 3-14).

LET us dwell a little on the Son of God proposing to such a woman as the Samaritan sinner to give her a great gift from God, if she asked it from Him; even a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life (John 4.).

She wondered that He should speak to a woman like her. She, and we, might well wonder, as the disciples did when they came back; but with Him there was no wonder in it—it was His life, His way, His nature, to do just what He did there, and God was in Him; He had sent Him to speak to sinners. It was from His Father.

But she did not put it that way, for she did not so know it; she was covering over what she was, though He showed that He knew her well. Her words covered her sins, except that she was a woman of Samaria, and He was at first to her only a Jew speaking to a Samaritan; and the Jews had no dealings with such a despised people.

Thirst drove her to the well, shame forced her out at such an unusual, untimely hour to draw water for herself, and her house, whatever that house consisted of. There was no sin in drawing water, but a burden in it to be borne all alone, and there was no one to sympathize with that heavily laden sinner, lonely in soul and body.

Yes, there was One whose heart was tender towards her—the same Jehovah who had of old said by His prophet Hosea (2. 14): "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably to her" (speak to her heart). God is faithful, if we are unfaithful (1 Tim. 1. 15; 2 Tim. 2. 13; 1 Cor. 1. 9). And what He is going to do to Israel one day, He was going just then to do to a Samaritan outcast, as He has done to many a burdened soul since then. Consider it. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is

that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him."

"If thou knewest"; I know, and my Father knows, why I have come down so low—so near thee—so like thee, in thirst, in weariness, in loneliness, in everything except sin, to meet thee here all alone, and tell thee how I know of a well deeper than this one, springing from my Father's heart and from my own. "*The water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life.*"

But consider again to whom He was saying all this. If there was no sin in drawing the water, there was abundance of sin in the associations which called her to do it all alone at that hour of the day; sin and shame brought her there alone, as shame brought Nicodemus in the previous chapter, all alone at night. Each had something to cover up both from man and from God. But Jesus knew well how to uncover it in each case. And see how He did it in this case. Grace did it.

But was it thirst that led the Son of God to sit alone at that deep well? He knew a deeper spring and was going to draw from it to quench her thirst, not His, for we do not read of that thirst being quenched except in quite another way, which the narrative tells us of at the close.

His Father gave Him to eat of meat that the disciples knew nothing of. Consider that, my soul, what gave Him His pleasure was the will of God, but man knows nothing of it, till he believes it. As soon as he believes God in Christ, he knows it. It comes out here, however, plain enough for any thirsty souls to drink in by faith. We read, "He must needs go through Samaria." Yea, He must needs come from God; He must needs suffer; He must needs die (John 3. 14-18). There

were needs on man's side, yea, abundant needs; but there were needs on God's side. If God is to be made known so as to reach sinners—reach the lost Christ must suffer and die.

But there were greater needs still, namely, that God should be known in His creation as He is, and the Son comes down as here to make Him and this known. Oh, what kind of a heart must that be that shuts Him out? This woman, at any rate, was not able to do it.

At first she thought His request singular. It was more singular, however, than she thought it. Why, He created all the waters, separated them from the earth, brought a flood of them over the earth, walked upon them, turned a storm into a calm.

But God is more than a Creator, more than Almighty. He is love, and light—and His love lighted up the dark heart of this sinful Samaritan, and made her forget, or neglect, what she had taken that wearisome journey for, with a heavy earthen pitcher on her shoulders, to carry it back heavier still to her sinful home. She has no need of it now; at least the need has gone out of her thoughts. What a deliverance! But we anticipate. Let us see further how it came about, that others may learn what the Son of God loves to do—has done, will do, for all that will on His terms converse with Him.

At first she gave Him a rebuff; she thought He was a Jew too proud to ask a favour of a Samaritan, whom the Jews cast out. God is higher still; has He cast out men? Is He too high to converse with them? Behold Him in Jesus at this well, how low did He stoop? He was weary, thirsty, and yet approaching to ask a favour from an outside sinner.

They were well met; but it was He who must go through Samaria. He had His message to such as she was; He must needs deliver it. He would not have been enjoying His own meat and His drink if He had not used, nay,

sought the opportunity of doing her this good. But she, what was she getting?

She was simply learning what was in a new man, another kind of man she never dreamed of. She did not know much about Him—thought Him a prophet.

But a prophet does not know all that every one did; only God knows that. She took in that as to herself. He told her all that ever she did.

It was her conscience that ascribed to a man what was true only of God. But He was God. We always underestimate, but we cannot over-estimate God.

But to her this was a man, and so He was. But He was God in a Man. "God with us"—Emmanuel. And note, His Father was in Him: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." You have no other to meet, not even at the judgment seat. But He is not judge yet. He is God as Saviour, a Saviour-God as presented in Timothy and Titus.

The pure Scripture itself is better than a paper on it. If enough has been said to attract to the Scripture, or to Him about whom the Word is written, it is enough. Is it enough for you?

Just note, a Man had taken possession of her, and that man was God (John 1. 1), and put others, other things, one and all, out of her mind. He had made her confess to Him what she would not have confessed to another; and she went quickly back to her city, lightened, certainly enlightened, and wishing to enlighten others. Where was her heavy water-pot? Did she miss it? Where her thirst and that of her household? Where were "the men"? except to tell them some news, not about herself—they must have known too much about her—but about this new man, this one man, this Jew so condescending, who possessed such knowledge as He had. To her at least, who could He be but the Christ?

She did not yet know all that this wonderful Man knew. But it was His knowledge that had brought Him down, not from Jerusalem or any other earthly city, but from dwelling in His Father's heart—yea, from eternity, to make known among Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, what He knew about His Father—yea, sent by Him to make it known.

She was, by a few words spoken by Him to her heart, completely delivered from all need except need of Himself.

Observe, nothing is here said about His work on the cross, for God and for men. That is in the previous chapter. This work, of course, was the righteous foundation for all He said and did. For God is not only full of grace, but there must be a perfectly righteous foundation for making known this grace.

God is as much light as He is love;

but who has so good a title to make known the grace as He who bore in His own body the judgment due to this woman, and all sinners who believe—God has been glorified in His death and blood-shedding, or He could not righteously pass over all the sins and guilt that He well knew. The work done on the cross is enough to cover, and glorify God about the guilt of all sinners, but they must believe it and Him who did it.

Who could know them so well as He who took the weight of them on the tree, and there put them out of God's sight? When the believer knows that, he may well leave them behind himself, turn to God, and wait for the Son from heaven (Thess. 1. 9, 10). For "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation: that is, wholly apart from every question of sin" (Heb. 9. 28).

"Before Abraham was, I am."—John 8. 38.

DWELL on it, my soul! Jesus, that thou knowest, that stranger in the world among His own, is "I AM." Henceforth let us be dead to all but this. I do indeed stand incapable of utterance. I do read of and talk with Jesus, I watch Jesus in His ways,—a servant, and, behold, He, even He, is "I AM," whose I am, whose way I follow, whose grace I adore. Christ is the union of these two things: the Man, the rejected man whom I look at now with most thankful sympathy, and, behold, the presence of God! How low it lays men's thoughts, experience, judgments, notions! The perfection of God was there, God rejected of men. What can meet or have a place along with this? Let this be my experience. Glory be to God Most High. Amen. Yet to me, it is Jesus; in truth it is "I AM." Here I rest: here I dwell; to this I return. This is all in all. I can only be silent, yet would speak what no tongue can utter.

This we shall learn, and for ever grow in—more beyond us for ever, for here is God revealed in His essential name of existence—God revealed in man, in Jesus! I know Him, am familiar with Jesus, at home with God, honouring the Father in Him, and Him as one with, and in, the Father; yea, delighting to do it. But do we believe it?

I do believe it all; and yet, as it were, believe nothing. I am as nothing in the thought of it, yet alive for ever more by it, blessed be God and His name. All shall praise Him so. Yea, Lord Jesus, God Most High, so shall it be, Lord Jesus! Thou art "I AM." Yet didst thou take little children in thine arms; yet didst Thou suffer, die, and be in the horrible pit—yea, for our sins! Thus I know the mercy-seat; I know that there is no imputing sins to me, that I am reconciled to God, and that God is the reconciling One.

(J. N. D.)

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. VIII.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

The Mercy Seat and the Cherubims.

(Read Exodus 25. 17-22, and Leviticus 16. 11-19.)

IT cannot be too often repeated and emphasized that the Lord Jesus became man in order to die. "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John 5. 6). Here we have pointed out the way in which Christ came into this world; it was in view of His death in order to effect atonement. The blood is here emphasized in a remarkable way. Apart from this there could be no blessing for man.

All this is happily typified for us in the mercy seat. In our last article we spoke of the ark, made of shittim wood (type of the humanity of Christ), covered with gold (type of the deity of Christ), and saw that it typified that most wonderful intervention by God in the affairs of this world when the Lord Jesus—God and man, one Person—was found in fashion as a man. But now we go on to a further thought.

The mercy seat consisted of a slab of pure gold, two and a half cubits long by one and a half cubits broad, which rested upon the ark. It had a distinct significance and designation of its own. It was not part of the ark, though always in conjunction with it. The holy of holies is called "the place of the mercy seat" (see Lev. 16. 2 and 1 Chron. 28. 11). The Hebrew word for mercy seat is *Kapporeth*—to cover up, to reconcile, to atone.

But look at the combination of ideas. The very name, *mercy seat*, brings before us God's attitude to the sinner. Mercy is what the sinner needs. But this *mercy seat* was made of pure gold, illustrating, in this connection, the inexorable claims of divine righteousness. Righteousness, God's righteousness, must be met and settled. How then can mercy flow to the sinner? If the claims of righteousness clash with

the desires of mercy, the claims must stand.

The magnificent verse springs to one's mind, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85. 10). What a meeting! Can righteousness, stern, inexorable, unyielding, kiss gentle peace? Not while one tittle of his demands are unmet.

What then is the solution to the problem? It lies in the meaning of the blood sprinkled by the high priest on the great day of atonement once on the mercy seat and seven times before it. We read, "Into the second (that is, the holy of holies) went the high priest alone every year, NOT WITHOUT BLOOD, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (Heb. 9. 7). "Not without blood" rings a note of insistence throughout the ceremony on the great day of atonement.

We get the Antitype of the mercy seat in Romans 3. 24, 25: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation [mercy seat, N.T.] through faith in His blood."

This then is the meeting-place between God and men, between mercy and truth, between righteousness and peace. Mercy is not at the expense of righteousness, but on the basis of it. The atoning death of the Lord Jesus solves the enigma. If the ark typifies the Lord Jesus in His twofold nature as God and man, the mercy seat, likewise, typifies the same glorious Person, but in connection with His atoning death.

The high priest in Israel, however, as well as offering a sacrifice for the people, had to offer one for himself, because he was a poor frail sinner.

The Lord Jesus, in contrast, had no need to offer a sacrifice for Himself. If this necessity had existed He could not have been the Saviour of others. He was no sinner, but the perfect, spotless, absolutely sinless Son of God, and when He died it was only and altogether for others.

Overshadowing the mercy seat were two cherubims of gold, standing with outstretched wings, covering therewith the mercy seat, their faces looking inwards and downwards—towards each other and the mercy seat.

There is very little said about cherubims in Scripture, but from what little is said we gather they were God's messengers of judgment.

Here they stand not with folded but outstretched wings, ready for immediate movement. Thus they stand gazing on the bloodstained mercy seat. Is this not a striking figure of how God can in perfect righteousness and holiness see in the atoning work of Christ the settlement of every claim in respect of sin, and how He is enabled to look with joy and complacency on the vilest sinner who puts his confidence in Christ and His atoning work? For the high priest represented all Israel in his approach to the mercy seat just as the Lord Jesus represented in His death every believing sinner.

Next we are told that Moses was instructed to put the testimony that God was to give him into the ark. Doubtless this referred to the two tables

of stone. All the details as to relation between God and man were only an elaboration of those ten wonderful commandments, which could be summed up in one word, *Thou shalt love*—God and thy neighbour. The testimony in the ark typifies the fact that the Lord Jesus magnified the law in His life. He could say, as it were, "Thy law is within My heart" (Ps. 40. 8).

And here let me guard against a common fallacy. Many people think that Christ's keeping the law is put to the believer's account, and he is thereby accounted righteous before God. But it was the *blood* sprinkled on the mercy seat that spoke of righteousness being met. True, if the Lord had not kept the law perfectly He could never have been the Saviour, but let it be ever insisted upon that it was by His death *alone* that righteousness was effected for the believing sinner: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22).

Finally we read that at the mercy seat God would meet with Moses to give him full instructions as to "all things which I will give thee [said the Lord] in commandment unto the children of Israel." The meeting-place between God and man becomes the communing place as to what suits Him, who designed to dwell among His people. How wonderfully these types bespeak the glories of the person and work of Christ. May we drink in these precious thoughts in a fuller and deeper way than ever before.

To the Preacher in Search of a Text.

IF any one inquire of me, How shall I obtain the most proper text? I should answer, *Cry of God for it*. If prayer alone should not guide you to the desired treasure, it will in any case be a profitable exercise to you to have prayed. The difficulty of settling on a topic, if it makes you pray more than usual, will be a very great blessing to you. Praying is the best studying. Pray over the Scriptures; it is as the treading of grapes in the wine-vat; the threshing of corn on the barn floor; the melting of gold from the ore. Prayer is twice blest; it blesseth the pleading preacher, and the people to whom he ministers. When your text comes in answer to prayer, it will be dearer to you; it will come with a divine savour and unction altogether unknown to the formal orator to whom one theme is as another.

(*Spurgeon.*)

The Creator with His Creature.

(JAMES BOVD).

A Gospel Sermon. (John 3. 36.)

IT may seem a strange thing to say, but I have no doubt it is just as true as it is strange, that had sin not come into this world we never would have had the Creator here in the way in which we have had Him. It appears certain He would have visited man had man remained an innocent being, for our first parents heard His footsteps walking in the Garden in the cool of the day. But this was not until man was fallen. Still He comes into the Garden, giving no indication that He knew the true state of His creature, but apparently taking it for granted that everything was just as it should be. And this gives one the impression that there would have been these visitations of God. Alas, instead of man being found at the feet of his Maker rejoicing in the unspeakable blessedness of such a glorious visit, he is found in a state of abject misery, and crouching behind the trees of the Garden from the eye of his Creator.

To Abraham He appears in angelic form, and though in a sense it was incognito, still the guise assumed was not beyond the penetration of the holy Patriarch, for in one of the three men who came to him he recognizes the supreme Being. And the intimacy into which he is drawn by the grace of the Lord gives him a boldness that is astonishing (Gen. 18.).

But it has been often noticed that as time goes on and the world becomes older, the drift of the human race is steadily and rapidly away from God, and the visitations of God become less frequent, until for centuries before the coming of Christ neither angelic nor human messenger breaks the monotony of man's sinful existence with a message from God. The pathway between earth and heaven seems utterly forgotten by angelic feet.

But the advent of the Son of God into

the world puts an end to the silence of centuries, and in John's Gospel we have the Creator come into His own creation, and come in the likeness of man, not merely as a messenger who is entrusted with a message from God, though a Messenger He surely was, but in Jesus we have both the Messenger and the Message in One.

This Gospel opens with the statement: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Such a Person never was in this world before. Angels had spoken the word in past times, and so thoroughly were they the representatives of Jehovah that some of them could be said to be Himself (Ex. 3. 2, 6; Acts 7. 53). Prophets had spoken the Word of God, and what they were given to say was faithfully delivered; but none of these was Himself the Word. They were messengers, but they were not the message. They spoke the Word, but they were not the Word.

But in this Gospel we have One set before our souls who was the perfect expression of all that God was in His approach to men. He was the Word of God; and the word is that by which one person makes known to another all that is in his heart and mind.

And Jesus was that in regard to God. It is not only what He said, nor was it only His wonderful works, but it was words, works, ways, all that came to light in Him here upon earth. He was not, as I have already said, a mere Messenger entrusted with a message; He was both the Messenger and the Message. In Him the invisible, and hitherto unknown God, comes openly before the vision of the creature. He

could say: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

And "in Him was life." Life had been thought to be in the law, but not life but death was there. Not because the law was an evil thing, but because man was a sinner in his very nature; this was why death, and not life, was in the law. Man was not subject to it, and therefore it killed him.

But now it had come into the world in the Person of Jesus. Life for man lay in the revelation of God, in the way in which He was now making Himself manifest. The light that shone in the Son of God down here was the light of life. Here the Godhead glory was shining through the human veil, and men were being confronted with the very nature of Him who dwelt in light unapproachable: and "God is Love."

The power of this was life-giving. No curse of law proceeded from His lips, no consuming fire laid in ashes His tormentors; not wounding but healing went before His face, and not death but life accompanied His footsteps. When reviled He reviled not again, and when He suffered He threatened not. In Him God was telling men what He was; and by Him men were coming to the true knowledge of God.

In His presence men felt themselves to be sinners such as they had never felt themselves to be before; but this did not drive them away from Him, but rather the opposite; they drew all the nearer to Him in their distress of soul. They felt themselves unfit for His holy presence, but they would not, could not, leave Him. Who else had the words of eternal life? The more sinful, the more wretched, the more helpless they felt themselves to be, the more they needed Him. The sanctitude of the Pharisees, the dictum of the Scribes, the traditions of the elders, the ritual of the priests: what had it done for them? They were weary and heavy laden, and these physicians of no value did nothing but increase their burdens.

Here was One, like an Island in the midst of a turbulent and treacherous ocean, inviting them to come to Him, and assuring rest to all who came. No wonder Peter, in answer to the challenge of the Lord, "Will ye also go away?" could only say, "To whom shall we go?" No one else inspired confidence.

How blind were those with whom He came into contact! How terribly mistaken they were in His mission! They thought He had come on account of the righteous that might be found here, but He has to tell them, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9. 13, R.V.). It was the need of the creature that brought Him here. He had come with light into the midst of this darkness, and with life into this valley of death. He was also "full of grace and truth." He was here in this world of sin and disorder to show us all things in their proper relation to one another, and He was here with grace sufficient to give us a place in the truth in new relations with God. He was here to reveal the Father, to put away the sin of the world, to baptize with the Holy Spirit, and to be the Centre of gathering for all.

His servants had been here before Him, and they had spoken His Word faithfully; but, as I have said, here was the Word itself. They could not direct attention to themselves. They could not say, Believe on me. They could only say, "Thus saith the Lord." Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes. He could say, "He that believeth on Me believeth not on Me but on Him that sent Me," and, "He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me." He was here to divert our attention from ourselves, and to centre it upon the living God.

It is not that He did not tell us a good deal about ourselves, but what He tells us about ourselves is only told us in order that we may altogether abandon any hope we might have regarding our own ability to arrive at life

on the ground of our own efforts. He tells us we must be born again, and that unless this takes place we can neither enter, nor even see, the kingdom of God. This rings the death knell of all the hope we may have had in ourselves. We are utterly lost and undone.

But He tells us more than this. If He has told us the truth about our own lost condition, and if in the light that He has brought we see every avenue of escape from the death that threatens us closed for ever, He does not hide from us the terrible pass to which our lost estate has brought the living God. He says: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here we learn that the One in whom there was life for man must himself undergo the judgment that rested upon man, in order that that life might be righteously available for man. There was no getting over this. He tells us it *must* take place.

But if such a sacrifice was demanded by the justice of God, the love of His heart was equal to the demand made upon it. His presence here on earth was the witness of this. He was not here to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. In Him the love of God was presented to the world, and that especially in His death upon the cross: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This love shall be the wonder and the delight of our souls for all eternity. It is beyond all understanding. Thank God, it is not beyond belief: for "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love."

Now we come to the result, as far as man is concerned, of the presence and work of Christ upon earth, and of the going out of all in gospel testimony: "He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." For all it must be either the life or the wrath. The blessing cannot be had without faith in the person in whom the blessing is.

It is no longer merely believing what the person says, for the Person here is the Object of faith. In Him God has been set forth. In Him I see the One who formerly dwelt in the thick darkness revealed. Does my hearer approve of Him? What reply does your heart make to this manifestation? Has it been light to you that has dispelled all your darkness? Has it been life to you who were under the judgment of death? a death which would have meant to you the lake of fire, the eternal wrath of God.

"The Father loveth the Son." Do you love Him? You cannot love Him if you do not believe in Him. Are the Father and you in agreement or at variance regarding Christ? You have certainly good reason to love Him if you only knew it. He has died that a way of salvation might be opened up for you, and are you going to despise that way, and in spite of all He has done go headlong to destruction? Do you prefer the wrath to the love?

The Father has given all things into His hand: do you wish it to be otherwise? Do you say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us"? How can you reject such infinite love? You have no other that so truly cares for you. There is no other who has your blessing so truly at heart. His love has not been in word or in tongue, it has been in deed and in truth. To make a way of escape for you He has suffered the abandonment of God. How can you treat such love with indifference? How can you despise such infinite grace?

Perhaps you say, What can I do? How am I to be a partaker of that life that is in Him? This is not hard to tell. The answer to your questions

could not be more simply and plainly given than it is in the Word of God. But let that Word have a place in your heart. Do not reason about it. As a little child receive it. God has spoken: it is your place and privilege to believe Him; to say, "God is true."

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." The sons of Jacob were dying in the desert from the poisonous bite of the serpents, just as you are from the bite of sin. A serpent of brass was made and lifted up upon a pole, and it came to pass that when one who was bitten beheld the serpent he lived (Num. 21. 6-9). In the lifted up Son of Man you have that which was foreshadowed in the serpent of brass. Now you look to Christ. On that cross He was bearing the judgment of all who believe on Him: "That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

How can you see Him there for you without seeing that you can never be under that judgment for yourself? He has been there, and has exhausted the judgment, and the proof of it is that He is at the right hand of God. Turn away from yourself, and let your own thoughts go to the winds, and let the thoughts of God fill your soul.

"He that hath received His testimony

hath set to his seal that God is true." This is surely not a great thing to do. How can you think He would deceive you? He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. You may be perfectly sure that God will honour His own Word. Get your own thoughts out of your mind altogether. Do not attempt to judge of the Word of God by what you may find in your own heart, but let that Word rule in your soul and heart and mind. Look away from yourself to the lifted up Son of Man, and say in the language of faith: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"; and look again to the throne of the Father and see Him sitting there in the place of acceptance and power, and be assured that payment God will not twice demand, once at thy bleeding Surety's hand, and then again at thine. And be fully persuaded that whether God speaks in grace or in judgment, as He does in the words of this text, He will faithfully carry out to the letter every Word He has at any time given utterance to.

Look again at the text, and ask yourself the question, "Which is my portion, the *life*, or the *wrath*?" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Bonds of Unity.—(Ephesians 4.)

WHAT mighty bonds of unity: the Spirit of God, the lordship of Christ, the universal ubiquity of God, even the Father, all tend to bring into unity those connected with each as a divine centre. All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points by which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those who are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever, without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving expression to that which exists in the rest. Only we are called on to maintain it practically. (*J. N. D.*)

Habitual communion with God must be maintained or our public service will be formal and futile. If there be no melting of the glacier high in the ravines of the mountain there will be no descending rivulets to cheer the plain.

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 7.

(H. J. VINE).

Priests, Pastors, and People.

AS TO THE PRIESTS, we are shown a picture, which, alas! is only too common all through the Bible. "Both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness" (23. 11-12). "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law *knew Me not*" (2. 8). *Pashur*, like Jeremiah, was of the priestly family. His sin brought judgment upon him, as is recorded in chapter 20. He is a striking example.

Jeremiah's father was *Hilkiah* (1. 1). The name of the high priest who found the book of the law was *Hilkiah* (2 Kings 22. 8). It looks as if this must be the same person, considering all the circumstances. It is a cause for thanksgiving that we have not now, in this day, to seek a high priest. God Himself has provided One for us who "continueth ever," who "ever liveth." There is no change in the priesthood with which we are connected. Of Jesus, our high priest, God hath said, "Thou art a priest for ever." No less a person than God's own beloved Son is suitable now. "Such an high priest became us" (Heb. 7. 26). He is become higher than the heavens.

THE PASTORS, like the prophets and the priests, were sunken in sin. The word for pastor is "*raab*," meaning "*to feed*." This word is only translated "*pastor*" in Jeremiah; it is translated "*shepherd*" usually. It is a very general term. It seems to cover all those who care for and feed the flock of God.

After speaking of the ignorance of the *priests*, Jeremiah adds, "The *pastors* also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal" (2. 8). He tells us, "The *pastors* are become brutish and have not sought the Lord" (10. 11). They trod down the vineyard of the Lord, and made His pleasant portion desolate, so that it mourned unto Him (12. 10, 11). The Lord says, "My people hath been like lost sheep, and their shepherds (*pastors*) have caused them to go astray" (50. 6). Woe is pronounced upon these scattering, selfish *pastors* (23. 1-2); the wind shall eat them up (22. 22); they shall cry and

howl when the fierce anger of the Lord shall fall (25. 34-36).

Among the gifts mentioned as given by the ascended Head of the assembly, in Ephesians 4., is the pastor. Only it is important to see that the pastor and teacher is united in one person—"some *pastors* and *teachers*"; not "some *pastors* and some *teachers*." It is a double gift in one individual. The importance of this is great, for many *teachers* have almost become mere scholars and theorists; and many *pastors* almost philanthropists. The practical work of the pastor keeps the gift of teaching in wise use and useful exercise. But as in Jeremiah's day, so now, the debasement of these things is appalling. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the good and great Shepherd of the sheep, forewarned us of this in John 10. So also did the Apostle Paul in Acts 20. 28, 33. Our safety and blessing lies in abiding with the Lord, who never fails in His Shepherd care towards every one of the true flock.

There are exceptions, thank God, to the general corruption. And it is refreshing and cheering to find Jeremiah speaking of the time when *pastors* shall be given according to the heart of the Lord, "who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (3. 15). "I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be discouraged, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord" (23. 4). Yea, he foretells the day when the Lord Himself shall recover His scattered people, and "gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (31. 10). Yea, of the seed of David, the shepherd king, he tells us, One shall be raised up. In His days "Israel shall dwell safely" (23. 5-6). The believer knows this Shepherd now, and receives eternal life from Him before He returns to gather Israel.

We have seen what is said as to the kings, prophets, priests, and *pastors*. And now we shall see that the *people* become like their *princes*. Like master like man. The prophet is fortified to meet their state by the Lord. He is first set "against the *princes* thereof, against the *priests*, and against the *people*

of the land " (1. 18). They had not only forsaken and forgotten the Lord, though still naming His holy name; but they had become idolatrous. Touchingly the Lord pleads with them. He asks, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" (2. 31). But they would not hear. Chapter 34. illustrates their state. The princes and the people make a covenant and break it soon after. Jerusalem, therefore, the princes and the people shall become "a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse." And His word was executed with startling exactness.

Egypt, too, was to reap the results of her ways. Israel was continually turning to her for help instead of turning to the Lord (2. 17, 18). Now, saith the Lord, "Thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt" (2. 36). In chapter 46. is recorded His word as to her.

The Philistines, too, are judged in chapter 47. *Moab* likewise in the next chapter: "For was not Israel a derision unto thee" (48. 27). *Moab* is "exceeding proud." In chapter 49. the *Ammonites* receive recompense. *Edom* also is punished. Likewise *Damascus* and *Kedar*, and *Hazor*, and *Elam*. God had raised up the King of Babylon to execute His righteous and necessary judgments upon the peoples, Israel, Egypt, "and all the mingled peoples, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines"; yea, upon "all the kingdoms of the world" (25. 20-26). The state of things was such as to call for this from God's hand.

But Babylon herself cannot escape. We are told of her judgment in chapters 50. and 51.; in language that reminds us of what is said concerning Babylon and God's people in the Book of Revelation. She shall sink and rise no more; whereas Israel shall go forth out of the midst of Babylon. This doubtless looks on to the future, to the end of "the times of the Gentiles"; when the kingdom and dominion shall revert again to Israel, blessed under our Lord Jesus Christ. A remnant is preserved for this purpose. Any one capable of seeing recognizes the rise of what is Babylonish on all hands; but "though Babylon should mount up to heaven," she shall be brought down. *The Chaldean* scholar, religionist, spiritualist, astrologer, and idolater was able by his wisdom to

develop a wonderful system in days gone by. It will soon reappear in a more marvellous manner than ever, as we are shown in Revelation 17. and 18.

One verse in Jeremiah is exceedingly significant in this connection; and more especially so because the present-day "scholars" reject it as a gloss. It is verse 2 of chapter 10. It stands as written by Jeremiah in a different language to the rest of the book, in *the Chaldean* language. And let it be noted carefully, it is to tell us that the gods of Babylon shall perish. The very strength of the Chaldean system should be utterly destroyed. Again we say, it is significant that God should inspire this verse to be written, not in Hebrew, but in Chaldee. It is one of those remarkable instances, of which there are many in the Scriptures of Truth, where God departs from mere rule, to impress the reader and cause him to consider. Sensible men nowadays do this often; but "scholars" are not always sensible; many of them would try to tie down the sacred writings of God to mere routine and rule. The fact is, the people of the true God were about to go into captivity in the land of Chaldea. This verse, in the language of their captors, would strengthen the faithful, amidst the religious corruption of Babylon, and command the consideration of such as Cyrus and others after, who were used of God to overthrow the Chaldean abominations.

The brilliant setting of this verse (10. 11) should be noticed. Just before, Israel is told not to learn the way of these idolatrous nations. Their wise men, one and all, were senseless and foolish. But the LORD IS THE GOD OF TRUTH, HE IS THE LIVING GOD, THE KING OF ETERNITY. In the following verse creation is ascribed to Him. Idols and false gods must perish before Him. "The portion of Jacob is not like them . . . the Lord of Hosts is His name" (ver. 16). The glory of the God of Israel must yet cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to bring this to pass. He will return to Israel and establish the pleasure of the Lord in the earth; and gladness and song shall fill every heart. THE PEOPLES, Israel first, and the nations also, shall come under His righteous sway, and be blessed in Him.

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—IV.

(JAMES GREEN).

The Treasure, the Pearl, and the Draw-net. (Matt. 13. 44-50.)

PASSING into the house, our Lord told to His disciples the inner secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, which would be hidden from the superficial observer. Explaining first the parable of the wheat and tares, He directed their attention to that which he was seeking. In the world-wide extent of the outward profession there would be found something so valuable that the Finder would esteem it worth his while to part with everything in order to acquire it. To have objects who should be the expression of the riches of His grace is of the utmost value to the heart of God. Even supposing that the creature could merit anything, how small and valueless would this be in comparison with that which God can bestow out of His royal bounty in sovereign grace, and the consequent praise of the glory of His grace resulting therefrom. Such objects of grace are the treasure found in the field of this world. To obtain the treasure Christ has purchased the field at the price of His own life. It was really His by creation right, but no treasure was found therein. He must make it His own by redemption purchase that He may have that which His heart values. He has bought the world, but the treasure was His object in so doing.

For this He gave up all. He emptied Himself of the outward form of Godhead, though ever remaining essentially the same; He took upon Him the form of a bondman; He gave up all that He could claim as a perfect man; He renounced His place as the Messiah of Israel; put aside His royal right to the throne of David; yes, He gave all, even His own life, to possess a people as His own peculiar treasure who should be the witness of sovereign grace. The idea conveyed in the treasure is a wider thought than that of the church. It includes all that is good in the kingdom; those gathered from Pentecost to the rapture and subsequent remnants of Jews and Israelites with the great multitude of Gentiles from every nation, kindred, people, and tongue; all sing the song of the Lamb and all are included in the treasure hid in the field. The thought of value rather than unity is expressed by the figure. Being found, it is carefully hidden and carefully preserved.

The epistles of Peter are occupied with the treasure in the kingdom, and beautifully does his oft-repeated use of the word "precious" set forth the greatness of the price paid (1 Peter 1. 19), the value of the faith given (2 Peter 1. 1), and the exceeding worth of the object in the eyes of the finder (1 Peter 1. 7), more precious than the most valued thing in creation.

In the parable of the pearl, it is the thing itself which the Merchantman buys. His attention is concentrated on one object, he buys nothing else. One pearl of great price is before his gaze, and that it may be his own he sells everything. The possession of the pearl was the reason for which Christ gave Himself. He loved the church and gave Himself for it. Into what depths of a past eternity are we led by the thought that He was seeking goodly pearls. He knew what He wanted, the divine purpose and ideal was in His mind. Human language has but small capacity to convey the immensity of the Divine mystery, that in those eternal purposes the church was before the heart and mind of Christ. He saw its worth, its comeliness, its beauty, its perfect unity; for a pearl is worthless if it is not complete; no spot, no flaw must be in it, it has no parts, oneness is essential to it. The treasure may be divided, but not the pearl. All this gave it a value which He could appreciate, for the loveliness He saw in it was His own image.

A pearl has no light in itself, but is formed to reflect the beauty of the light which falls upon it. Then what tongue shall tell the value of the price He has paid, the greatness, too, of the love told in His death, in order that He might present the church to Himself, glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. We may well stand amazed at the grace of such a purpose, and find deep rest of soul in knowing that while all around the mustard tree of profession ripens, and the inner leaven of evil spreads and works, the eye of Christ sees that which is of infinite value to His heart and which He will presently take out of the kingdom to shine in His own perfect beauty and display His own perfections.

The last parable of the series—the net—emphasizes the fact that the purpose for which the kingdom in its present form exists is the possession of the good. The object that God has in casting the gospel net into the sea of nations is to gather out from thence the trophies of His grace, during the absence of the rightful Lord of all. The wide extent of the fishing is indicated by the net being of the largest size, a draw-net or seine. Into this all kinds of fish are gathered, but the time of discrimination will come, the net will be full, the preaching of the gospel will have a termination. Then shall be seen the result of the divine fishing, the good gathered into vessels, the unreal rejected.

As we trace succeeding parables we shall find the mixture of real and unreal running through them, until shall come the final

separation at the close. Then the great "Fisher of men" shall distinguish for ever between the precious and the vile. Even the best of under fishers may be mistaken as to the quality of that which is caught, but His unerring hand and eye shall not fail as to this, when the present mystery of the kingdom shall close. The good shall be gathered into vessels, not one vessel but several. The church will be with Him in the Father's house, in the place He has prepared; the martyred remnant of Jews will be given heavenly blessing; the spared remnant will have their portion in special nearness to the King when He comes; while the saved of the Gentile nations will form the nucleus of the population of the millennial earth. Every family will have its place in blessing; nothing that has been produced by the work of Christ will be lost, all will be raised according to God's appointment in that day. We have another instance in this parable of the further

light afforded by the interpretation. The angels are represented as coming forth and severing the wicked from amongst the just. This is not the explanation of the gathering of the good into vessels, but a subsequent event, when judgment shall carry away the wicked found in rebellion against God and leave on earth those who shall bear the news that the Lord reigneth to the utmost limits of the earth. God will be victor. Men may turn His grace into lasciviousness; deny the Lord that bought them; use His kingdom for their own ends; and leave Him nothing but a name; but amidst all the confusion the Spirit of God preserves the hidden treasure for the coming Lord of glory. Christ shall possess His church, the pearl for which He paid the priceless cost of His own life, and God shall be glorified in every redeemed family from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Answers to Correspondents.

"Christ Made Sin" for us.

S. C. P. asks for an explanation of the passage "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5, 21), and also of John 3, 14 and Rom. 8, 3 in connection with it.

There are many sides to the death of Christ, but this verse brings before us that which exceeds in solemnity and importance all others. Holy and spotless in Himself, He hung upon the cross before God *for sin*. Not only the iniquities that we had committed, but the sin that is in us from which every sinful act springs was then and there brought before God, and upon Christ, our Substitute and Representative, there fell all the holy wrath of God against it. He stood there in our place to suffer in our stead that we might be reconciled, and become the righteousness of God in Him, and this meant that the full consequences of sin, with the awful judgment that divine and eternal justice decreed against it, should come upon Him.

We often dwell upon the cross of Christ as the great declaration of God's love to men, and rightly so, for in that cross the love of God declared its fulness and celebrated its triumph. But there was more than love at the cross. There God showed forth His abhorrence of sin; there He declared His inexorable justice in His judgment of sin in the One who

was made sin for us; there His righteousness was manifested, and the integrity of His everlasting throne upheld. This was all done in that hour of hours when the waves and billows rolled over Jesus, and when from the darkness of those depths He cried: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

This is the foundation of our everlasting blessing, this is the unshakeable basis upon which the glory of God rests; through this we are saved, through this God is able to display Himself as God to the universe—triumphant over all evil, visiting judgment without mitigation upon sin, and yet gathering to His bosom of love those whose sins He judged in the person of Christ.

Upon the cross Christ suffered at the hands of men; they hated Him so thoroughly that they ransacked their ingenuity in order to discover unheard-of ways of torturing Him. *He suffered for righteousness at the hands of men.* There gathered against Him, also, the powers of darkness, and no human mind can conceive the fierceness of the fight that they waged against Him, but He

defeated them; laid them low; He made a show of them openly, making them His spoil. But there was more at the cross than these. **IT PLEASSED THE LORD TO BRUISE HIM.**" *He suffered for sin at the hands of God.* We cannot enter into what that means. The thick darkness that gathered about that cross enshrouds this side of His suffering in holy mystery; but we see that it was necessary. If God is God and sin is sin, nothing less than this would do, not only for our salvation, but for God's glory, and for the reconciliation of all things in earth and in heaven, and of us unto Himself.

It was to this end that Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). It was to this end that, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, the Son of Man was lifted up" (John 3. 14). But though made in our likeness, as the serpent of brass was made like the serpent that had bitten Israel, He knew no sin, He was God's holy One. The truth as to His spotless humanity is fundamental. And further, there never

was a moment in eternity or time when God's beloved Son yielded more delight to His Father's heart than when, in obedience to His Father's will, He took up the sin question on the cross, that it might be settled for ever.

There is nothing like the cross of Christ for moving our souls to devotion to Him. It is there that we see what our sin is, it is there that we learn that the condemnation that our sin called for fell upon the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is there that we learn that He made a complete clearance for us, that He shed the blood that cleanseth us, and that now there can be no condemnation for us, for through the redemption that is in Christ, God is just and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

There is no greater theme in Scripture than this; we shall find none greater in eternity. May we give more thought to it

"Were the vast realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

"Greater Love hath no Man than This."

E.D. asks: "Does John 15. 13—'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'—refer to Christ's love to lost sinners?"

No, that is not the thought in the passage. "Lost sinners" are not "friends" but "enemies," and when they are in question it is the *love of God* that is prominent. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). "When we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (ver. 10). Of course, Christ loved sinners, and loves them still; that scarcely needs to be said, for He was rightly, even though in derision, called the "Friend of sinners." He came "to seek and to save that which is lost." The Father and the Son were one in this. Yet the great and prominent note in the gospel, as it is taught to us in the Word, is, *God is love*. And that love has been shown and commended to a world of unworthy sinful men who were enemies and not friends of God.

But John 15. shows us another circle, it is not the world of sinners but the "friends" of Jesus, whom He had chosen out of the world. They were aforetime enemies, but the grace of God had

changed that and they are here spoken of as friends; those to whom the Lord could confide His purposes and tell the secrets of His love—He could trust them. Now for these men—His friends—He was about to lay down His life, and that wonderful expression of His love for them, beyond which none could go, had to be the standard of their love one toward another.

But while it was the disciples whom the Lord primarily addressed, they were pattern men, they represented all who should come after them, who should be chosen out of the world as they had been; and this privileged relationship of friendship to the Lord is open to all who have responded to the Lord's choice, but mark the condition, "*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.*"

Each of these may rejoice in this special character of His love and say, "He laid down His life for me, His friend." And then there follows the result, as He has loved them so must they love one another, not stopping short of the example that He has set, as He said, "This is My

commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." John brings this before the saints in the third chapter of his first epistle, verse 16, "Hereby per-

ceive we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." A needed word.

"Some to Everlasting Life and some to Shame and Everlasting Contempt."

J. K. M. asks: "Does Daniel 12. 2 teach bodily resurrection? or does it refer to the raising up of the Jewish nation, as in Ezekiel 37.?"

It is not here a question of the raising up of dead bodies, but of the gathering of Israel from among the Gentile nations.

The first verse of the chapter has in view the Jews, *i.e.* the two tribes that clung to David's house, and were carried away captive into Babylon, and that afterwards rejected their Messiah. With them God will deal first, and they will be gathered first into the holy land, there to pass through "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30. 7), the "great tribulation" of Matthew 25. This time of trouble will bring to light God's true elect ones amongst them (Matt. 25. 22), "Everyone that shall be found written in the book," for they "shall endure unto the end" (Matt. 25. 13).

But there are the other tribes of Israel

scattered somewhere among the Gentile nations, and this, we believe, is the meaning of "sleeping in the dust." God knows where they are. They will awake as belonging to the nation, and God will bring them into the wilderness, and there purge out the rebels (see Ezek. 33.-38.). There will be those who will awaken with a strong national policy, and a determination to share in the possession of the land of their fathers, without any reference to God; such will awaken only to pass into shame and everlasting contempt. But others, the second elect company spoken of in Matthew 25. 31, who shall seek after God, shall awaken to everlasting life. So that the passage has the same character as the resurrection of the nation in Ezekiel 37.

Do the Scriptures hold out any hope of salvation in another age for those who have rejected Christ in this?

R. S. writes: "I have heard it argued that as the ten virgins (Matt. 25.) represent only those who profess Christianity, those who have heard the gospel and yet have made no profession of being Christians, and have not joined any of the sects in Christendom, will, unlike the foolish virgins, have another opportunity of salvation through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom after the coming of the Lord."

The ten virgins of the parable represent the kingdom of heaven, literally, the whole profession of Christianity in contrast to heathendom. Out of this profession those who are truly the Lord's will be taken at His coming, the oil in the vessels being the evidence that they are really His—the oil, we believe, is the grace of God brought into the soul by the Holy Ghost where and when there is obedience to the gospel of Christ—all else are shut out of the marriage feast. It is not a question of a person having joined one of the sects of Christendom at all, but of his belonging to a sphere which is greatly affected as to the outward life of it by the Word of God and in which Christ's authority is nominally acknowledged. All within this sphere are responsible to receive the word with which they have become familiar.

But if any hope to find in the silence of one passage of Scripture a plea for their continued rejection of Christ, the positive declaration of another takes it from them at once. We find that 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9 tells us that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power."

The gospel offers a full and eternal salvation to men *to-day*, and that without money or price. Why do they reject it? It is God's best offer, and His last to those who refuse it. After this comes the judgment which no Christ-rejecter shall escape.

My Soul Waiteth upon God.

(H. J. VINE).

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not be faint" (Isaiah 40. 30, 31).

THE Lord Jesus knew well where to turn for help as He pressed forward in the path of faith. God was His confidence, as the will of God was His delight, and He ceased not to turn to Him. His own strength might be weakened in the way (Ps. 102. 23), but He knew where to find the source of strength unailing, and to that source He ever turned.

The redeemed soul has also learned to turn to God, and as he deepens in this, and knows what it is to truly *wait* upon God, to be still and silent before Him, he finds the true secret and spring of strength and stedfastness in the way of the will of God. He can say truly, I have heard this, strength belongeth unto God (Ps. 62. 11).

This is a time when we need very definitely to wait upon Him.

We pray; we have our regular seasons of prayer. This is necessary and right. But, we also need to wait upon God; especially at a moment like the present, with its personal and collective exercises. We need to take special time *now* to definitely wait upon God.

Great and grave issues are ahead; and to be right with God at the present, and also to be right in the future, it is essential for each one to have to do with Himself in reality. One cannot take the place of another in this. Each for himself must in faith and exercise get to God—to the everlasting God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; *our* God and Father through grace. How good it is to know that He welcomes us to draw near to Him!

When the face is set purposefully in this direction, difficulties usually arise at once. The world, the flesh and the

devil oppose, for it is the way of the victor—the way of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even a saint of God may be the unconscious instrument to hinder. Some near and dear one may unwittingly interfere. Pressure of work may distract and clamour for the precious time set apart. But that is all the more reason why the firm purpose to wait definitely upon God should be adhered to. The work will be well and worthily done afterwards, and with much more grace and ease. Every true-hearted servant of Christ has proved this; therefore say unto thy soul, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Ps. 27. 14).

A well-known labourer in the work of the Lord was once told that a large amount of extra work awaited him. He answered, "I shall therefore need to take more time to wait upon God before attending to it!" There lay the secret of the success of this much used servant of the Lord. Strength, grace and wisdom, along with peace of mind by the Spirit, become ours experimentally as we wait upon God.

We speak, of course, of those who know redemption in Christ through His blood, and are sealed by the Holy Ghost, of those who know access to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. To such, mere book prayer could not suffice. They may be benefited by reading written prayers in the Bible and elsewhere; but their own hearts and souls must be before God in unhindered communion. Nor could book prayer be well-pleasing to God. He is our Father, and looks to hear the breathings of the heart of each one of His own, however simple. Even an earthly parent could not find pleasure in a child who could only ask or speak from a

book. It would be unnatural, and painful; whereas the feeblest utterances direct from the youngest lips give pleasure to a parent. Immediate dealing with God is what the real soul must have.

The Apostle Paul bowed his knees before the Father on behalf of the saints at Ephesus. He asked that they might be strengthened (Eph. 3. 14-16). He had told them in chapter 1. 3, that they were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; but they needed strength to enter into this, and to be for God's glory here. We are blessed up there; but we need strength down here. We know where to find it. Strength belongeth unto God! *What then is to be done?* "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." *Pray?* Yes: only we must WAIT UPON GOD!

In this restless age it is this waiting which many are missing. Even true believers will contrast "being practical" with it; just as if waiting upon God was not a most practical thing, as well as producing most practical results. Later in the letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle exhorts us to "prayer and supplication in the Spirit"; and adds, "*watching unto this very thing*" (6. 18). In the Colossian letter, he exhorts to persevering prayer, adding, "*watching in it with thanksgiving.*" If we are to succeed in *waiting* on the Lord, there must be the *watching unto* it and the *watching in* it.

The second and more inward part of the book of Isaiah opens at chapter 40. Great and wonderful events are foreseen and foretold in it. Mighty and moving scenes are opened out for us. The Servant of the Lord is coming! The pleasure of the Lord is to prosper in His hand! The distracted nations and their kings shall be astonished! Jesus, the despised Nazarene, the shoot out of Jesse's roots, brings justice and order, glory and blessing to the earth! The great God, the only God, the just

God and a Saviour, brings all to pass through the suffering One; He is God's *personal* Servant, and Israel is His *national* servant. He is *personally* the Son-Servant, and Israel is *nationally* the son-servant (compare Hosea 11. 1: Matt. 2. 15, and Rom. 9. 4, where read *sonship* for *adoption*). The first said, I have spent My strength for nought. The second became utterly weak both politically and numerically. How then shall glory and blessing come to the nations of the earth? The answer is found in Him to whom belongeth strength and wisdom; and the Servant saith, My God shall be My strength; then He replies, I will preserve Thee to establish the earth (49. 5. 8); and to depleted Israel He saith, The smallest shall become a strong nation (60. 22). Therefore the prophet can speak comfort to the heart of God's people; only their mind must be changed, and their strength too. They must learn that all flesh is as grass, and turn alone to God for strength.

Have *we* learned that vain is the help of man? Oh, then, how blessed it is that God invites us to turn alone to Him! to Himself! to the everlasting God, who fainteth not, neither is weary! to Him who giveth power and strength to those that wait upon Him!

The word "*wait*" in Isaiah 40. 31 has the thought of simply and singly *looking to* Him. It also embraces *waiting for* Him, and *expecting from* Him. It is a very full word. That accounts for it being variously translated. One word in English does not give the fullness of its meaning. It is upon God alone then we are to wait. We are to look to Him; to wait for Him; and to expect from Him only. In this exercise we deepen in the knowledge of that which is before the mind of God; and that displaces things which have been before our own minds that are not according to His. Who has been *HIS* counsellor? Who showed *HIM* the way of understanding? *HE* makes known to us *HIS* counsels, and directs our minds in the way of understanding,

as we wait upon Him. His thoughts, not those that originate in our minds, are to abide! His strength, not ours, will prevail! and it is this which He would have us to possess. He says, *The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; and again, They that wait upon the Lord shall renew (change) their strength* (40. 5. 31). The word of our God shall stand for ever (8). Let the eyes look up to the heavens;—He created them, and all their starry host. Let them look abroad upon the earth beneath;—He weighed the mountains; He meted out the dust of the land; and the waters of the sea He measured in the hollow of His hand! They all manifest His eternal power and divinity. Even the nations, so prominent now by their strifes and ingenuity in destruction, are to Him as the small dust of a balance. "All nations before Him are as nothing," and vanity! They are counted to Him less than a cypher (17) ! **WAIT UPON HIM!**

How He values those who do so, both old and young. They are spoken of as His flock in this very chapter, which describes the majesty and might of God so magnificently. He feeds them as a shepherd, and gathers the lambs with His arm, carrying them in His bosom; gently leading those that are with young. With what confidence then we may **WAIT UPON HIM**. His mind and strength are to be ours. We thus change our strength.

The youth who trusts merely in his own vigour faints and grows weary. The young man who seems so tireless in his natural energy shall fall. But

those that wait upon God find strength unailing. Nature fails, but God fails not. Weariness and fainting are unknown to Him; and it is He who gives strength to those that look to Him alone; so that they may *rise above* the distractions of this world; or better still, *run* through them without any weariness; or still better, *walk* in quietness with God in spite of them, and not faint (ver. 31). There it is:—Waiting and its consequences;—mounting up, running and walking in new strength from God! Oh, may my soul know this change of strength in an increasing measure! Therefore will I say to my soul: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

The special character of our strengthening to-day is according to the riches of **THE FATHER'S GLORY**, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, and the wide reaches of glory in heaven and earth, of which He is the glorious Head and Centre, might be fully apprehended by us; and that we might know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. This is peculiar to the assembly, and is not found in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Father now known through the Son is the everlasting God of Isaiah 40. 28. He is the Creator of the utmost bounds of the universe. He gives being, character and name to every family in the heavens and upon the earth. He is over all, and through all, and in us all. Let our souls wait upon Him. He is able to do far beyond what we ask or even think, according to His inworking power. To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.

"The Father's Bosom."

THE bosom of the Father has been disclosed to us. "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). There is nothing like that. The deep, unspeakable, unfathomable love that dwells in His bosom is the love that has visited us. How surpassing all knowledge is such a thought as that! It is the heaven of the heart to be still and silent, and in simple faith to let such a revelation as that tell its own tale upon us. (J. G. B.)

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—V.

(JAMES GREEN).

The King and His Servants. (Matt. 18. 23-35.)

AFTER the group of parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew there are no more recorded until chapter 18.; the intervening incidents bringing into prominence the foundations on which the kingdom would be established, that is, the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The following parables reveal the principles of grace, righteousness, love, and reward which would characterize it. In chapters 14. to 17. the Lord shows His power over creation by feeding the five thousand and four thousand; He demonstrates His power over Satan by releasing the daughter of the woman of Canaan (chap. 15. 21-28), and the lunatic (chap. 17. 14-21) from his dominion; He shows His authority over the domain of the Son of Man by commanding the fishes of the sea (chap. 17. 24-27), His supremacy over disease, the consequence of sin (chap. 14. 34-36), and His intimate knowledge of the heart of man (chap. 17. 1-8). All this is connected with His person; then there is that which relates to His work. Three times He speaks of His death (chaps. 16. 21; 17. 12, 22). Apart from this there would be no subjects in the kingdom, and no living stones wherewith He could build His church. This was the only way by which the forgiving grace of God might reach those who had so deeply sinned against Him; at the same time it brings into prominence the ruling principle of the kingdom which is grace, the throne is a throne of grace, and the subjects of the kingdom must order their conduct in suitability to it.

It was Peter's question as to how oft he was to forgive an offending brother that gave rise to the parable in which our Lord likened the kingdom of the heavens to a king taking account of his servants. We are apt to forget that our Lord is speaking of a kingdom established on earth and limited to a certain period, and hence we raise difficulties by introducing into the parable the question of eternal forgiveness. Many indeed have drawn the conclusion from this that a sinner may be forgiven, but through having his forgiveness cancelled be finally lost. Suffice it to say that such a

question is most amply settled by many other scriptures. My sheep shall never perish (John 10. 28): Shall not come into judgment (John 5. 24) may be quoted. So that we must look for the interpretation of the parable to the time to which it applies, viz. to the condition of things in the kingdom during the absence of the king. It must also be borne in mind that in these parables our Lord is stating the greatness of the change from the kingdom in outward display that the Jew expected to the present mystery form. The great principle of this form of the kingdom is grace, and in unmeasured bounty has it been extended to all, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Consequently if account is to be rendered it must be by the Jew first, and how great was the debt that he owed.

We are not told whether the talents in the parables are of silver or gold, most probably the latter, in which case an enormous sum is indicated. The Old Testament reveals the indebtedness to God which the Jew had accumulated and for which the whole nation had been sold into captivity. But their cry had gone up to God in their distress, and, like the servant in the parable, they said: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Daniel 9., Ezra 9., Nehemiah 9. tell of their cry for forgiveness, and freely was it granted; a reviving was given them and into their midst in due time the Messiah came. Their reception of Him showed how little they understood the principle of grace, and instead of acknowledging their own need of it they went about to establish their own righteousness. Then their treatment of the Gentiles, who doubtless were their debtors, though the proportion of debt was as a hundred pence to ten thousand talents, revealed that their hearts were unchanged. The Acts of the Apostles tells of their bitter opposition to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, who in the presence of the grace of God stood upon common ground with themselves as fellow-servants. The consequence of this was that their national forgiveness was cancelled, and they are

still in the prison-house of blindness and unbelief, until they shall awake to the understanding that all their liabilities have been met by the One who by wicked hands they have crucified and slain. Then shall God say, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, and account that they have received from His hand, double for all their sins." But is there no present lesson for us each in the parable? Yes, indeed, and our Lord points this out in verse 35: "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." In relation to the kingdom we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us"; also that if we forgive not, neither shall we be forgiven, and we cannot escape the action of this principle. The treatment we mete out to an offending brother is that which will be measured to us sooner or later, under the governing hand of God. He has so ordered, that as we do to others, so shall we be done by. This is the golden rule of the kingdom, and we do well to consider it, for we call upon the Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work. Where grace is truly operative, it forms the heart in the character of God, so that we act as He has done in forgiving grace. For so has He called us to be followers of Himself as dear children, and to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as He for Christ's sake has forgiven us. How much? sevenfold? Nay, seventy times sevenfold, that is, beyond measure. What a pattern of grace! May we answer to it.

The Labourers in the Vineyard. (Matt. 20. 1-16.)

The parable of the labourers is likewise directed against the self-importance of the Jew, and it arises out of another question of Peter's (Matt. 19. 27), as to what should be given to them who had forsaken all and followed the Lord, a question which reveals the natural selfishness of the heart, which after all seeks the reward as an object. But God only speaks of reward in the way of encouragement, and never as an object for the

heart. He alone is to be that, and service is to flow from a glad heart which seeks only His approval. Then again God gives not according to claim, but out of His own goodness. Hence many that had the first place, and the Jew had this, would be surpassed by the Gentiles in respect of the grace which God would bestow upon them, not of works lest any man should boast. At the same time the Jew would have no cause for complaint, for God will keep His word to them. In the last parable the emphasis was upon grace, but in this one righteousness is prominent, that is, God's sovereign right to dispense of His own goodness as He pleases. The Jew has always sought to dictate to God as to how and whom He should bless, and like men generally has not been backward in asserting his own claim to have more than others. In the parable it is only with the first that an agreement was made, those who were hired at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours, came in trusting solely to the goodness of the householder. After this manner the Gentile has been called to receive out of the bounty of God. God will do as He pleases with that which is His own. He will keep His promises to the Jew, but He will go beyond the promises and bestow out of His sovereign goodness the blessings of His grace upon the Gentile, so the last shall be first and the first last. In the application of the parable to our practical ways, we must remember that there can be no claim upon God for service done, He alone is the judge of that which is for His pleasure. Many an obscure and devoted worker will take precedence of others who maybe with much boastfulness and surrounded by the praise of their fellows have professed to serve God. Many will find in that day that that which men have approved will be counted nothing in the sight of God, and much that they have despised and given no place will receive His well done. Let us labour for Him, not as the hireling who receives wages for so much work done, but rather out of the constraint of love render Him service, seeking alone His approval, though no other eye may see our work, awaiting in patience the day when out of His own goodness He will bestow the recompense which His love prompts.

“Our Fellowship.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

IT is usual for people of the world who are ambitious to make great efforts to enter into circles of society higher than those to which they have been used. To be familiar with notable people, or with some aristocratic family, or better still, to be presented at Court, or to come into contact with Royalty in any way, is something to be laboured for, and talked about when accomplished as long as life shall last.

That is the way of the world, and what heart-burnings, envyings and disappointments it carries with it, and how utterly poor and unsatisfying it is, especially when compared with that which God in infinite grace has opened to us. Take those Galilean fishermen—Simon and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, as examples. We have no reason to suppose that they were particularly ambitious, for they possessed neither qualities nor attainments likely to grace society, and they probably never contemplated moving out of their own station in life; and yet one day they received a call which changed their whole life and outlook for time and eternity. They heard the call of Jesus, and in response to it they abandoned their nets and followed Him, and they were placed immediately in associations, and given access to and intercourse in a circle of which they could never even have dreamed.

They did not become the companions of scribes, or enter into the fellowship of the haughty pharisees; they were not put into relationship with the chief priest, or looked upon favourably by the kingly court. No, they were carried beyond all these, beyond the most exalted and exclusive circles on earth, and beyond angels also, into a wholly divine circle, so that they could say, “*Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*” (1 John 1. 3).

They were not introduced into this most blessed society, if we may be per-

mitted to use that word in this connection, as mere spectators, or to pass in and out of it as those who were to be thus honoured for a moment but who had no abiding-place there, but they were brought into it as those who were to know it as their life and portion for ever.

Let us consider their call to this high place and privilege, and remember as we do so that they were representative men, and that what was true for them is true for us, and can be made real to us by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

The first chapter of John's Gospel shows us their introduction into this entirely new circle of fellowship for men. They heard the Baptist bear witness to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Wonderful title for the Only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father to assume! The fact that HE came in that character put at rest all doubts for ever as to the question of sin being settled for the glory of God, so that no barrier to the effectuation of God's purposes of love might remain. They not only believed the testimony that they heard, but He became at once the Object of their hearts, which had been awakened by the Father's touch, and they followed Him, for from henceforward nothing but Himself could satisfy them, and no place but the place where He dwelt could be home to them. It was this that made them ask with deepest earnestness from their very hearts, illuminated as they were by His glory and wholly possessed by Himself from that moment, that memorable question, “*Master, where dwellest Thou?*” To their question they received an answer which must have filled them with wonder, and which opened up to them, and for all who receive Him as they did, His own dwelling-place in the Father's everlasting love.

The desire for His company which moved them so mightily was only the response in their hearts to the love for

them which was in His heart, and the grand purpose of His coming was to set them free from every hindrance and to cleanse them from all defilement that they might be His companions for ever in the place where He dwelt. Thus has His love expressed itself.

It has been pointed out very beautifully that in John's Gospel the Lord is not spoken of as the "Son of Man without a place to lay His head"; that belongs to other Gospels in which we have Him portrayed to us in other ways. But in this Gospel He had His dwelling-place—a place of ineffable rest, for He is the Only-begotten Son *which is in the bosom of the Father*. This was His eternal dwelling-place, and it was His home as a Man here below. None shared it with Him before He came into manhood, it was His own peculiar place, but now He had found associates to whom He could say, "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me" (John 16. 27). And of whom He could say when speaking to His Father of them, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17. 23). Yes, He had found those who were now to share with Him the unspeakable rest and joy of the Father's love.

Thus they became the associates of the Only-begotten Son of God. He dwelt among them and they dwelt with Him, and they beheld His glory as the most worthy Object of the Father's love. They heard the Father's voice telling out His delight in His beloved One and their hearts thrilled in unison with the Father's thoughts of Him. And as they lived and walked and dwelt with Him, He gave them the Father's words—words that angels could not understand—and these words entered their hearts and made known to them the Father's name, and opened up the Father's bosom to them with all its wonderful secrets of love. They beheld Him, with ever-deepening wonder, a Man amongst them, yet the only-begotten *with the Father*. They saw Him despised and hated of men, yet moving onward

through all opposition and undisturbed by it, doing that which His Father commanded Him. He manifested before their eyes a life that did not belong to this world, that was not dependent upon anything that this world possessed—even *that eternal life which was with the Father*. It was the life of His own dwelling-place revealed here upon earth to His disciple, that they might enter into it and share it with Him, that *His own joy might be fulfilled in them*.

And those Galilean fishermen entered into that which was revealed to them, and the things that they heard and saw and contemplated and handled they have declared unto us by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that we might also know the fullness of joy that belongs to this most blessed life and fellowship.

What are our thoughts and attitude towards this revelation of the Father by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the divine fellowship which is the result of it? Has it affected our sanctification from the world? or do we still in company with the unenlightened crowds pursue the things of the world and run after its friendships, fellowships, and society? If so we know nothing experimentally of the Father's love: it is not in us; and we are pursuing that which is nothing but lust and pride, and which is most surely perishing.

Can we do this? Not if we have believed the testimony of God to His Son as the Lamb of God, and beheld Him upon the cross suffering for sin as the sin-bearer, there coming under God's own condemnation of it that He might bear it away. No, we shall shrink from that which brought Him into the judgment of the cross for us, and attracted by the unmeasured love that led Him to become a sacrifice for sin for us we shall follow Him as His disciples did, and He will lead us into His own dwelling-place.

It is thus that we shall find the rest and peace and joy that the world cannot give and of which it knows nothing, for we shall be led outside of it, disturbed

and dominated by sin as it is, into that region of eternal repose—the Father's bosom—His perfect love. Not our love to Him but His to us—and not only as God the Saviour whose love has been told out to the world, but as brought into this most blessed relationship: Himself our Father and His love to us measured only by His love to His well-beloved, who has been through death that we might be associated with Him in His dwelling-place of "love supreme and bright."

Let us consider these things and bow in worship in the presence of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for this great purpose did not originate with us, it

is the fruit of divine and eternal love. The FATHER could not rest until it was accomplished; the SON OF THE FATHER became man to declare the Father's love and to make this fellowship attractive to those who were called to it, and the HOLY GHOST who has proceeded from the Father has come to dwell in the hearts of all who respond to the call of grace that they might apprehend and enjoy the bliss of this new place and relationship with its life and fellowship. It is ours to respond to the labours of sovereign love and refuse everything that would unfit us for fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

What Think Ye of Christ?

WHAT think ye of the Saviour and of His love? Is He not altogether fair in your eyes? What of those feet of His that were beautiful upon the mountains bringing good tidings of peace and yet were in the end pierced with cruel nails? What of those eyes that were as doves eyes fitly set (Song of Sol. 5. 12), and yet were often wearied with tears, the eyes that looked at Peter when He denied Him, and that were closed in death for us? What of His head, worthy to wear every crown that

the universe can yield and yet torn by a thorn-wreath? What of His mouth, from which grace has flowed in words of eternal life and yet which was smitten by the rude hand of a base Jew? He brought the fulness of God's grace to us, but it involved Him in suffering unspeakable. He took the shame and gives us the glory. He took the curse and gives us the blessing. He went into death and gives us life. What think ye of Him and His love?

The Life of Faith.

WE are not to put on faith as a cloak, or an upper garment when we go to the streets, or assembly, and then lay it aside in the house, at table, or in the office or shop. The renewed man is not to eat and sleep because the light of reason and the law of nature teach him so to do, or the convenience of a calling; for then we do "but walk in the light of our own fire, and the sparks that we ourselves have kindled," and shall "but lie down in sorrow" (Isa. 1. 11). But we are to

set faith as the plummet and line to regulate these actions, to do them, because He who hath bought us with a price commandeth us by the light of faith. And the light of faith is to govern us in eating, drinking, or trading, in sleeping or walking, according to Christian sobriety, in the measure of the action, "Whatsoever ye do" (though but civil service, as servants to earthly masters in a civil calling) "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3. 23).

The Way of the Lord.

"*MY thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord*" (Isa. 55. 8). His ways are often contrary to our judgment: we lie in wait to see God come upon the tops of the mountains; but we are deceived—He cometh the lower way through the valleys. The disciples thought that Christ would travel by the high way and make them kings, and restore the kingdom to Israel—instead He died and was buried, He went the low way, through death, to make them kings and priests to God.

"*As for God His way is perfect*" (Ps. 18. 30). Slander not God's ways of providence, with the reproach of confusion and disorder. There is a long chain of God's ways, counsels, decrees, actions, events, judgments, mercies; and there is white and black, good and evil, crooked and straight, interwoven in this web; and the links of this chain, partly gold, partly brass, iron, and clay, and the threads of His dispensation go along through the patriarchs' days, Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and are spun through the ages of Moses, and Israel in Egypt, and the wilderness, and come through the times of the kings of Israel and Judah, and descend along through the generations of the prophets, Christ, the apostles, persecuting emperors, and martyrdoms of the witnesses of Jesus, slain by the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, till the end of the thread and last link of the chain be tied to the very day of the marriage of the Lamb. Now, in this long contexture of divine providence you see not one broken thread. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," saith Christ. Providence hath no vacancy, but causes, events, actions, ways, are all bordered one upon another, by the wisdom of providence, so that

links are chained and fettered to links, not by hazard or chance.

Though this web be woven of threads of divers colours, black and white, comfortable and sad passages of God's providence, yet all maketh a fair order in this long way. Jacob weepeth for his dead child Joseph; Joseph rejoiceth to come out of his prison to reign: David danceth with all his might before the ark; David weepeth sore for Absalom his son's miserable death. Job washeth his steps with butter, and the candle of the Almighty shineth on his head; and Job defileth his horn in the dust, and lieth on ashes, and mourneth. All is beauty and order to God.

"*Wait on the Lord and keep His way*" (Ps. 18. 30). Put the frame of the spirit in *equilibrio*, in a composed, stayed serenity of mind, looking to both sides, black and white, of God's providence. So holy David was above the sorrow. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both the ark and His habitation; but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I; let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him" (2 Sam. 15. 25, 26). He putteth his soul upon God's two *ifs*—if He save, it is good; if He destroy, it is good. Make sure this general: Christ is mine; at that anchor, in this harbour my vessel must ride. Whatever wind blow in externals, Christ died for me. If I live, it is in Christ; if I die, it is to Christ; if I ride with princes on horses, it is good; if I go on foot with servants, it is good. If Christ hide His face and frown, it is Christ, it is good; if it be full moon and He overshadow the soul with rays and beams of love and light, it is also good.

(*Rutherford.*)

Why Believers Suffer.

(JAMES BOYD).

AS to why believers, whose sins have all been gone into, judged, and judicially made an end of in the death of Christ, are not exempted from suffering is a cause of great concern in the minds of many who have not the scriptural answer to such a very important question. One can very well understand a rejecter of the gospel, upon whom lies the wrath of an angry God, being greatly afflicted, but to find one who is so loved as Christ is being in evil circumstances is quite another thing altogether.

But is there not another question quite as difficult to solve as this one? Why are not believers who are born of God and have received the Divine Spirit removed to heaven at once? Why are they left here at all? They are as fit for heaven as they ever can be made (John 13.; Col. 1. 12). All that is needed by them is a change of body, and one would think that for this it were not necessary to keep them waiting until the advent of Christ (Phil. 3. 21). Yet from the beginning of the work of God in grace on earth His people have had to suffer from the hands of men, the first saint of God being murdered, and all the others plagued more than other men (Ps. 68.); and although their souls often rebelled against it, as in the case of Job, they were made to learn that out of it all they had reaped a wealth of blessing which without it they never had known (Job 42.; Ps. 119. 67).

But in order to get a right understanding of the whole subject we must have some knowledge of the true nature of the present time in which our lot is cast. And we can find this in the Scriptures, for it is all put on record in the wisdom and grace of our God; for He would not only save the souls of men, but He would also bring them to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2. 4).

¶ The two great subjects of prophetic writings in the Old Testament are "The

sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1. 10-12). From the moment of the rejection of Christ until the day of His appearing to the world is the time of His sufferings. They shall be terminated by the power of the glory in which He will show Himself to the world. Of course His own personal sufferings ceased when He went to the Father, after having accomplished the work of redemption. But because He is still in rejection, and deprived of His rights on earth, and because His people are afflicted by this world, this present time is still characterized by the sufferings of Christ. He said to Paul, who persecuted the church of God: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

Now the greatest favour that God has conferred upon His saints is the privilege of sharing in His sufferings (Phil. 1. 29). To be granted faith is surely a wonderful favour from God, but to be allowed to suffer a little for His sake is a still greater manifestation of His favour to us. It is only to a great friend an upright and self-respecting man would grant such a privilege. It is also one way in which God allows us to manifest our love and gratitude to Him. I will endeavour, by the help of God, to point out some of the reasons why there is really no other path for us than that of suffering.

As Lights in this World.

Our Lord says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9. 3). But in view of His absence His saints are said by Him to be the "light of the world" (Matt. 5. 14; Phil. 2. 15). Saints are light in the Lord (Eph. 5. 8), because they are here to present the moral characteristics of Christ to the gaze of men who are in darkness, and because all the source and power of their light resides in the Lord of heaven, who is hidden from the world, but in faith and in the

power of the Spirit manifest to His own. The moon shines during the night because it is in the light of the sun, and saints shine during the absence of Christ because they are in the light of the risen Son of God.

And this light is most objectionable to the men of this world, whose ways are by that light exposed in all their ungodliness. Therefore the desire of men is to quench that light, and to this end are all their energies directed. In the darkness they can do a great many things that they are ashamed to do in the light. People can even deceive themselves in the darkness, but in the light they see that which they gloried in as good and virtuous to be nothing but worthy of the condemnation of God

In the darkness they mistake honesty for righteousness, for if they are upright in their dealings with their fellows, they consider this is all that is necessary. But the light which radiates from the lives of God's people gives them to see that they have some one other than man to consider, and the One who should have been first in their thoughts has had no place at all. In the darkness they can talk of living clean lives, for they know that a world that has cast off God is not likely to condemn them for dabbling in its defilement; but in the light they come to see that no man can be clean in the sight of God whose heart is full of lust and pride, and that to be the world's friend is to be God's enemy. A worldling is here for the world, and a believer is here for God: and this is an infinite difference.

This world hated the light as it shone in Christ; and the Lord says: "If they have hated Me, they will also hate you." He says also: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19). The light is hated and persecuted, whether in Christ or in His followers. The fruit of the light is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth (Eph. 5. 9, "light," see R.V.),

and these qualities are foreign to the nature of fallen men, and therefore those who walk with God are a constant rebuke to the worldling, and must experience in this world hatred and persecution.

For the Name of Christ.

We may rest assured that Christ having been rejected by the men of this world, those who are here in His name will not have an easy time. To be here in His name is to be in charge of His interests, and to maintain as far as in one lies all that concerns that name upon earth. Paul persecuted all that called upon that name, whether they were men or women, for his desire was to blot out the name of Christ from under heaven. But the persecution did not end with the conversion of that ravaging Benjamite. The devil can always find those who are ready to engage in his service, for he gives no work to be done that is disagreeable to the natural heart of man.

To suffer shame for that name is held by the believer to be the greatest possible honour (Acts 5. 41); and Peter tells us: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified" (1 Peter 4. 14). When our Lord took His place in public testimony for God at the baptism of John the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon Him; and it will be also true of us, if in our confession of Him we are reproached. As sure as we are, a special mark of favour from the Father will be given to us.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrew Christians exhorts them to go outside the camp to Him, bearing His reproach. If we are here in His name we cannot expect better treatment than He got, and He felt the shame He was put to much more keenly than we do. He says: "Reproach hath broken my heart" (Ps. 69. 20). In our hardness of heart we may care little what men

think of us, or what they say about us, but it was not so with the Lord whose heart was tender enough to feel every character of indignity that was heaped upon Him. But what a joy it is to have to suffer a little shame for His name! How good it is of Him to entrust the honour of that name to us! And shall we, because of the shame that is attached to it in this evil world, be found in the least degree in the denial of that which is consistent with its incomparable dignity and excellency.

Suffering Evil with the Glad Tidings.

Perhaps we fail more in the appreciation of the grace conferred upon us in giving us to have fellowship with the proclamation of the gospel, for connected with this fellowship there is always of necessity affliction. On account of the zeal of the Apostle of the Gentiles in the gospel he was bound with a chain, and the Asiatics shrank from association with a man so obnoxious to the authorities of law and order. "All that be in Asia," he says, "have turned away from me" (2 Tim. i. 15), and he exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of himself who was a prisoner on the Lord's account; but to suffer evil with the Glad Tidings.

The gospel, which sets forth Christ as Saviour and Lord, cannot be popular in a world guilty of His rejection and murder. It was not only the Sadducees who opposed it when they saw how it destroyed their no-resurrection theory, nor was it persecuted by the Pharisees only, who in the light of it saw their own self-righteousness to be no better than filthy rags, but it was the whole world that rose up against it, because it condemned the whole world system, and announced a day of judgment by the Man it had crucified.

Therefore was the whole world up in arms against it, and therefore was it unpopular everywhere, and those who propagated it, and those who supported its propagators must feel the wrath of

the powers that be. Christians who desired to stand favourably in the eyes of the world could not go with those who regarded the interests of Christ as of prime importance, and therefore they fell back into the rear, and refused to be identified in a public way with the men who sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In practice they became enemies of the cross, whatever love may have been at the bottom of their hearts for the Saviour who died upon it.

But what infinite blessing they missed by this! What a glorious opportunity was theirs, and how blind they were to the honour held out to them in the grace of God! From the eternal glory they will look back upon their cowardice and defection, and if there can be regrets in that home of fulness of joy their hearts shall know it. The scars gotten in that holy war shall shine in the world to come brighter than the glorious sun in the heavens.

Suffering with Christ.

There is also suffering on account of the possession of the Divine nature. Creation groans all around us. From the highest to the lowest—from the head to the foot—from the man set in responsibility to God down to the worm that has its home in the clod at his feet the effects of the fall are felt; and every living thing is racked with pain. The heart of every one is made bitter on account of sin, and throughout all the earth there is a cry.

Is this nothing to the Saviour, whose untiring labours for the relief of human distress came to light in all His activities in the days of His flesh here below? He who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who groaned and was troubled at the power of the king of terrors, cannot be indifferent to the deep sorrows of the human race, for whom He gave His life in order that a way of salvation might be opened up for all.

Nor can His people either who have His life and nature be indifferent to

human woes. The character of this world—its godlessness, its ignorance, its wilfulness, and its woes—made the Saviour a Man of Sorrows, and out of it His followers can gather no joys. Inwardly their joy may be unspeakable, for this is gathered from the heavenly world, of which Christ is the centre; but with the nature of Christ as partaking of His life, they must know something of sorrows that were His in His life below.

But the Apostle could say: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." This shall much more than compensate us for all the sorrows we have to pass through on our way to heaven. The sorrows of creation must continue till the sons of God are manifested, and then they shall cease for ever. Creation awaits the manifestation of the sons of God for its deliverance from the bondage of corruption; but we await the redemption of the body. Our groaning will cease when our bodies are changed into the likeness of Christ's, the groans of creation will cease when we come forth with Christ out of heaven. May each of us be able to reckon with the Apostle, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8. 17-30).

The Chastening of the Lord.

To help us on our way to heaven we are subjected to the chastening of the Lord (Heb. 12.). The will of the flesh has to be broken in us all, and the process is both trying and sorrowful. Our great Example having taken the place of a Man humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross, and we are to follow in His footsteps. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame, and by patient submission to the will of God reached the only place that had any attraction for Him—the presence of God where there is fulness of joy, and

His right hand where there are everlasting pleasures.

This is the goal that is before the souls of His followers, and by the glory of it are we attracted thither. But if the glory attracts us the discipline of the Lord delivers us from fleshly entanglements. He chastens us for our good, and that because He loves us. The eagle stirs up her nest, making it uncomfortable for her young, in order that they may leave it for an element which they are as yet afraid to venture upon, for well she knows their capabilities of being at home in the airy firmament. And we have Christ in heaven as the object of our hearts, and we have the discipline of the Father to loosen us from earth. In love He does it. He says, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12.). Wherefore, He says, lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, for there is nothing to fear. Therefore we may well sing:—

"The Lord is Himself gone before;
He has marked out the path that I tread:
'Tis as sure as the love I adore;
I have nothing to fear nor to dread.

"For the path where my Saviour is gone
Has led up to His Father and God;
To the place where He's now on the throne,
And His strength shall be mine on the road.

"And with Him shall my rest be on high,
When in holiness bright I sit down
In the joy of His love ever nigh,
In the peace that His presence shall crown."

In that day His hand shall wipe the tears from off our faces. The toils and sorrows of the way shall all be forgotten. Our failures also, thank God, if not forgotten shall bring no sense of distance between our souls and Him who suffered for them amid the gloom of Golgotha. May we know how good it is for us to be under His chastening hand so that thanksgiving may displace murmurs and doubt.

The Christian Ministry.

(H. P. BARKER).

An Enquiry as to what the Scriptures say on the Subject.

(Continued from page 240).

A. How can any one know whether he is called of God to the ministry, and if called, whether he is to serve as an evangelist or as a pastor and teacher ?

B. The Lord has His own way of making His call heard and His guidance clear. If His servants wait upon Him, and see that they have a single eye for His glory, He will not fail to make His will known.

As to the character of the service, it is generally according to that which most presses upon the spirit of the one who is exercised about it. If his spirit be burdened with the need of perishing sinners, and he ardently desires to reach them with the gospel, it is as an evangelist that he will seek to serve his Master. If, on the other hand, his heart is drawn out in affectionate desire to the people of God as he sees their famished condition, and how greatly they need to be comforted and built up in Christ, his service will be more that of a pastor and teacher. But, as in the early days of Christianity, the same individual may to some extent combine both lines of ministry in his service. The important thing is that he should be really sent of the Lord, and should receive his guidance direct from Him.

A. Do those who are called to serve the Lord, either as evangelists or as pastors and teachers, require to be trained for the purpose ?

B. Yes, indeed; and this important work of preparation He Himself undertakes. When He said to His disciples: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4. 19), He implied that He would *train* them to be this. The word translated "make" has this force.

We find instances of the Lord training

His servants for the work He had for them to do, in the Old Testament. David learned, in his encounters with the lion and the bear, lessons of dependence on and confidence in God that were the best preparation for his subsequent conflict with the Philistine giant. Moses learned, during his forty years' sojourn in the desert, lessons that stood him in good stead during his forty years' leadership of the hosts of Israel through those same regions. The Lord always suits the education to the service that is to be undertaken.

A college course at some theological seminary is no substitute for this essential preparation. On the contrary, it may do positive harm. Such seminaries are often hotbeds of rationalism, where the students become infected with so-called modern thought and thoroughly *unfitted* to be servants of Christ. Even in those institutions where the standards of orthodoxy are adhered to, the general atmosphere is often one of great spiritual deadness, where amid a weary routine of study the ardent zeal of many a promising young labourer in the Master's vineyard is quenched and himself diverted from his devotion of heart to his Saviour. We would not in the least depreciate the help that younger servants of Christ may receive from those of maturer years, and we believe that the Lord will maintain to the end faithful men who are able to teach others (2 Tim. 2. 2), yet it is always a most serious mistake to take the training and preparation of such out of the hands of Him whose servants they are called to be.

A. Has Scripture anything to say as to how those who devote themselves to the work of the ministry should be supported ?

B. Yes; it shows us two methods by which they may be supported. The first, which we may call the *normal* method, is that they should work at some trade, or follow some profession, like other men. Paul himself did this. He was a tent-maker by trade (Acts 18. 3), and he ordinarily carried on his occupation to support himself while preaching the gospel. "Yea, ye yourselves know," he says to the elders of the Ephesian assembly, "that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20. 34). Again, in writing to the Thessalonians, he says: "Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God" (1 Thess. 2. 9). In his second epistle he adds: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you" (2 Thess. 3.).

A. But are there any ministers, evangelists, or pastors and teachers, who thus earn their living at some secular occupation nowadays?

B. Yes, some of the most efficient and God-honoured evangelists that have ever lived have been doctors, lawyers, schoolmasters, Civil Service officials, merchants, clerks, tradesmen, farmers, and mechanics. So also in the case of pastors and teachers. There is no reason whatever why any one engaged in occupations such as these should not be whole-hearted and devoted ministers of Christ, giving His service the first place and using their business, as Paul did, for the furtherance of His interests.

A. What is the other method of support for those who engage in the ministry?

B. That mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This is what we may term the *exceptional* method. In the case of those who go to labour among the heathen, or whose service makes it necessary for them to move from place to place, it may not be possible for them to combine with their ministry a secular occupation. Such may surely be set free by the Lord whom they serve, that they may run on His errands without let or hindrance. They do not thereby become servants of Christ, ministers or labourers in the gospel in any truer sense than their fellow-servants who follow their businesses. They do not constitute a class in themselves, nor do they deserve the esteem of their fellow-Christians (see 1 Thess. 5. 13) one whit more than do those who equally serve the Lord and pursue some secular calling.

Let such go forth, if convinced (after much waiting upon the Lord) that He would have them do so, depending entirely upon Him. Let them decline to receive any help from unconverted people, even if it should be offered (3rd Ep. John, ver. 7). He who fed Elijah by means of ravens knows how to care for them. Let them not be surprised if sometimes, like Paul of old, they are in want, and even hungry (Phil. 4. 12). It is an honour to suffer in any way for Christ's sake. In times of emergency they can also count on God for succour. He will not fail them. Happy are they who have proved the constancy of His faithfulness and love.

The First Requisite.

TRUE and genuine piety is necessary, the first indispensable requisite in the one who would serve the Lord. Whatever "call" a man may pretend to have, if he has not been called to holiness, he certainly has not been called to take up service for the Lord. "The hand," saith Gregory, "that means to make another clean, must not itself be dirty." If your salt be unsavoury, how can you season others?

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. IX. (A. J. POLLOCK.)

The Table of Shewbread.

(Read Exodus 25, 23-30; Leviticus 24, 5-9; Numbers 4, 7, 8.)

THE first mention of a word in Scripture is always deeply significant. In Exodus 25, 23 we get the first mention of a table in Scripture. It is plainly used for placing thereon food for the priests. Its great idea is food, sustainment, support.

It becomes a deeply interesting inquiry as to how food, sustainment, support are ministered to God's people. Who is sufficient for this?

We get an answer typically in the construction of the table of shewbread. Like the ark, it was to be made of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold, and, like the ark, it is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of His person is ever guarded. If shittim wood typifies holy humanity, gold typifies His essential deity.

A crown of pure gold had to be placed round about the table; a border of an hand-breadth round it, and that with a golden crown encircling it. Thus we see how carefully and jealously the Holy Spirit would guard the truth of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for us not to question, but to bow; not to analyse and dissect, but to worship and adore; not to pry into these mysteries with a curious mind, but to feed upon the revelation of Christ by faith and in the Spirit's power.

Upon the table were laid twelve loaves. They were made of fine flour, type of the pure, spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus: "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6, 33). True it is that John 6, presents Christ in a universal aspect, but just as He came, presenting Himself as the bread of life to the world, so is He likewise food for His people and the Sustainer of the life which He imparts.

Then again there were twelve loaves, indicating that Jehovah took in the

whole twelve tribes of Israel, and that sustainment of soul was available for every individual in the nation. The priests alone eat it, but the truth is that *now*, in this dispensation, every believer is a priest.

Now there is but one loaf, not twelve—the one loaf indicating the truth of the one body, spiritually all distinction between Jew and Gentile gone.

Upon the twelve loaves frankincense was put, type of the fragrance of the life of the blessed Lord. It says, "Thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord." So we learn that fire played its part in this memorial. The fine flour had to be subjected to the action of fire, changed by it in its appearance and consistency, and made available as food. So there can be no feeding on Christ apart from His death. He were alone if He had not died. But now every question of sin met, and all that the believer is as his former fallen nature set aside in the cross of Christ, the renewed nature is free to feed upon Christ and share the delight of God as to Him.

It is not that the flesh is not present with the believer, and will be to the end of his pilgrim story, but this is not what characterizes him. The new nature does, and it is the believer in relation to it who finds his delight in feeding upon Christ.

Finally, when the camp moved, the table of shewbread was covered by a cloth of blue, above that a cloth of scarlet, and above all a covering of badgers' skins, thus emphasizing the holiness becoming to divine things and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His person. May we ever be characterized by reverence in the things of God.

My Soul Waiteth upon God.

(H. J. VINE).

WHERE can I turn for strength and grace,
 O God, when all around gives way ?
 To Thee I come; I seek Thy face;—
 All help from man declines to-day;
 As vanity his best estate!
 On Thee alone my soul shall wait.

Thou hast redeemed us by the blood
 Of Jesus, Thy beloved Son:
 And far beyond the stormy flood
 Of earthly ills, the heights He's won:
 Should rising torrents ne'er abate.
 On Thee, O God, my soul shall wait.

The earth beneath, the heavens above,
 And all their families Thou hast made!
 More rich the wisdom and the love,
 The glory, might and power that laid
 Redemption's firm foundations great!
 On Thee alone my soul doth wait.

Silent before Thee, quiet, still!
 My Stay and my Salvation Thou;
 FATHER, I call Thee; 'tis Thy will
 That we should have free access now,
 The Spirit gives the strength and state
 To draw so near and on Thee wait.

And this I find,—as thus I know
 The grace that comes alone from Thee,—
 My soul *mounts up* from ills below;
 And power increased Thou givest me
 To lay aside each hindering weight,
 As still my soul on Thee doth wait:

The morning breaks! what grace abounds!
 I onward *run* to Christ the goal!
 My way the light of day surrounds!
 Now I may *walk* with God until
 I pass within the heavenly gate,
 To be with Him on whom I wait:

To fly, to run, to walk,—ah, this
 Is known to him that turns to God,
 Whose strength in secret thus is his,
 To tread the path that Jesus trod:
 And though this way some enter late,
 On God alone we still may wait.

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 130.—132.

PSALM 130. alone of all the "Songs of Ascents" deals with the question of guilt and pardon. The cry to Jehovah "out of the depths" plainly declares where the sense of our guilt will bring us, for if "Jah should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" But with Him is forgiveness, not to give licence to sin, but that He may be feared, with the holy fear due to Him (Hab. 3. 2). With Him also is mercy and plenteous redemption or ransom, and HE (emphatic), He alone will redeem Israel from *all* her iniquities (Jer. 50. 20; Micah 7. 19). From Isaiah 40. 1 we learn the reason for the waiting spoken of in the Psalm: Israel will not be assured of pardon until she has paid her last mite under the chastening hand of Jehovah; she will then be reckoned to have received double for all her sins. It may be well to add in view of much present-day teaching that of course these sufferings have no expiatory value (that will be found in chap. 53.), but are used to effect a moral purification.

PSALM 131. Here we find the proud Israelite humbled in the presence of his God: "Jehovah, I am not haughty." The Gentile philosophy which once so captivated and corrupted him is relinquished and, like a child properly weaned, he is restful in the presence of that which once yielded him all he wanted. The literal translation is "upon his mother," *i.e.* leaning upon her bosom, illustrating how the believer should find no attraction in the thing which once enthralled him. This is true deliverance from the power of sin. For the point of the instruction must be sought in the process of weaning, not in the nature of the thing we have surrendered. Death to nature is the mischievous exaggeration of a pseudo-spirituality.

PSALM 132. should be compared with Psalm 87. and the closing verses of Psalm 78.; in all of these Jehovah's choice of Zion and His delight in it as the symbol of the exercise of grace is exhibited. Interpreters have differed as to whether we should connect this Song with the bringing of the ark to

Zion by David, or into the temple by Solomon (2 Chron. 5. 6). If we adopt the latter view, "the ode is seen to be harmonious and consistent throughout," says Perowne, and certainly the language employed seems hardly consistent with the temporary character of David's tent, and verses 1 and 10 are a little unnatural in the mouth of David himself. The Psalm begins by recalling to Jehovah the anxious care of David to find a dwelling for "the Mighty One of Jacob," a title first used by the dying Patriarch in Genesis 49., and found also where the subject is redemption by power, in Isaiah. A true estimate of the importance of God's dwelling among men was often lacking in the former dispensation (see Haggai 1.) and is too rarely found now; the diligence of the pious king may serve as a rebuke to us, and we may learn deeper lessons from the sacrifice of Him who went into death that living stones might be secured for God's temple from among those who apart from grace are dead.

VERSE 6. has been variously interpreted, but is best understood as explaining the way in which the desires of David were accomplished. No doubt "it" refers to the ark, the symbol of the presence of the God whose glory he sought; it is not named till verse 8, but was in the mind of the speaker from the first. Ephratah, according to Genesis 35. 19, was the ancient name of Bethlehem; there he had heard the story of the ark and his desires had been awakened that it should once more occupy the central place in the worship of the nation. In later years, when able to accomplish his purpose to magnify the One who had exalted him, the ark was found at Kirjath-Jearim, the Hebrew equivalent of the "fields of the wood" (1 Sam. 7. 2). In 2 Samuel 6. 2 the same place is called Baale-Judah. See also Joshua 15. 9, 60. In verse 7 we come to what we take to be the exhortation of King Solomon, which should read thus: "Let us come before His footstool." Verses 8, 9, 10, according to 2 Chronicles 6. 41, 42 (omitted in Kings), form the conclusion of Solomon's prayer at the dedication

of the temple. In reply to these petitions, the promises of Jehovah to David are cited as given in 2 Samuel 7., and the Spirit seems to take pains to show that in each case the answer exceeds the terms of the prayer. The petition is that Jehovah would take the newly erected temple for His resting-place; the answer is, "This shall be My rest for ever, here will I abide." The next desire is that the priests might be clothed with righteousness; to which the reply is, "Her priests shall be clothed with salvation." It is next sought that the saints should shout for joy, which is answered by the declaration, "Her saints shall shout aloud for joy." Lastly, "For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of

Thine anointed" (that is, refuse not his petitions); to which the answer comes, "There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed." We may thus learn the importance of prayer according to God's purpose, which is surely answered either now or in the coming age. As a matter of history the anointed of 2 Samuel 7. failed and suffered under the hand of God for his sin; but the citation of 1 Chronicles 22. 10 in Hebrews 1. points to another Son, who finished His work perfectly and hence secured for His people the sure mercies of David. When His kingdom comes, He will build the temple of Jehovah, and bear the glory, and be a priest upon His throne (Zech. 6.).

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 8.

(H. J. VINN).

Fulfilments of Jeremiah's Words.

ALTHOUGH there were no startling or miraculous interventions on God's part, to publicly justify the words of Jeremiah at the moment, nevertheless, the exact fulfilment of his words, though delayed apparently, was all the more striking afterwards. There was nothing immediate or sudden. Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord and suffered for it. God in long-suffering mercy waited upon the people, patiently looking for their repentance. That did not take place; and meanwhile the prophet was reproached and ill-treated. Then, when the hearts of the people, the princes, the priests, the prophets and the pastors were hardened utterly, the fulfilments of Jeremiah's words, were swiftly executed. Surprisingly so, both in public and private events; also in personal and particular details. To name them all would occupy too much space; but some of them should be mentioned here.

In Josiah's day, things looked very prosperous at Jerusalem; nevertheless, the prophet foretold upon the city, "evil from the north, and a great destruction" (4. 6). This was exactly fulfilled, but we are apt to overlook its miraculous nature. Did some one emphatically announce to-day that St. Petersburg would be captured and destroyed, most people would smile and

scout such an idea. If it took place, the fulfilment would be the more striking because of their scepticism. Thus it is with Jeremiah's prophecy as to Jerusalem. Again, everything *seemed* to be outwardly flourishing with the temple worship; but as the Lord desolated Shiloh, where he set His Name at the first, so, said the prophet, should it be done to this house, because of their wickedness (7. 11-14). This too came to pass (2 Kings 25. 8-17).

Such striking signs as the *girdle* (c. 13) were precisely fulfilled. Jehovah had taken up Israel for His honour; but having sought their own honour with "great pride" (ver. 9), they should be destroyed as a nation. Similarly the *potter's vessel* of chapter 18.; and the *earthen vessel* of chapter 19. Also the *bonds and yokes* of chapters 27. and 28. Hananiah might oppose the truth of this last sign, and break the yokes of wood; but it only served to make the word of the Lord more impressive; calling for the prophecy concerning the yokes of iron, and Hananiah's own doom. We know how all this came to pass, and in a way which leaves no room to question either the divine prediction, or the divine consummation.

The oft-repeated prophecies concerning the punishment of the people of Israel, and their fulfilment, might well impress

the mind, but when Jeremiah foretells, that the Lord "will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners" (9. 25-26), and we see Babylon, a comparatively young power, rise up and do this, it is enough to fill us with astonishment, and to carry conviction to any thoughtful person that God rules in the Kingdom of men. Chapters 45. to 49. all had their fulfilment in this connection in a most marvellous manner.

The important and formal prophecy of chapter 25. is still more impressive. It contains the well-known word as to the 70 years servitude (vers. 9-16). It should be noticed, however, that this again includes the other nations, as well as Israel. And thus it was that all these nations served the King of Babylon 70 years.

A further word on this prophecy as to Israel must be added. In 29. 10-12, we read, "Thus saith the Lord, that after 70 years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you." It was this word, evidently, that years after set

Daniel praying: "I Daniel understood by books, the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet." So for the fulfilment of this promise Jeremiah was used *in prophecy*; Daniel *in prayer*; and Cyrus, a man who did not know the Lord, *in providence*. God had said of Cyrus long before, through Isaiah, "I have sur-named thee though thou hast not known Me. . . . Thee I have raised up in righteousness." Again we read, "Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made proclamation" etc. (2 Chron. 36. 22). So exact, and so encouraging, is this word and its actual accomplishment, that it is full of comfort and cheer to the soul that trusts in the blessed God; knowing that, even at the present time, He makes all things work together for the good of His own, who have been called by His grace, according to His purpose. Even a detail such as buying a field (32. 7), is used of God to show in the very presence of the desolation, about to be brought upon the land, that His good word concerning His people should verily come to pass; and the fields should flourish and be fruitful again. And so it was. Our God and Father is a faithful God, who fulfils His word.

He made Himself of no Reputation.

MAY the Lord keep us all from resting upon a religious reputation; for of all the terrible things that can befall a saint of God one of the worst is trusting to a religious reputation, especially for one who is engaged in ministering.

Look now at the direct contrast of this in the Lord's earthly path. He lost credit, every step He took, with those around Him; because He went on walking with His Father shining brighter and brighter; till at last men could not bear its brightness, and as far as they were concerned, put it out on the cross, because those around Him knew not His measure of communion, and could not at all get up to it. . . . Thus we see the blessed Lord in man's estimation got lower till they put Him to death, "even the death of the cross."

Then there was Paul. What spiritual energy of faith there was in him! He walked with God in power; but we see that those about him could not attain to the point he had reached. . . . His path became more and more lonely, and at the end of his course he had to say, "All that which are in Asia be turned away from me." Paul, out of all he had gathered, had only one person to visit him in prison.

(J. N. D.)

Answers to Correspondents.

Meetings for Prayer, the Lord's Supper and Worship.

COL.—To lay down rules as to the conduct of meetings, and as to what exercises should be admitted or excluded from them most certainly destroys the liberty of the Spirit, and must have most disastrous results, since it can only produce bondage and formality. Yet, on

the other hand, there is that which is suitable to each special gathering of the saints of God, and as those gathered together are subject to the Lord and led by the Holy Spirit everything that is done will be in beautiful harmony.

Matthew 18. 19, 20.

Clearly this passage has in view the gathering together for prayer, and those gathered according to it, *i.e.* in, or unto the name of the Lord, are gathered as representing Him in the world during His absence from it, and so they will pray in His interests, and He will be with them. But to say that nothing but prayer must have a place in such a gathering would be folly, for *thanksgiving* must always be associated with our prayers. *The Word of God* should also have its place, for it is by it that we are instructed as to what to pray for. Then occupation with the interests of Christ leads to occupation with Christ Himself, and that must end in *worship*. So that a meeting gathered for prayer might very naturally close in the overflowing of hearts in true worship to the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. But while Matthew 18. 20 was first spoken in connection with prayer it does not limit the

Lord's presence to the prayer meeting. It is not the purpose of the gathering but the Name to which they are gathered that secures His presence. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians there are three special gatherings together of the saints indicated. (1) For the pronouncement of the solemn judgment of the assembly in the name of the Lord against an evil-doer (chap. 5. 4). (2) For the Lord's Supper (chap. 11. 20). (3) For ministry and general edification at which prayer, singing and thanksgiving have their place (chap. 14. 23). In connection with the first of these the power of the Lord is specially mentioned as being with them, and this could not have been apart from His presence. So that we have no hesitation in extending the blessed declaration of Matthew 18. 20 to all of these gatherings—for the assembly when truly gathered is gathered unto His name and to no other.

The Assembly and Fellowship.

It is important to see that there are two distinct lines of truth unfolded in the word. The one is that which connects itself with what is individual, *i.e.* the grace of God which has saved us and put us into His family, and the revelation to us of Jesus as our Saviour and Lord and High Priest, who ministers grace and sympathy and help to us in the midst of all the trials of our earthly life; in short, it includes *all that the Lord is to us* individually if there were not another Christian on earth to enjoy it with us, and without doubt this side of the truth yields joy unspeakable. The other line is the truth of the assembly, or church, and presents the Lord as the Head, not of the individual Christian, but

of His whole body, which is composed of all who have believed the gospel. It opens up for us what may be called the Lord's own circle, a circle in which His supremacy must be owned and in which His love may have its own way; and those who are intelligent as to this side of the truth have added to their knowledge of what Christ can be to them the further knowledge that *His assembly is precious to Him*. They have said, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (S. of S. 2. 16), and they can also say, not thinking of themselves alone, but voicing the feelings of the assembly as having their part in it, "*I am my Beloved's, and His desire is towards me*" (S. of S. 7. 10). This is a distinct advance,

for the thought before the heart is the joy of the Beloved. Christ is everything. It is blessed, indeed, to be able to say, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20), but there is the further great revelation of love that passeth knowledge to which none who can take up those precious words should be indifferent, namely, "*Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it*" (Eph. 5. 25).

While all who have responded to the call of the gospel belong to the assembly, all have not realised it; indeed the majority of the saints of God appear to be totally indifferent to it altogether. Yet the truth regarding it has a very large place in the epistles, and we need only to read them, earnestly and prayerfully, with Christ and His glory before our thoughts instead of ourselves or our blessings, to discover the greatness of our calling as being part of the assembly, which is the body of Christ.

Now in 1 Corinthians, to which epistle we should go for help as to the assembling together of the assembly, we find that they were to come together, not as so many individuals that might form a meeting or a crowd, but as each having his place in the body of Christ, into which body they had been baptized by the Holy Ghost (chap. 12.), and the Lord's presence and His things were to control them and not their own. They had their own houses in which to eat and drink, as chapter 11. tells us, there they could look after their own things, and the Lord would be with them in their homes, for He never leaves nor forsakes His own; but when they were gathered together it was to His place they had come. They left for the time being what was individual, and what might be termed their own interests, to have communion: their part in common with the things of the Lord as the Holy Ghost was pleased to bring these things before them. So in connection with the three gatherings of the assembly in this epistle we find that in connection with the removal of evil from the midst of it (chap. 5.) the *Lord's name and power* are prominent; the Supper (chap. 11.) is spoken of as the *Lord's Supper*; and at the close of chapter 14., which gives us the gathering

for general edification, we have these solemn words, "If any man think himself to be spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are *the commandments of the Lord*" (ver. 37).

Any one can understand their Majesties the King and Queen visiting the cottage of a poor subject and inquiring kindly after the health of the children and leaving behind some token of their favour; but if they invited the occupants of that same cottage to Windsor Castle to show them the treasures there, and to talk to them of the affairs of State and of their interest in the Empire generally, it would be a totally different matter. And this feebly illustrates the difference between having the Lord with us in our individual pathway and circumstances, and our having through grace a place in His assembly. When this opens up before the soul it means a great advance in the truth and must have a powerful effect upon the whole life.

Now while it is manifestly impossible to gather together the whole assembly in any given town or place as was done at Corinth, not only because of physical difficulties, but more because of the sinful sectarianism that has destroyed all outward and visible unity, yet there is no reason why any who may be awakened to the truth and blessedness of the assembly should not act together upon the truth of it, and upon the principles laid down in the Word for its well-being. There may be only "two or three" with sufficient devotion of heart to do this; well, let them do it, and they will prove how true and faithful are the words, "There am I in the midst of them."

Such would, without pretension of being anything at all, seek grace to maintain what was due to the Lord, they would search the Word in order to know His will and be much in prayer for His support, because conscious of their own feebleness. They would not regulate things so as to make them acceptable to themselves, but they would be very careful to be acceptable to the Lord; and together guided by the Holy Ghost they would enter into that true fellowship, which has Christ as its centre, His interests as its circumference, and the Holy Spirit as its power.

The Lord's Supper and Worship.

We believe that it is right to connect worship specially with the Lord's Supper. In eating the Supper we call our Lord Jesus Christ to mind in that which was the perfect expression of His devoted love to His own. It is not our blessings that we recall and recount, beyond all praise as they are, except to extol the Giver of them, but CHRIST HIMSELF, as He laid down His life for us. He detains the heart by the fullness of His beauty and the greatness of His love; we behold His moral glory shining out in the surrounding darkness of hatred and sin; we contemplate together His lowliness, His unresisting meekness, His tender yet mighty love triumphing over all the hatred of His foes; and deeper still His complete submission to the will of God. We dwell upon the greatness and the excellency of His sacrifice—"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us *an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour*" (Eph. 5. 2). "Through the eternal Spirit He *offered Himself without spot to God*" (Heb. 9. 14). We think, as we are strengthened and led by the Holy Ghost, upon His suffering in our stead, and while our thoughts cannot fathom the soundless depths of sorrow into which He passed when "He was made sin for us," yet we may consider Him thus going to the uttermost limits of the will of God, and we can rejoice with unspeakable joy that God has been glorified in the death of Christ about our sin, which was a challenge to His glory. And by that same death we see God made manifest in the fullness of His nature and character as He could never have been had sin not raised its head in rebellion against Him. In short, we see in the death of the lonely Sufferer of Calvary, when He gave Himself for us, sin's dominion overthrown, our everlasting blessing secured, and the foundation laid for an eternity of glory to God and universal rest and joy for His creatures.

We know as we dwell upon this that we are free from our sins before God through Him; that we are liberated by His death from the condemnation that rested upon us as connected with sinful flesh; our consciences are purged; our place is the holiest, and we are accepted before God, even the Father, in Him the

Beloved. We learn in that death what God's thoughts are towards us, for the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ; it tells us of the love of God that would have us in everlasting and unalienable nearness to Himself even at such a cost. All this, and more, the Holy Spirit would bring before our souls as we fulfil our Lord's desire, "Remember me." And we could not contemplate these things without worshipping. Christ becomes supremely great in our thoughts as we thus behold Him; our hearts are held in the thrall of an Object, all glorious, and we forget ourselves in adoring Him. His Father, also, the Source of every thought that has found expression in Him, we worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

But to make it a rule that everything else but worship must be excluded from the Lord's Supper would spoil it at once, for the liberty of the Spirit is essential to it; it must be spontaneous and free, and to attempt to force it by rule and regulation would destroy it altogether. Thanksgiving and praise have their place at such gatherings, and prayer also, for we do not think that we could be maintained in the spirit of worship apart from dependence, and dependence finds its expression in prayer. Moreover, as the heart is filled with the blessedness of what Christ is and the joy of being brought to the Father in and with Him, it will turn in intercession for others that they may be brought into the same blessing. So that while a prayer meeting may naturally close in worship, a worship meeting may well close in prayer.

Nor can any rule be made as to the standard of worship; to do this would be a human invention and not of God. In Israel a worshipper could bring for His burnt-offering either a bullock, a sheep or goat, or two young pigeons. These were typical of different apprehensions of Christ's offering, but they were all alike acceptable to God; and now the feeblest appreciation of Christ is acceptable to Him. And as in music many notes produce harmony, so in our worship the Spirit of God would touch many hearts by the varied glories of Christ and so make sweet melody for the Father's ear. How great a privilege it is to have part in this!

The Power of the Word.

A missionary in China writes from a school for Bible study there :

“In our third study we were given to see some fruit of the students’ own work in distribution of tracts and ‘Scripture Gift’ portions, whereby a soul is brought to Christ and a student to the school. He is an old Confucianist whose son is attending a Government school here. Two years ago this son received a copy each of Mark’s and John’s Gospel, which with other books had been distributed with a view of reaching the student classes in this city. These books were taken home 500 li away and came into the father’s hands, with the result that under the Spirit’s illumination the old man’s interest in the truth at once began, and through the mission station nearest him he sought and obtained admission to the Bible school.

“The very morning he attended class Mark’s Gospel was opened for consideration. All were struck with the remarkable coincidence. It was lovely to see his growth in spiritual things during the session. Please pray that the work of these two books may not end here but be used of God to bring salvation to his home and village and many of his Confucian friends.”

(W. S. H.)

From a labourer in South America comes the following incident :

“At Cordoba, a recent case of conversion has interested me a good deal, that of a woman who was exceedingly anxious to get a certain favour from heaven. The priest told her that the way to ensure success would be to buy a handsome statue of San Antonio, so that she could have a mediator always with her. She accordingly purchased an image of wax and plaster about nine inches high. About the same time a friend gave her a fine parrot, with a

good flow of language. One afternoon, returning home from a walk, she found the saint’s niche empty, and the parrot in high feather, it having eaten all the wax and shivered all the plaster. She said afterwards, as nearly as I can remember her story, ‘All the afternoon I cursed the saint for his weakness and the parrot for his wickedness, and spent my time in a fury of rage, fearing that my last hope of obtaining the desired favour must be forfeited for ever. That evening a poorly dressed and humble man came to my door and offered a little book called “The Gospel of Saint Luke.” I was in no mood for reading, but something powerfully drew me to the gift, and I was soon enchained and enchanted. As I read, my violence vanished, my soul was ashamed in the presence of perfect calm and power, and slowly, as I read, the light of God penetrated my darkness, and a few days after I was delivered from my superstitions, and rejoiced in the forgiveness of my sins.’ ”

A Christian soldier related recently in our hearing how that he sent a copy of the New Testament to his son who is with the Salonica Forces. The boy was a prodigal, with no love for his father’s God and Saviour. The precious volume was sent out with many prayers, and every day the earnest father prayed that no harm might befall it on the way, but that it might reach his son in safety, and then that he might be induced to read its pages.

And his prayers were answered; the book reached the boy and he read it. Sharper than any sword that ever soldier wielded, its words pierced his conscience and heart, and amongst other portions of it Luke 15. was used by God to turn his feet from the broad way to God, and the father received the glad news that he had longed for—his son was saved.

From the Form of God To the Form of a Servant.

(W. HY. WESTCOTT).

"No one knows the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11, 27).

WE are met on the threshold of any study as to the Person of the Son of God by this intimation of its vastness. Statements are made in the *Holy Scriptures* to enlighten our hearts regarding the One who has reconciled us to God, and has revealed the Father to us; but they are like an open heaven to us, sunlit and starry, ever full of new discoveries, and surrounding the saints with their benefits and lustre.

As, however, there are certain cardinal points in the mariner's compass, so there are certain great revelations in the Scriptures toward which the thoughts of the believer's heart may turn, reverent and adoring; where we may learn the Majesty of the Being who before He became Man subsisted in separate personality, eternal and Divine in the Godhead.

To touch upon such in their order in the New Testament we have :

JOHN 1. The Eternal Word.

PHILIPPIANS 2. The Form of God, and equality of glory.

COLOSSIANS 1. Creator Fullness for creation's sustenance and recovery.

HEBREWS 1. Glory incapable of diminution or change.

Humbly we touch on such themes.

In the Gospel by John the Spirit of God opens out to us the glories of the Word. As the Word, He is the universal Representative of all the mind and thoughts and ways of God, both in His own Person and by means of what He says and does. If at any time any revelation required, or requires, to be given of God's thoughts and plans and will, the revealing thereof took place, or will take place, through Him. We are to think of Him as the One adequate, and

He alone, to fully disclose all that is in the mind of God, and to bring into being all that the mind of God has planned.

In the first verse, the Spirit goes back to all that is called "beginning," however nebulous this may be to the mind of man, and He shows us there that the Word "was." "In the beginning was the Word." This teaches us the eternity of His being. For whatever had a beginning, He had none; He only *was*. All else began; He subsisted when it did begin.

Secondly, the Scripture shows that, commensurate with the eternity of His being is the fact of His possessing separate personality. "In the beginning . . . the Word was with God." If the evangelist had written "the Word was *in* God," our foolish minds might have thought that just as Levi was (Heb. 7.) in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedek met him and only received actual being later, so perhaps our Lord, the Son, the Word, had only received separate being at a special date in eternity. But the Holy Ghost is too jealous of His glory and too accurate in His words to admit this erroneous idea. "In the beginning . . . the Word was with God." As certain as the Eternity of His being is the separateness of His personality. There never was a time, however remote, when the Word was not with God, ever distinguishable from the Father as the Father, and from the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit. Yet there is no suggestion of a second Godhead, for though distinct in personality, He was with God.

Finally, as though to forbid for ever any comparison of Personalities or of glories in the Godhead, or in our conceptions of the Deity, He says "the Word was God." Whatever language the Lord used of Himself after He took a servant's form, or whatever terms

might apply when He had become a Man, we should be utterly wrong in supposing that He held an inferior place in Deity before He came. This last clause in our verse is absolutely destructive of any idea of an inferior place in Godhead. "The Word was God"; and God cannot be inferior to God.

In one verse, Divine wisdom sums up His Eternity, His separate Personality, His absolute and equal position in the full glory of Godhead.

Another thing is added. Without bringing in any other title, He says, "The same (*i.e.* the Word) was in the beginning with God." That is, whatever other glories He possessed, there never was a period in the eternity past when He was not the Word. It is in this connection that the inspired evangelist adds, "All things were made by Him." The One who is the Expositor of the mind and thoughts of God, and who was capable of putting the imprint of God's thoughts into form, created the material universe, the "all things," that they might be the transcript of God's glory, so far as that could be in creation. All that we have around us, the immensities and wonders of space, the beauties and uses of light, and heat, of form, and colour, and sound, originally bore the impress of the glories of God through Him who was adequate in wisdom and glory and power to declare Him. Every element in earth, and sea, and sky, was designed to express some ray of the Creator's glory,—a well-stocked library in which the man who feared God might study His eternal power and Godhead.

The chapter goes on to speak of man's condition after he had fallen, and to show how the Word, ever true to His character as the living Exponent of God's mind, became flesh; to deal with sin in due time as the Lamb of God, to baptize men who had repented with the Holy Ghost, and to make Himself known to their hearts as the Son of God, the new and living Centre of all God's ways.

But let us pass on to Colossians, leaving Philippians 2. for later consideration.

In the Epistle to the Colossians (chap. i.) it seems clear that the first fourteen verses are to prepare us for the contemplation of the glory of the Son of the Father's love from a fresh point of view. Much of this glory is true of Him as having become Man; but in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses we are faced with Godhead glory pure and simple. It is evident that the creation of thrones, etc., was prior to the date of the incarnation of our Lord; and His necessary condition of pre-eminence when He did become Man takes its rise in what He was ere He became such. He is the Firstborn (the most eminent) of all creation; "*for* by Him were all things created."

It is of the utmost importance to reverently study what is said of Him. By knowing Him as He is set before us in the Scriptures of truth we are fed and encouraged, and we are fortified against the too evident effort of many to depreciate His glories. It is said of Him that "He is before all things." This is a necessary truth, because of what was said just before, viz. that "by Him all things were created." We say that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. Yes; but who was He? The chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem, who ought to have known the truth, told part of it only. "Out of thee," they quoted, "shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel." But the quotation should have gone on, "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5. 2). He comes into the creation, and the place of pre-eminence was His by right; but He who came is the One to whom creation owed its being, whose own glory is from everlasting.

Moreover, it is the Son to whom this operation is here attributed. He was the Son when He wrought the work. This relationship of Son with Father in Godhead glory is antecedent to the creation of everything. It is not a relationship originating in His immaculate birth, though as born into the world He is also styled "Son of God." But being Son in the inscrutable glory of

Godhead, the Fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him; He was capable of being the Image of the invisible God. While we may say in general terms that God created the heavens and the earth, we learn that the Godhead was pleased to act by Him who was Son. He was adequate and competent for this. There was no defect or inferiority in Him which would have rendered His work inefficient, or that would require it to be supplemented by some other agency. How great the Son must be! The Father is content to be revealed in the Son, and all His fullness is detailed in Him. The Father can be known, because He is revealed in the Son of His love. The Holy Spirit too, holy in character and infinite in power, is content to be set forth in the Son, and to bear witness to Him.

But the language in which His creative work is described is very wonderful, too wonderful for us to do more than love it and pray that we may understand it. There are three words (really) used in the sixteenth verse, "*In Him were all things created . . . all things were created by Him, and for Him.*" We can humbly thank God for as much as we grasp of the "*by Him,*" and of the "*for Him.*" He is the Alpha and He is the Omega, the First and the Last. He is the Originator of the universe, and it is designed and built and governed so that in the end all will be found to have conduced to the furtherance, the working out, of His glory. But what is meant by the "*in Him*" at the beginning of the verse? The word used implies that He has set the stamp of His character upon what He has created. It is intended to exist and to operate in constant dependence upon Him, acting only as He wills it to act, and drawing for its subsistence and its sustenance upon the Fullness ever resident in Him.

For the purpose of the present paper we do not enter upon the question of whether the responsible creation failed in its responsibility. All that is considered in the chapter, and the difficulty

met from the same inexhaustible Fullness. But in our verse we find that the whole creation, and all the authorities that were constituted in it in heaven and in earth, were created and ordered by Him with the impress of His Personality upon them. Himself the Image, the Representative, of God. These subordinate thrones and dominions and principalities and powers were created by Him, each to act in its own sphere and within its appointed scope, but all in dependence upon, and taking their character from, Him. "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." They are not supreme in themselves, nor is any one of them self-sufficient so as to be independent of Him. We may feel how small we are in comparison of them; even earthly potentates seem inaccessible by reason of their greatness; but there is One higher than the highest; and they are all dependent upon and responsible to Him. Nor are we to think only of earthly powers; there are potentates in heaven of whom we know little or nothing. We read of them, "principalities and powers in heavenly places"; but though we know next to nothing of them, we learn that they are created to bear the impress of Christ's character, and are equally responsible to Him with their earthly compeers. But consider the greatness of the One on whom such a vast system of glories can hang, and upon whose fullness all may draw without turning to another! All resource is in Him, wisdom, power, love, and boundless good. All that is represented by thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers,—the rulers and the ruled,—may come and come again to this inexhaustible Person, and receive all nourishment, all support, all direction, without troubling to seek it from another or elsewhere. Such is the One who is available too for the church; but this is digression so immense that it must be left.

In Him then all the Fullness was pleased to dwell, in Him, the Son; and the creation of all subordinate authori-

ties in the universe is only the working out into a peculiar form of the boundless fullness eternally pleased to dwell in Him. How foolish, how erring, the heart that looks to other quarters, or has hopes in other directions than Christ.

In Hebrews 1. the same glorious Person is the theme, seen in far-reaching glory from before the earliest creations down to the end of time, when all material creation will have served its purpose and will be changed. But He remains unchanged. He has assumed Manhood, and will never put that aside again; but what He ever was in the essential glory of His Person, He is, and ever will be. His becoming Man, and His fulfilling the many offices designed for Him by the will of God, does not in the least degree diminish His essential glory as the Son, or extinguish one ray of His bright blessedness.

By His Son, God made the worlds. But He by whom He made them is the brightness of His glory, the express Image of His Person, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. Nothing of this is lost by incarnation. These things are as true to-day as when He created the universe; they will be as true in eternity to come as they are true now. "Thou remainest . . . Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." He is the One in whom every attribute of God's glory is realized, and is made effulgent; He is the exact impress of God's nature. It is not only that He has wrought marvellous works of wisdom and power, and upholds them all throughout the vast universe without weariness or intermission; but He is perpetually capable of representing to us the attributes and nature of God Himself. Not one distinguishing feature in the character of Deity but it finds its revelation and expression in the Son. God has spoken in Him. In knowing Christ we are set in the light of what God is. Nothing is withheld of the glory of God, for the Son is the shining forth of that glory, the bringing

forth into visible expression of all that God is. It will be noted that this is not something which the Son became, or was made, in the course of time. Other glories connected with His work and His offices might have a beginning; but this of which we are now speaking is what is proper to Him as Son, the essential glory of His Person, true of Him before time began, and true of Him when time shall be no more.

The brief statement in Philippians 2. can only be understood in the light of other Scriptures. It speaks of Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. We cannot issue an explanation of what is meant by the Form of God. It is beyond us even as God is beyond the creature. But with other scriptures in our hearts and hands we can say with certainty what it was *not*. The true rendering of the second half of the verse helps us: "He thought it not robbery (He did not esteem it rapine, or an object of rapine) to be equal with God." He was not in an inferior or subordinate position, like Lucifer or like Adam, to look up and crave after Godhead honours through lust of possession. No; being already in the Form of God, and possessed of the Godhead glories we have been considering, He could not crave after being what He was already. The Heir-apparent to the Throne of England does not lust after being the Prince of Wales, nor seek by ambition and robbery to attain that status. He *is* Prince of Wales by virtue of his family position. To Christ it was no robbery nor object of robbery to be equal with God. To humble Himself *was* possible; to exalt Himself to a higher level *was not*. And this mind was in Him; He humbled Himself, He emptied Himself, He did not appear with any of the insignia of His Royalty, He veiled His Godhead splendours, He came incognito among men and took the servant's form, that He might complete the path of obedience in Manhood even to the death of the cross.

“In Christ.”

(JAMES BOYD).

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Rom. 8. 38, 39.)

IN the Epistle to the assembly at Rome we have set before us, by the Holy Spirit of God, the putting forth of Almighty power for the deliverance of His creature from the consequences of his sins and from sin's dominion. Ephesians gives us the other side of the gospel, and that is the unfolding of Divine counsel, and the putting forth of the same power for the fulfilment of this counsel. But in both, the spring and fountain of all God's activities toward us are seen to lie in His unfathomable love (Rom. 5. 5-8; Eph. 2. 4-10).

The greater part of the first three chapters is occupied with the state in which man is found, after all the help that in the mercy of the Creator had been extended to him, before God rose up, if I might so say, to take the whole matter into His own hand, and to lay an unshakable foundation in righteousness, upon which all who would submit to His intervention might be set in eternal and happy relationships with Himself. When the story of that intervention of God is told we find the believer in the most blessed relations with God *in Christ*.

But first of all, man is proven to be absolutely lost. There is no power of recovery found in the creature. Left to himself he must inevitably perish. Put into the most favourable circumstances, given the best education, given the most perfect religious training, brought up in the most moral environment: he is still a sinner. He is under death and wrath on account of his sins, he loves sin, and serves it with every member of his body; he is a slave to his lusts, and an inveterate hater of his Maker.

Only by the direct interposition of God can man be recovered out of his

sinful and lost condition. And in this epistle we have a treatise by the Holy Spirit upon the way which that interposition of God has taken. He has taken upon Himself the justification of the ungodly. He asks no help from the creature. He invites not the co-operation of the sinner. He will do the whole work Himself, and He will get all the glory to His great name.

He sent His Son, who submitted to the judgment that rested upon sinful men, and bore that judgment Himself on the tree. The blood of the One who made His soul an offering for sin is on the mercy-seat, and is the witness that God has not been indifferent to the sin of which man was guilty, nor forgetful of the judgment that had gone out of His own mouth against it; and neither was He regardless of the miserable state into which sin had plunged His thoughtless, foolish, and erring creature.

We have a foreshadowing of this in the blood-sprinkled lintel on the night in which the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt slaying the first-born son. The judgment which the angel was executing had earlier in that night passed upon the first-born Israelite, in the lamb that was slain on his behalf, and whose blood met the judicial eye of the merciless executioner!

Now the blood of God's Lamb is on the mercy-seat on high, and is the righteous ground upon which God can justify the ungodly sinner, who in the sense of his own hopeless condition turns to God, and puts his trust in Jesus. In the cross sin is seen in its true character, for the murder of the Son of God is the climax of its frightfulness; but there its judgment comes to light in the abandonment by God of Him who represented it on the cross, in the hour

in which the wrath of God broke loose against it. There also His determination to open up a way of salvation for all is manifested, for "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In chapter 4. we come to the antitype of the crossing of the Red Sea, by which the Israelites passed out of Egypt into the wilderness, and where both the might of the Sea and of Pharaoh were destroyed. Death, and him that had the power of it, that is, the devil, were annulled in the death of Christ (2. Tim. 1. 10; Heb. 2. 14), who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

In the resurrection of Christ God declares His acceptance of the work of the cross, and the glory He has given Him is the witness to the value of that work in His estimation. And risen from the dead and before the face of God He is the believer's subsisting righteousness, immaculate, untarnishable, unalterable, in spite of all the failure that may be found in the people of God down here on earth.

Now we have peace with God, who has dealt with every disturbing element that had come in between us and Himself. The foe has been defeated, our liabilities have been met, the atmosphere has been purified, nothing now remains to occupy us but the love that has come to light in the accomplishing of our deliverance. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we have been justified by faith, we stand in grace, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and with the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us we are conscious of having been led out of the world of godless lust, and from under the oppression of the devil, to the habitation of the holiness of our God (Ex. 15. 13).

We come now into the wilderness, for the world is that to the redeemed

of the Lord. It can yield him no support. He is not only justified, but he lives in the life of the One who is his righteousness before God. The world can yield nothing towards the support of that life. To the redeemed it is a place where there is neither sowing nor reaping. Our sustainment comes from above. Christ, who has died for us, is everything to us: our life, our righteousness, our bread, the rock from which we drink, our light, our leader. His cross is for the old life and nature inherited from Adam, and which still yearns after the fleshpots of Egypt. Death to all that we were as slaves of the oppressor must be drunk. The water is bitter indeed, but the love of Christ manifested in His cross makes the most bitter water sweet, if by drinking it we may live and walk with Him.

And we are alive to God in His life, and we are to reckon it so. What is true of Him we are to reckon true of us. Therefore the Spirit of God brings before us that which is true of Him: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." This is what is true of Christ; but as we are in Him we are to come out down here in moral correspondence with Him. Therefore we are exhorted to "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (chap. 6.). Our members are no longer to be used in the service of sin, but in the service of God; and to be rendered as free men to One whom we love with all our hearts, and whose service is sweet to our souls.

Justified in the power of the blood of Jesus, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and alive to God in Him, we are where condemnation can never reach us: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Our eternal place is in the results of His work, and in the acceptability of His person, and condemnation is a thing

utterly unknown there. Our sins can never rise up against us, nor can sin any more dominate us. We are justified from our sins, and we are delivered from sin's dominion; the love of God is in our hearts in the power of the Spirit, and the quickening of our mortal bodies is the only thing necessary to place us with our Saviour in the glory of God. This will take place at His coming again.

What a salvation! How complete! How glorious! The darkness, the distance, the bondage, the enmity, the condemnation, the fear: all gone, and gone for ever. The light in which our souls live is the light of God, the light of His eternal love. The life, the salvation, the righteousness, the relationships, the heavenly position; all are set before us in Christ where He is in the presence of God for us, and to whom we are as certain to be conformed as we are certain that He has taken us up at all: for "whom He justified, them He also glorified."

In the end of this chapter we come to the persuasion of the Apostle. We are very ready to quote this as *our* persuasion. That it should be I very readily admit; but it is another thing to say that it is. The Apostle says, "I am persuaded"; he does not say that the *Romans* were. Still, as has been often remarked, he was as truly persuaded concerning them as he was concerning himself. He says: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That love is the very nature of God, and is the source from which have sprung all His activities toward us. It was declared to us when we were yet sinners, when we were ungodly and helpless, and it was manifested towards us in the death of His only-begotten Son. This is the measure of it. Im-

measurable by the creature! Like to the sun in the heavens, we may bask in its beams; we may rejoice in its living light, and comfort our hearts with the thought that it knows no change, and if it cannot be greater it can never be less toward us than it was in its manifestation in the death of Jesus. Its expanse is beyond the vision of our souls, its depths are infinite; it is higher than the heavens, it encloses in its rayonnant and ravishing embrace the utmost limits of redeemed creation. We may bathe in its life-imparting depths, we may endeavour to comprehend its illimitable vastness, we may occupy ourselves with its glorious infinitude, but its shoreless tides shall laugh at our finite creature efforts: those tides that flow from the heart of the eternal God, and which break forth before our mental vision amid the darkness of cloud-swathed Golgotha, and which have only been prevented from deluging a fallen world by the unbelief of a devil-deceived creature.

O the blessedness of having seen its manifestation, of having believed it, of knowing it, of having felt that we are the objects of it, of having it set before us in Jesus, of tracing its footprints in the dust of this world, of beholding its movements amongst the senseless multitude of wondering spectators, of seeing its invasion of death's domain, of gazing upon its triumphs over all our enemies, of contemplating it gone back victorious to the Father's throne, of knowing that it came not to make any demand upon me, but to give me all I needed as a free gift, and not only what I needed, but going infinitely beyond all my need as a sinner, or as a creature, that I might be all that it desired me to be for itself and for its own delight for ever and for ever! What fathomless love!

"Love that no suffering stayed!
We'll praise true love divine;
Love that for us atonement made,
Love that has made us Thine."

And from this love nothing can separate us.

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. X.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

The Golden Candlestick. (Read Exodus 25. 31-40 ;
26. 35 ; 37. 17-24.)

THE Golden Candlestick presents us with a deeply interesting and instructive picture of the Holy Spirit of God, and His office in the church of God upon earth.

It has ever been the aim of Satan to get the church into the place of Christ, thus dethroning Him, who alone should be supreme. This opens the door to leaders taking a position utterly foreign to the Scriptures, and to clericalism, and spiritual assumption, in truth flesh in its worst form. We see this in its grossest development in the Roman Catholic religion, and in its subtlest form among the most enlightened of Christians. If we think that we are not in danger of these insidious attempts to dethrone Christ and enthrone man (seen finally in the place the Man of Sin will get), that is just the moment when we are in danger. It was while "men slept" (Matt. 13. 25) that the enemy came along and did his deadly work. May we be watchful.

We shall see how the typical teaching we are considering in this paper exalts Christ, and puts man in his own proper place.

Let it be first noticed that the candlestick was of *pure gold*. This, as we have seen in previous papers, is symbolical of Deity. Seeing that no shittim wood—type of humanity—enters into the construction of the candlestick, it is not typical of the Son of God, who, alone of the persons of the Deity, became man. We have no difficulty in seeing that it typifies God the Holy Ghost, as the following reflections will prove.

The candlestick was composed of a central shaft, with six branches, three springing out from each side, *seven* lamp-holders in all. Further, three bowls were allotted to each branch, and *four*

bowls graced the central shaft, the number 7 again being prominent.

Seven is distinctly symbolical of perfection, and there is nothing perfect outside of what is divine. We read of "the seven Spirits which are before His throne" (Rev. 1. 4), not meaning that there are seven Holy Spirits, but rather a sevenfold perfect activity of the one Holy Spirit. In the same way there were seven lamps, but only one candlestick, that is viewing it as a whole. So Revelation 3. 3; 4. 5; 5. 6, speak of "the *seven* Spirits of God."

To go one step further, each lamp depended upon oil for its light.

Oil stands as a type of the Holy Spirit in His alone ability to shed spiritual light. The connection between oil and the Holy Spirit in this way is clearly seen in the use of the word anointing. Prophets, priests and kings were anointed by oil in Old Testament times. When the kingly anointing was taken from Saul and given to David, we read, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. . . . But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" (1 Sam. 16. 13, 14). The connection between the oil of anointing and the Spirit is thus plainly seen.

The very word "anointing" is used in the New Testament in reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit. "The *anointing* which we have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same *anointing* teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2. 27).

Let it be remembered that no *natural* light entered the tabernacle. A window was appointed for the roof of Noah's Ark, but no window was provided for the tabernacle. There were four curtains thrown over the tabernacle as a covering, two being made of skins, so that it can be plainly seen that the priests were totally dependent on the candlestick for light.

Does this not teach us a much needed lesson, viz.: that the church of God is totally dependent on the Holy Spirit for spiritual light? A verse, just quoted (1 John 2. 27), says, "Ye need not that any man teach you." And again, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2. 20).

That is to say, if anyone comes to a Christian, and tells him that he is dependent on any man to teach him, or that he is unable to grasp divine truth without such aid as that of an accredited board of teaching, or any ecclesiastical authority, he lies.

On the other hand, Scripture amply provides for the help and teaching of believers through gifts from an ascended Lord. To despise such and their help is to despise the wisdom of God in giving them. But when such are truly servants of Christ in real touch with their Lord, they will be thankful if all they teach is brought to the touchstone of God's Word, just as the Apostle Paul praised the Bereans in that they searched the Scriptures daily to find therein confirmation, even of apostolic teaching, before they would receive it.

And after all, what the teacher gives out must be of the Spirit of God, and not of himself. If the latter, it must be always and ever erroneous and mischievous, however plausible.

Should not the typical teaching of the Golden Candlestick have the effect

of turning us from all that may be merely the fruit of the exercise of the human mind and of casting us wholly upon God, that He might by His Spirit teach and bless us. The more brilliant the mind naturally the more dependence is needed by the possessor of that mind, and the more dangerous he becomes, if not kept true to the truth by the Spirit of God.

Then we learn from Leviticus 24. 1-4 that Aaron ordered the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually—type of Christ Himself, who is the Head of His assembly. We are told by the Lord that when the Spirit of truth should come He should not speak of Himself (see John 16. 13), that is to say, He should not speak *from* Himself, or of His own initiative, "but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." Thus the Holy Spirit exalts Christ.

It is not that the Holy Spirit does not speak concerning Himself, for He does, or else how should we know about His being, His presence, His power, His offices? But though not less than God, He never presents Himself as the object of worship. He is the power for worship. Prayer is never addressed to Him. He is the power for prayer.

Lastly the lamps were to burn *continually*—from evening to morning; that is not merely what we call night, but the whole twenty-four hours, and as soon as one twenty-four completed, another began, and so *continually* were the lamps kept fed and burning.

Does this not cheer us to think that the Lord can and will keep by His high priestly grace and direction the spiritual light burning, so that we may never be without its help and blessing? Can we not thank God for such full and perfect provision for His people?

The lintel-stone of our Lord's school-door is a low stone, ye must stoop low, ye must be very humble, else that stone will take your head and ding your back, and ye will not win in.

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—VI. (JAMES GREEN).

"The two Sons ; and the husbandmen" (Matt. 21. 28-46).

WE now have to consider a group of three parables uttered during the last week of Our Lord's life on earth. He was visiting Jerusalem for the last time, and was assailed by various groups of questioners, whom He silenced in turn, until at last they had to listen to the scathing judgment which He pronounced upon them in Matthew 23. The first to meet Him in the temple were the chief priests and elders of the people. They challenged the authority by which the Lord had accepted the acclamations of the people to Him as the king, the Son of David, and the Hosannahs that greeted His entry into the temple precincts. Our Lord answered by demanding that they should tell Him if the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. They evaded the real issue of such an inquiry and He refused to tell them the authority under which His acts were done. Indeed there was no need to do so, for their own consciences convicted them as to this. But He added the parable of the two sons. The first refused to obey his father's commandment, but afterwards repented and went. The second professed to obey, but in result did the opposite. There could be but one answer as to which was the obedient son; and the Lord applied the lesson to them, that only by the way of repentance and faith was entrance obtained into the Kingdom of God, using the term which involved the moral character of the kingdom. God will have reality; the profession of having a place of privilege is worse than worthless in His sight without the corresponding moral reality which He values. The publicans and harlots were far from God; they had refused His authority like the first son, but they had heeded the message of John, they had believed it and repented and yielded themselves to the rule of God. On the other hand the chief priests who boasted of serving God were not found in the place of repentance and were disobedient to the authority they outwardly owned. Has the parable no lesson for us? Yes, indeed. For the danger is ever present of magnifying outward privilege and forgetting that God looks only to the man that is of a meek and contrite spirit and trembles

at His word; one who boasts not in the superiority of his church position but follows righteousness, faith, charity, peace with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. Such esteem not themselves to be anything, but Christ all. Such are truly in His kingdom, know the thoughts of His heart and understand His mind and will.

Our Lord continued with another parable connected with the former. He does not say it is a similitude of the kingdom of the heavens, for it refers to the dealings of God during Old Testament times, but it is a necessary prelude to the parable that follows in chapter 22. Isaiah 5. tells us that the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His pleasant plant, that He looked for judgment but behold oppression, for righteousness but behold a cry. The vineyard had yielded no fruit for Him; He looked for grapes but found only wild grapes. He had done all that was possible for those to whose responsibility he had committed the vineyard. But they had cultivated it for themselves and not for Him. By prophet after prophet had He sent seeking for fruit. He looked for judgment, the discernment of good and evil, the choosing of life rather than death, of blessing rather than cursing; this would have been precious fruit for His heart, but instead He found the oppression of sin. He looked for the fruit of righteousness, but there rose up to His ear the cry of the servants, one beaten, another killed, and yet another stoned. But in patient grace He had sent again and again with the like result. In these few verses (34-36) our Lord sums up the history of Israel, until in verse 37 He reaches that manifestation of God's grace which was present in their midst. "Last of all He sent unto them His Son," hoping that to Him would be rendered the reverence which was His due. But such grace only brought out the enmity of the husbandmen to the owner of the vineyard; they would accept His gifts but not His Son. Their consciences told them of His claims; they said, "This is the heir," but they sought for themselves the inheritance that was His, and

they cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him. What a story of the heart of man at his best estate; blessed, privileged, enriched, and withal the subject of the patient grace of God (2 Chron. 36. 15). He had sent to them by His messengers, rising up continually, and carefully (marg.) and sending; because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God and despised His words, and misused His prophets; and now their sin was to reach its head, and before the next Sabbath they would have slain the Heir. Yet how blinding is sin! They listened to the parable and readily pronounced a righteous judgment upon men who could so act. Like David they say, The man that hath done this thing shall surely die, but like him they needed the definite application to themselves, that they were the men. Then when they perceived that He spake of them, unlike David, who repented, their resentment rose at the rebuke and urged them on to fulfil the very words spoken; they sought to lay hands on Him. The nation had rebelled against the authority of God and the kingdom has been taken from them and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. There shall yet be an Israel who shall so do, but it will only be when they shall own the marvel of the Lord's doing in making the Stone which the builders rejected the head of the corner. A marvel of grace is conveyed in these words. God has raised Him from the dead and made His name the name of salvation and power, the only name under heaven, given amongst men whereby we must be saved. Solemn indeed is the lot of those who stumble at that name. Israel stumbled at that stumbling-stone and were broken, their hopes gone, shut up in unbelief until the mercy of God shall open their eyes. And upon a Christless Christendom shall that stone fall, and it shall share the doom that belongs to the Gentile political powers with whom it is identified, when the stone cut out without hands shall smite them and grind them to powder. But between the breaking of Israel and the crushing of the Gentile God has interposed a scheme of grace in the kingdom of the heavens, which our Lord sets forth in the next parable: He has made a marriage for His Son.

"The parable of the wedding" (Matt. 22. 1-14).

In the previous parable the Lord had used the term "kingdom of God" as being more suitable to those Old Testament times during which God's authority had been clearly asserted. The nation of Israel should have acknowledged that authority and kingdom, but instead, when the Heir came, they in rebellion crucified and slew Him. Consequently in this parable "the kingdom of the heavens" is spoken of as being appropriate to the present period of which it speaks. That which marks the present interval in the dealings of God with this earth is the matchless character of His grace; it is set forth in the word: "A certain king made a marriage for his son." We see not the bride, for the Son is the object; the guests are invited by a world-wide invitation of grace to do him honour. Christ is the prominent One in God's thoughts and counsels; the marriage is for Him. So we ever find in such expressions as "the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. 19. 7), or again "as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21. 2).

In the parable the invitation to the feast is addressed first of all to a certain class, "them that were bidden." The Jews were the bidden ones, marked out by special favour for blessing; even their sin does not alter God's thoughts for them; but though it is His mind to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations, He will magnify His grace by commencing with the people who were the most guilty and at the city where the greatest crime had been committed. "To the Jew first," "beginning at Jerusalem," but "they would not come." Nevertheless grace shall be upon grace, and other servants are sent forth with a still more urgent message. The first set of servants would answer to those who preached the gospel to the Jews until the death of Stephen (Acts 7) crowned their definite refusal of the invitation. The second set correspond to those who, associated with Paul, still carried the gospel to the Jew first. On this second occasion greater enmity broke out than on the former. On God's side all was ready: care, interest, provision, deep concern and desire for their company were expressed in the

terms of the invitation ; but they cared for the things of earth more than the things of heaven: the farm, the merchandise were more to be desired in their eyes than the presence of the King. Alas, they have had many followers. Worse still, the rest, imitating the ways of their forefathers with God's messengers, entreated the servants despitefully and slew them. That which is told prophetically in the parable is related historically in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jewish opposition, which was the basis of the persecution against the heralds of the gospel, had its root in the deep-seated opposition of the Jew to salvation by grace. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, they prided themselves upon their religious position; and in view of such thoughts how searching are the words of the King as he turns to seek other guests: "They which were bidden were *not worthy*." Now a third phase is entered upon, the invitation goes out without preference. The highways of the world are to be searched and as many as can be found, both bad and good, are to be gathered in. No distinctions are recognized, for indeed there is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3. 23). At the same time there is no difference in the grace bestowed upon the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him (Rom. 10. 12). By such means is God filling His house, furnishing the wedding with guests. The parables never rise to the thought of the church, the body and bride of Christ, they are concerned with the kingdom, the nearest approach to the profound truth of the mystery being the parable of the pearl; but this speaks of value and not union, so here it is not the bride but the wedding guests who come, as presently we shall find the virgins going forth, to meet the bridegroom. This setting of things leaves room for the application of the parables to the Jewish remnant who will be included in the kingdom of the heavens, but not numbered amongst those who have part in the church. The mystery of the kingdom will end with the appearing of the

Lord, when it will be no longer secret but displayed, while the period of the church formed in the kingdom but belonging entirely to heaven will terminate at the rapture. Still, for each and all alike, be their destiny heavenly or earthly, the one necessity is Christ; no other title can admit to the feast, no other robe is suitable apparel for the eye of the King. The feast and the wedding garment are both of His providing, and it would be an insult to expect to partake of His bounty and despise the suitability necessary to His presence. "How camest thou in hither?" Small wonder he was speechless. There is great personal point in this parable; none escape the eye of the Master of the feast in a crowd. We are not told why this man had neglected the one necessary thing; certainly many are doing the same thing to-day, ready enough to speak of a God of love, and a home in the skies, and hoping to be found good enough to obtain a place there at last, forgetting that their own righteousnesses are but filthy rags, and not availing themselves of the righteousness of God, which cost Him even the death of His Son to provide. Saul of Tarsus was such an one, and he had much to boast in; he describes the garments on which he set so much store in Philippians 3. 4-6. But when grace revealed to him the excellency of Christ, all was counted an offence, and gladly did he suffer the loss of all that he might have Christ for gain, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. This is the wedding garment. Christ is alone suitable to God, He only is God's choice. Many are called, for none are outside the gospel invitation; only those who, forsaking all merit of their own, accept the free provision of God's grace are described as chosen. Within: the light, the love, the feast, sharing God's joy in that scene of bliss of which Christ is the centre and the object, every guest accepted in Him. Without: the doom, the darkness, the tears, the despair. Solemn indeed is the warning against trusting in anything that will not bear the search-light of the glory of God.

"Our Shepherd is the Lord, the living Lord who died;
 With all His fulness can afford we are supplied.
 He richly feeds our souls with blessings from above,
 And leads us where the river rolls of endless love."

The Prophet.—Jeremiah, No. 9.

(H. J. VINE).

Fulfilments of Jeremiah's Words—*continued.*

OF individuals: that which was said concerning Jehoahaz, or rather "*Shalum*" (22. 11-12) came to pass with solemn precision, as also did the word concerning *Jehoiakim* (22. 17-19). His son, called by his father Jehoiachin, but by the prophet *Coniah*, became another witness of the truth of God's holy word (22. 24-30). The case of *Zedekiah* is perhaps even more astonishing, because of the exactness with which enigmatical details were executed. That *Zedekiah* should be delivered, with the city and the people, into the hands of *Nebuchadnezzar* (21. 3-7), was plainly foretold and fulfilled. There was nothing obscure in that, although so solemnly true. Nor was there any enigma in Jeremiah's words to *Zedekiah* in chapter 34. 2: that the city should be burned with fire; and *his eyes* should behold the eyes of the King of Babylon. Doubtless, after the words were verified, they would speak with a loud voice to *Zedekiah*. The very reference to *his eyes*, so often made, must have given him to feel afterwards that he had been in the presence of omniscience, when he heard, but heeded not, the words of the suffering prophet. When we read, however, of *Zedekiah*, that he is to be taken captive to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans: "Yet he shall not see it" (Ezek. 12. 13), we wonder how this can be, and feel it must have some covered significance. But all is clearly explained, when we read of the just but awful punishment which befel this wicked prince, who slighted God's word, and dishonoured His holy Name: "The King of Babylon slew the Sons of *Zedekiah* in *Riblah* before *his eyes* . . . moreover he put out *Zedekiah's eyes*, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon" (39. 6-7). Without eyes to see the land of his captivity, he would have leisure to remember the claims of the holy, omniscient God against whose word He had sinned so grievously; and it may be hoped, repent, and receive His forgiving mercy.

Intensely interesting and instructive as all this is, we may not further follow out these fulfilments. But a short reference must be made to another class

of prophecy, which has partly been fulfilled and yet awaits completion. There is much like this in the Old Testament. Take one verse: Isaiah 9. 6—"Unto us a child is born." That part has been fulfilled. "The government shall be upon His shoulder." That part awaits fulfilment. In between, Christ has been rejected, and is hidden in the heavens, and His assembly is being formed during the time of His rejection. She will share in His glory, as His bride, when "the government shall be upon His shoulder."

In Jeremiah 33. 15 the Lord saith: "I will cause to grow up unto David the Righteous Branch." The opening of the New Testament shows us the fulfilment of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, of David's line. But the word continues, "He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land"; and "In those days Judah shall be saved." This is yet to come. In chapter 23. 5 we have the same truth in almost the same words; only, in the latter, "*He*" is called *Jehovah Tsidkenu*: whereas in the other "*she*" (*Jerusalem*) takes the same name from Him whose city she is.

Chapters 30. and 31. can only be understood in the same way. Israel is to be restored and blessed under the royal line of "David their King" (30. 9); but before that, "the time of Jacob's trouble must come" (30. 7). Nevertheless Israel shall be saved, and established again: "For I have loved thee with an everlasting love," saith the Lord (31. 3). A voice of weeping, however, is heard in *Ramah*. This has taken place (Matt. 2. 17); but it will be heard again before the full blessing of Israel comes. Weeping for a night; joy in the morning. The cases of *Rachel* and of *Jacob* illustrate this principle of God's dealing with Israel all along. This explains for us also a verse which has given so much exercise and thought (31. 22)—the "New thing." It doubtless includes the truth of "THE SON GIVEN," the child born of the *Virgin Mary*; but it takes in likewise the woman *Israel*, centering in the *Metropolis Jerusalem*, no longer compassing the *Ark of the Covenant* as of old

(3. 16, 19), but A MAN, who is Himself the Covenant; everlasting, living beyond death, having once died, now alive for evermore. This is "new." No other explanation answers to that word. It agrees, too, with the "New Covenant" spoken of a few verses after. Of Jerusalem it can consequently be said, in the very next verse, "O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness." She then takes her name (which speaks also of her new character) from the Name which *He* bears in that day, as we have seen.

The two solemn chapters concerning Babylon (50. and 51.) are also explained on the principle of which we have been speaking. Desolation has indeed fallen upon that ancient city.

That has exactly fulfilled the word through Jeremiah so far as it goes. But Babylonish corruptions remain, and are reviving, and there is much that awaits a future fulfilment, according to this prophecy, and according to that of Revelation 17. and 18. In the meanwhile, we find in the last chapter of Jeremiah one who was an object of contempt at Jerusalem—*Coniah!* raised to eminence by Evil-merodach at Babylon. Like many who are unfaithful to God and His people, he is exalted amid the corruptions of Babylon, which was already beginning to sink, in the days of the intemperate Evil-merodach. He was himself afterwards murdered. This was the King who lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, and provided his diet, before whom he ate "all the days of his life" (Jer. 52. 31-34). Of Daniel, at Babylon, we read, "He would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat" (Daniel 1. 8); and he represents the faithful remnant, who will be delivered in a future day out of Babylon.

The words of Jeremiah, or rather the words of the Lord through him, have been abundantly proved to be of divine origin, by the exactness of their execution; being fulfilled with such preciseness in public, private, and personal detail, as to exclude any upright questioning. And that which awaits accomplishment will doubtless be carried out with the same perfection. Our God who fixed the months and years, and timed the shining of the moon and of the sun, spake all the words of prophecy, and His word must be done.

The Book Itself and its Structure.

The book of Jeremiah has an arrangement which is quite unique. Like the Gospel of Luke, which does not follow mere historical sequence, but nevertheless strictly observes the moral "method" (Luke 1. 3), so in Jeremiah God has preserved an order, which, however, is not chronological. It is not the order of date; but an order beautifully ranged according to its central event. This event is formally set out in chapter 25.—the desolation of Jerusalem, when God forsakes "His covert," His earthly centre, and the consequent overthrow of all the nations, whilst Babylon rises to supremacy. This is the solemn climax.

The Spirit of Christ in Jeremiah gave Him to feel keenly the destruction of Jerusalem. He knew what it meant to the Lord who lived it, and what it meant for men generally. Its importance was great and grave. Leading up to that central event then, his words are arranged with distinct method; not according to the order in which they are spoken, but according to their connection with that event. From that central event, the rest of the book follows in ordered arrangement, according to the effects of Jerusalem's overthrow.

Jerusalem is seen to sink and Gentile Babylon is seen to arise, But looking beyond the times of the gentiles, the prophet is also allowed to see the shining supremacy of Jerusalem again, through the Man Christ Jesus—whilst Babylon suddenly sinks to rise no more, Jerusalem's sun arises, never to set again. It is precisely the same in Revelation, in regard to the *heavenly* Jerusalem and Babylon from *beneath*, involving nevertheless greater and deeper questions than the *earthly* Jerusalem and Babylon of the Old Testament. Keeping in mind what we have said as to this, we shall be able to understand the Holy Spirit's arrangement of this book, as God has graciously preserved it to us in His providential over-ruling.

It begins with words which are quite unusual, and also ends with the same: "*The words of Jeremiah*"—the last chapter being added. Just as if the Holy Spirit would impress again upon our hearts the central event of this book, concerning Jerusalem and Babylon.

The main divisions are—(1) CHAPTERS 1. to 24. : the moral section ; containing a moral pleading with the people. (2) CHAPTERS 25. to 39. : the section of the Covenant, and the central event ; containing promises, and Jerusalem's fall. (3) CHAPTERS 40. to 45. : the historical section ; containing the history of the remnant, with whom Jeremiah remained after Jerusalem's overthrow. (4) CHAPTERS 46. to 51. : the Gentile section ; containing prophecies concerning the nations. (5) CHAPTER 52. : the concluding section. The sub-divisions of these main sections are equally distinct and interesting ; but we will notice them in going through the book itself. The Lamentations are of unique interest, having a peculiar acrostic* order and structure, except the last chapter, which purposely departs from this order.

We must mention a characteristic of this book, which conveys the intensity of feeling which filled the Lord's heart for His people and city. Strong expressions are repeated over and over again. In his zeal for their good He speaks of "*rising up early*" to speak to them, time after time—eleven times at least ! How this

speaks of the Lord's intense love for them ! No wonder He wept over Jerusalem ! They have "*forsaken Me !*" they have "*forgotten Me !*" they have "*turned their backs unto Me !*" He says again and again. This shows how He felt their treatment and the bitter suffering they were bringing upon themselves. It would be "*as a woman in travail and anguish.*" This is said several times : because of the "*stubbornness of their hearts,*" and because of "*the evil of their doings.*" There are many such repetitions ; but these suffice to show us the heart of our blessed Lord, expressing its feelings through the tender heart of Jeremiah. It is indeed very touching to think of this slighted love, this love divine. Here again, *the exaltation of the Lord* in His deep love is seen. He has loved them with an everlasting love ; and as we see, He will pursue them with mercy, till they are brought like ourselves to GLORY IN THE LORD."

"Israel's race shall then behold Him full of grace and majesty,
Though they set at nought and sold Him,
pierced and nailed Him to the tree.
Hallelujah ! they shall praise Him, and their Lord in glory see."

* For an outline of this and of the other wonderful acrostics of the Bible see the writer's book, *The Alphabetical Scriptures*, by our publisher. Price 3d., cloth 6d.

"Remember Me."

From a letter from a distant tropical island.

I go to the Lord's Supper every other Lord's day, walking twelve miles both ways, and truly it is a joy to me to remember my Lord and Saviour in His

death. Those dear words, "Remember Me," seem to be the power that propels me along the very difficult twenty-four miles. "You know something of J— roads."

Jehovah—Jesus.

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| I am | Exod. 3. 14 ; John 8. 24. |
| I am (before Abraham was) | John 8. 58. |
| I am (whom they sought to kill) | John 18. |
| I am (the Son of Man lifted up) | John 8. 28. |
| I am (the Resurrection and the Life) | John 11. 25. |

The Lord's Coming, as it will Affect the Assembly.

(An Address by H. J. VINE).

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4, 15-18).

THE first thing we see from God's Word is that it is the Lord Himself who is coming. It is this same "Jesus" (Acts 1, 11). He is coming in like manner as He was seen go into heaven. He is coming in that same body that bears the very marks of His sufferings. He is coming again, as He was here, a Man, only in a body quickened by the Spirit. He is not going to depute another to come for us. "The Lord HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout" (1 Thess. 4). He is the same blessed Jesus who walked on this earth, the same One who died for us, and who was seen and known by His own in resurrection.

What a glad moment it will be for His heart! The glorious answer to His sufferings and His travail for us upon the cross. Think what it will be for Him to have us there, in answer to all those terrible sufferings which He endured upon Calvary's cross! And what will it be for the church, for the assembly, after her journey through this world,—after all her testings and trials? What will it be for that loved company to find herself in a moment in the presence of her Bridegroom—in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ? And as individuals, what will it be for *you*, dear brother, and for *me*? What will it be for *each one* of us to be there in the presence of the Lord,—to see the One who loved us and died for us, the One that the Apostle Paul could speak of as "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"? But whilst it will be blessed for the assembly, and blessed for each one of us individually, to be caught up to be with Him and like Him for ever, HE HIMSELF is going to

have His own deep joy in having us there. *He* shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. There will be no regrets in His blessed heart on account of all that He suffered for us. He will never regret having toiled and travailed so much to make us His. He is going to see the assembly, His body, His loved bride there, a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21, 2), and His glad heart will be perfectly satisfied. You and I are going to be satisfied, too, for we are going to see Him. *He* "shall see" the redeemed! *We* "shall see" the Redeemer!

There are many Christians who do not believe in the Lord's second coming at all. They trust Him as their Saviour, but they do not believe what Scripture makes known to us, that a moment is coming—we believe coming very quickly—when He will take us to be with Himself for ever. There are others that, whilst they see it in Scripture, fear to face it. There are many children of believing parents, taught in the truth, who are deeply convinced in their souls that the moment is coming when the Lord shall return; they trust in Him as their Saviour, but fear to dwell upon His coming again, not understanding that it is what Scripture speaks of as "the *blessed* hope,"—the happy hope for each believer's heart. They do not seem to understand that the Lord loves them so perfectly that He will never be satisfied until He has them there with Him. Oh, when our hearts drink in a little more of that love which led Him to go to Calvary's cross, there to bear all the judgment due to us, then all fear will disappear, like the cold before the warm sunshine. Perfect love will cast

out all fear. We are told fear has torment, His known love expressed at the cross will drive that away. Divine love would not leave a little bit of dread or torment in the believer's heart. I know there is a reverent fear, but that is a very different thing to slavish fear; and when the love of Christ is known, that sort of fear disappears.

Dear believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour came the first time to put your sins away; He is coming the second time to take you away! He is coming the second time to satisfy His love towards you by having you in His blissful presence in glory, never to know another moment of suffering or unhappiness for all eternity!

Some of us who have known the Lord for many years are apt to get a little impatient, and say, "Why does not the Lord come soon?" We would like to "see His face" now. We need to get a little of His own patience into our hearts. 2 Thessalonians 3. 5 says, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ" (N.T.). He loves us, and yet how patiently He has waited to have us with Him. All the glory is His, and yet how patiently He has waited the Father's time. We are to account the long-suffering of our God as salvation (2 Peter 3. 15). We are not to think for a moment that His love has cooled at all towards us. We can say, However long He waits, we know that His love has neither cooled nor weakened; but for a divinely wise reason He still waits there with the Father. He desires that more sinners should be saved and brought in to know Him. For God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

I will just say a word about some difficulties concerning Christ's coming again which are commonly raised. It is said, "Christ comes again when the believer dies." But that is not so. 1 Thessalonians 4. 16 tells us that when Christ comes, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." When a believer dies, his

spirit is absent from the body and present with the Lord. Instead of Christ coming for him, he departs to be with Christ. It is a very blessed moment, looked at properly according to God, when the believer's spirit passes to be with Christ; it is "far better" than to remain here (Phil. 1. 23).

It is also said, The Lord's second coming is when He comes to the faithful believer, and manifests Himself to him. But that is a spiritual coming, spoken of in John 14. 21, and a very precious thing, too, and I would encourage even the youngest here to go in for it. Keep the Lord's words and do His commandments and you will experience it. "If a man love Me, he will keep My commandments." If you do this the Lord will make Himself precious to your heart, and you will get a precious sense of His drawing near to you. But that is not the Lord's coming for the assembly, for the bride. That is individual, and it does not take us off the earth. When He comes, He will come in the air, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4). Our being with the Lord in His home is different to having Him with us in this world.

Another error which used to prevail amongst Nonconformists was that they were going to get the world converted, and when the world was converted, the Lord would come. But if one thing is plainer than another it is that the world is *not* being converted by the gospel. At the present time the Mohammedans,—although they have no evangelical or missionary societies, nor paid representatives as the sects of Christendom,—are making more converts than the so-called Christian church is making! We need not be misled by the idea that the world is to be converted through the gospel before the Lord will come, for the Bible tells us that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. The blessed Lord will come into the air, just when perhaps things in the world

look the blackest outwardly. He will catch us up out of it to be with Him and like Him for ever!

The world is going to be put right before He reigns in kingly glory over it. It will be put right by the judgment of God, not by the preaching of saving grace. When the first mutterings of the thunders of God's judgment are heard men will cry to the rocks to fall on them. They will not cry to God to save their souls. They will blaspheme His holy name, we are told in the book of Revelation. God will sweep the wicked away with judgment; and when the scythe of judgment has swept through the apostate nations, then will be fulfilled the time spoken of in the Psalm, which says, He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

There is another popular error. It is a common idea that Christ's coming will be the time of the general resurrection and the last great judgment: the time when men will have to stand before the white throne to be judged. But if you read Revelation 20. you will see that those who truly believe in Christ have part in the **FIRST RESURRECTION**; and the general judgment, as it is termed—which is not a general judgment at all,—is the judgment of the unregenerate, of the wicked dead, and takes place at least a thousand years after the Lord has taken His own people to be with Him. It is said of the just, they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (ver. 6); but of those who are to be judged, they live not till the thousand years are finished (ver. 5).

HE IS COMING PERSONALLY. He will come with an assembling shout, a shout of command. Military terms are used for this victory of grace and power. His voice will ring into our ransomed hearts, and there will be instantaneous answer in a rising shout of praise from the dead who are raised and the living who are changed. There will be the providential action of the archangel, and the mighty trump of God. We shall

be for ever with the Lord. I think the emphasis is—"For ever **WITH THE LORD.**" It is not that you are just going to heaven for ever, but you are going to be *with the Lord* for ever. We shall go to the Father's house. That is the affection side, the side that every true heart seems to constantly move towards. Then we see in Revelation He is going to come back, and He is going to take up the wide earth, and rule it in a way that the greatest and best British monarch never did rule the British Empire. But wherever Jesus is, we are **WITH HIM.** If it is in the Father's house we shall dwell there with Him. If He comes out in His glory and splendour and majesty, and reigns right royally, we are with Him. Wherever Jesus is, we shall be with Him. Blessed be God, that is just what our hearts long for!

HE WILL COME INTO THE AIR,—only to the border of this world's atmosphere,—to the outskirts of this particular part of the universe that cast Him out as a malefactor. He will come and call those who belong to Him out of the whole scene before the judgments fall; for He is our Deliverer from the coming wrath. We are not appointed to wrath! Do you think He is going to leave His bride in the tribulation that He Himself is going to send, spoken of as the "great tribulation"? He is not going to leave His bride, His assembly that is so dear to Him amidst the world-wide judgments that will flow from His own opening of the seals of the book (Rev. 5.). Never! His own will be kept from the hour of that tribulation, as we are told in Revelation 3. 10. God knows the hour,—the exact moment when the prophetic clock will strike for this great tribulation, and He says—*I will keep thee from the hour.* Before ever the hour comes you shall be taken away to be with the Lord; for the force of the reading is, *I will keep thee out of the hour.* He does this by catching us up to Jesus in the air.

WHEN WILL HE COME? No one knows the day nor the hour! Doubtless

we see signs all around us telling us that the time is very near! When the Jewish temple is rebuilt (and I have no doubt this will follow quickly after the break up of the Turkish empire), and the abomination of desolation,—the image is set up, then the believing remnant of the Jews will count up the exact time, the very number of days, when the Lord will appear, for times and seasons belong to the Jewish believers, not to the assembly. When you have the special instructions relating to us, to the assembly, no times or seasons given—no dates given. They abound in other parts of Scripture. We see them in relation to the Jew, and that there will be a time when they will be able to count up the “1260 days,” the “42 months,” the “3½ years,” the period called “times, time and half a time,” all equalling. And see His love and care for these Jewish believers. He says, as it were, regarding that distressful time, I do not want you to be cold and suffering unnecessarily, so “pray that your flight be not in winter—nor on the Sabbath day,” to upset the sensitiveness of their Jewish consciences. The Lord cares for His earthly people, and surely He does for the assembly, His heavenly bride.

When will He come for us? Very soon. I am assured of this, beloved brethren, that the time is near. Look at Germany. It was outside of the Roman Empire. It can never have world dominion. The Roman Empire must be revived for this, and now we see things moving quickly. Italy, whose capital is Rome, has broken away from Germany, and has fallen into line with those earthly powers which belong to the old Roman earth. They are combining already, but before the actual revival of the Roman empire takes place we have to go. All this shows the coming of the Lord is very near. If you knew the Lord was coming in twelve months' time you would say, “No more waste time for me! I will fill in every day for the Lord!” But we cannot fix the time. There is not a single prophecy to be fulfilled, so far as

the Lord's coming for His assembly is concerned. Let us then be diligent, waiting, watching, and ready for His coming at any moment.

FOR WHOM IS HE COMING? He is coming for the assembly,—His body and His bride. The two figures of body and bride are used almost interchangeably by the Spirit. Why did Adam go into that *deep sleep*? That from himself might be taken that rib, and that he might consequently receive the one who was made from it for him, his bride—Eve. Christ, the Last Adam, went into the deep sleep of death, that through *that death* He might have His assembly, which will be consequently presented to Himself as the result of His death. That is the company for which He is coming. Do you belong to it? Are you a member of that body? There is no need to pray for the members of this body to be saved. They are all saved, sealed by the Spirit, and have a living link with the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord nourishes and cherishes the assembly. We may be among the feeblest of the members of His body, but we are every one alike dear to Him. People sometimes say to me, “What church do you belong to?” I say, “Thank God, I belong to the church the Bible speaks of.” “But what church is that?” “Well, it is called ‘*the church*,’—‘*the assembly of God*.’ It is called ‘*the body*’ and ‘*the bride*.’ I belong to the assembly Christ is going to take up and present to Himself.” Let us beware, brethren, lest we get sectarian in spirit, and try to build up a nice, happy party, or sect, or school, and say, “What a nice assembly we've got.” No, let us rather say, “What a precious assembly Christ has got; I belong to no other.” I see many dear saints of God here, and I say, “Thank God, you belong to Christ's assembly.” Be satisfied with that. When you believed the gospel of your salvation you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1. 13). The price was paid for us at the cross. What was the price? Christ's own precious blood. The Lord looks down on all His

own, and He knows them all, and loves them all. Those who trust in Christ are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise until the time when He will take us to be with Him in the glory for ever. We are to be for the joy of His own heart. Our joy will be full doubtless, but He is going to present us TO HIMSELF without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. He has every right to have us for Himself.

We read in Revelation that when that precious bride, that loved assembly, comes out from heaven she will be arrayed in shining glory, and the mighty hosts will cry, "Hallelujah, the marriage of the Lamb has come." That will be the *public celebration* of the marriage. But the communion that takes place inside between the assembly and Christ is too deep for words. You do not get that in the book of Revelation. She goes in in wrought gold: she comes out arrayed in fine, bright linen,—the righteousnesses of the saints. The coming out is in view in Revelation. She will come out with Christ. The throne will be in her midst. And by the glory which shines from Him she will be used to light up the earth, and make it

sing for gladness. The glory of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Lord will then cover the earth. But there is very little said in the Bible about what takes place inside. We know that the heart of the blessed Lord will be fully satisfied. He will have us there with Himself. Then He will bring us out with Himself and fill the universe with glory. She is seen shining with the glory of God, and her radiance like a stone most precious, clear as crystal.

Let us remember that every one redeemed by Christ's blood forms an integral part of that glorious city, the Lamb's wife. May God give us, as we wait for that blessed moment when the Lord will catch the assembly up and take her inside to be with Himself where He is, to be a little more true to Him now, a little more faithful to the One who has loved us, and given Himself for us, and to say "No" a little more firmly to the friendship of that world whose hand is still stained with the blood of our beloved Bridegroom. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Jesus says, I want all your love. He loved us and gave Himself for us.

Oneness or Uniformity?

"Continue in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2. 24).

THE oneness of which our blessed Lord spoke to the Father, recorded in John 17. 21, is, that all His own might know in present communion oneness in the Father and the Son. In contrast to this, Scripture abundantly shows the utter failure of the efforts of religious-minded men for uniformity. So enamoured does the mind become by ideal uniformity, by some set of principles usually called divine, that it will pursue such in a spirit which is diametrically opposed both to the nature and character of the blessed God, harshness and cruelty often being used to enforce a particular form of uni-

formity, and faithfulness to God often pleaded to cover what is really a dishonour to His holy Name. Now the way of the Holy Spirit is to lead, to guide, to teach, and make known the positive truth of God, as it is revealed in His beloved Son, who has made the Father's Name and the Father's love known; and it is thus that exercised hearts are livingly led into the blessedness of present communion in oneness in the Father and the Son. It is the living communion of persons and not the harsh uniformity of mere religion.

(H.J.V.)

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 133.—134.

PSALM 133., according to the title, was written by David, and has been thought to refer to the time of his coronation at Hebron, when the men of war came with a perfect heart to make him king, and "all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king" (1 Chron. 12. 38, 39). It is reasonable to suppose that after having been established in Zion, he looked back on those three happy days and wrote this Song to commemorate them; but however good and pleasant those days were, the conditions for their repetition never occurred again. The hearts, in that day one, were in no long time stolen by Absalom (2 Sam. 15.). A sad illustration of the fading of all that is of God when left to man's keeping. Yet the unity which finds its centre and bond in God's beloved would be lasting if the figures employed in the Psalm were translated into spiritual realities. The holy anointing oil, fragrant in itself, is viewed as binding together the High Priest and his garments; so Christ and His saints, with whom He clothes Himself in testimony before men, are sharers of the same anointing, by which the saints are bound together and to Him (2 Cor. 1. 21, 22). The dew, type of the grace of heaven, falls alike on the mighty Hermon and the little hill of Zion, illustrating the unifying power of grace, which when received produces the lowliness and meekness of Jesus, whereby unity is practically maintained (Eph. 4. 2). Alas, other means more easily wielded by the flesh have been constantly employed to achieve so desirable a result; especially has the discipline and authority of the church been pressed

into this service, but in vain; human devices inevitably widen the breach they essay to heal, and the power which may be needed to maintain holiness (1 Cor. 5.) if invoked to promote unity becomes, in result, the weapon of one party to oust its opponent.

The last verse shows that the realisation of the good things of this Psalm awaits the setting up of the kingdom in power, for the Zion of David became covered with the cloud of the anger of Jehovah, for her iniquity was greater than the sin of Sodom (Lam. 2. 1, and 4. 6). Nevertheless in its own time "life for evermore" will be ministered from that centre, and in the meantime wherever the children of God find His centre in the Name of the Lord (Matt. 18. 20). There blessing will be ministered by the Spirit as surely as from Zion in a future day.

PSALM 134. The last of the "Songs of Ascents" is a call by the Spirit to the servants of Jehovah to occupy the night watches in His praise; thus would continuity in praise be assured, the services during the day being already provided. The words of praise are found in the fourth and following verses of Psalm 136. The last verse is taken from Numbers 6. 24, but now the blessing of the people is "out of Zion," and from Him who made heaven and earth (no mere tribal deity). For the expression "out of Zion," see Psalms 128. 5, and 135. 21. There Jehovah and His people are once more united (Joel 3. 21), and blessing flows from thence to a renewed earth: "There shall be showers of blessing" (Ezek. 34. 26).

"How Long?"

God's beautiful earth is a-weary;
 Her cry goeth upwards, "How long?
 How long ere the midnight of weeping
 Be lost in the morning of song?
 How long ere the strife and the discord,
 The grief and the struggle shall cease;
 And the nations shall meet
 At the crucified feet
 Of the glorious Prince of Peace?"

The Way Home.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"I am treading a path of sorrow, but thousands of God's pilgrims have trodden it before me, and He who sustained them in it will also sustain me, for His grace and power are always the same."—*From a Letter.*

IT is a rough road that many whom the Lord loves are treading, but **IT IS THE WAY HOME.** They are learning as they tread the road that earth can yield no rest for their bruised and tired spirits; but it should cheer them to know that **THERE REMAINETH A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD** (Heb. 4. 9). Tears of sorrow are often on their cheeks, but their experience of God's ways with them in their homeward journey shall not end in sorrow, for from the lips of **JESUS** have come those startling and hope-inspiring words, "Blessed are ye that weep now: for **YE SHALL LAUGH.**"

We wish to say to our fellow-travellers to the heavenly home, Don't let the devil dim the eye of your faith or obscure for you the glorious outlook by questions as to whether God is good to you or not; lay firmly hold of His sure word and find strength in the promises of **HOME** with the **REST** and holy **LAUGHTER** that belong to it—blessed compensation for the pilgrimage and the labour and tears of the way to it.

"I have a home above
From sin and sorrow free,
A mansion which eternal love
Formed and designed for me."

Not all God's children are tested in the same way in this homeward journey. Some are well acquainted with bodily pain and weakness, with weary days and sleepless nights; others are misunderstood and persecuted by those they long most to bless; many suffer keenly as they see those suffer who are dearer to them than life, and still others have the deeper and, if it were not for the sure hope of resurrection, the darker sorrow that death lays heavily on the heart as he swings his sharp and effective scythe. No wonder that many sigh and weep, nor can we condemn them, for "Jesus wept," and the heart

that is not moved by sorrow and trial is a hard and insensible heart.

The Christian in a world of sorrow cannot claim an immunity from tears, nay, it sometimes seems as though he had more weeping times than those who know not God; but God has His own gracious way of bringing forth meat from the eater. He is the great and only true Alchemist who can transmute our tears into priceless gems; He can and does turn that which threatens to be wholly evil into our greatest good, and so the Christian has a deeper joy in his sorrow than the worldling has in his pleasure. And the road along which God leads His children is **THE WAY HOME.** It is this that we wish to emphasize.

"High in the Father's house above
Our mansion is prepared;
There is the home, the rest we love,
And there our bright reward."

The thought of home makes the mariner cheerful in spite of the waves that dash and foam about the ship; he can whistle in the very teeth of the gale if the prow of the boat is turned to port and the sure hand of the skipper holds the helm. And so the Christian can sing, in the joy that the knowledge of Christ's love yields—

"And though by storms assailed,
And though by trials pressed,
Himself our life He bears us up
Right onward to our rest."

We want the thought of heaven as our home, and of the One who has made it home for us, and who will come again to take us there, and of the Father whose welcome awaits us, to give our hearts a strong tug in that direction and thrill us with fresh hope.

"Home, home, sweet home:
Our great Friend is Jesus,
And heaven is our home."

There is another thought not less sweet, and most wondrously sustaining,

it is that the love that has prepared a home for us beyond the clouds and the sorrow will not neglect us on the way to it. And we have brought together in Hebrews 4. some of the great provisions of God's love for us while we labour to enter into His rest.

THE WORD OF GOD, in verse 12, is that which discerns and makes manifest every thought and intention within us that would make our feet falter in the road home. It comes to us directing our steps, enlightening our path, cleansing our way. It warns us of by-paths, flashes its light upon the devil's snares and pitfalls, it searches the innermost recesses of our souls and rebukes every unbelieving thought that might spring up in our hearts. How priceless is the word of God! how absolutely necessary it is to us and how all-sufficient in its own sphere! God grant that we may never harden our hearts against His word.

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST, in verses 14 and 15, is also for us; He undertakes our cause in our heaven-bound way. And here is a theme that might well occupy volumes printed in gold, but how little it is understood. The great high Priest is Jesus, the Son of God. Does not the heart swell with holy exultation at the thought of His greatness? The service to which He devotes Himself in this character is that of bearing up His pilgrim saints in intercession before God, and He does this with truest compassion and deepest sympathy. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—marvellous thought! It means that every pang in every heart that loves Him is felt by Him. You may not be able to understand it; you are not asked to do so, it is too great for your small mind, but He asks you to believe it, and if you don't you will grieve that heart that loves above all things to be trusted. He would have you to believe that He is serving you every hour because He loves you; yes, loves you with the same love that led Him to Calvary for you. The birth pangs do not exhaust the

mother's love for her babe; she would be willing to lay down her life for it at any time.

**"Yet she may forgetful prove,
He will never cease to love."**

How could He cease to love? He is **JESUS**. And what does that name mean to us? It tells us of the love that brought Him from the eternal throne to Bethlehem's manger; it tells us of a life of suffering service that led through sorrow and shame and loss to the cross of Calvary; it tells us how His love declared itself there. The waves of death uplifted their awful crests and rolled upon Him to engulf Him; the billows of Satan's power roared about Him to destroy Him, and He went down beneath the deep waters of God's judgment against sin on our behalf. But though He stood for us where all the seas met upon Him, yet was His love not quenched. It burned with a fervent flame amidst the fierce waters, and shed its wondrous light in the darkness of that awful hour, and there it triumphed—and now the Lord is risen.

**"And we stand beyond the doom
Of all our sins through Jesu's empty tomb."**

That love has not changed one whit; it is as deeply interested in your welfare to-day as it was when it bore your sins on the tree. Were it otherwise, Jesus would no longer bear that precious name for us, and we should have neither Saviour, Priest nor home.

But Jesus is the Son of God, for so our text presents Him, and while "**JESUS**" carries us in thought down to the very depths of the humiliation into which His love carried Him, "**THE SON OF GOD**" presents His glory, His magnificent greatness, the unmeasured splendour of His Person and inheritance. But there are other thoughts than these in the bringing together of these names and titles that should talk eloquently to our hearts. "**Jesus**" tells us of His preciousness to us. "**The Son of God**" tells us of His preciousness to God. "**JESUS**" TELLS US THAT, SINCE HE LOVES US SO WELL, THERE IS

NOTHING THAT WOULD BE GOOD FOR US THAT HE WILL NOT ASK FOR US WHEN HE INTERCEDES BEFORE GOD FOR US; AND "SON OF GOD" TELLS US THAT GOD WILL NOT DENY HIM ANY REQUEST THAT HE MAKES. So that the fact of Jesus the Son of God being our great high Priest means that we are put into contact with the eternal and infinite resources of God, and that eternal and infinite love sets these resources in motion for us, for God loves His Son and Jesus loves us, and Jesus is the Son of God.

Our limited space forbids that we should enlarge upon this most blessed theme, but we would urge upon our readers, and especially those who are passing through trial and sorrow, to consider the High Priest of our profession—Christ Jesus. He it is who can and will sustain you. He has passed through the heavens from the very lowest point of suffering and shame; He has gone to the highest point in

glory, and no watchful sentry rang out the challenge, "Halt!" for every gate was thrown open wide for Him to pass triumphantly through, and He is our Forerunner as well as our Priest. He has passed into the glory which is our HOME before us, and for us, and the welcome that He received is the welcome that awaits us. There is not a difficulty or hostile power that He has not met in the way that we travel as we follow Him. He was tempted in all points as we are apart from sin. And now He lives in the glory to succour us with gracious help from thence.

THE THRONE OF GRACE, in verse 16, is also available for us. We may come boldly to it, and when we do we shall discover that our best Friend sits upon it, and there we shall obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help.

Here are some of our resources, and as we draw upon them we shall hold the full assurance of hope unto the end, and THE END IS HOME.

From the Form of God to the Form of a Servant.—*continued.*

How easy it becomes to reject error when possessed of the truth. We have lately seen a perversion of this passage foisted on Christian readers as follows: "Who being in the form of God, did not meditate a usurpation to be on an equality with God, but (contrariwise) made Himself of no reputation, etc." To which is attached the wretched explanation:—

"Hence the Divine proposal to the Logos—that if He would become a man, taking the sinner's nature, but not participating in the sinner's weakness or sin, He might thus be the Redeemer of men and accomplish the Divine Will. Attached to this proposal was the promise that so great a manifestation of love, loyalty, and obedience to the Father would receive a great reward—an exaltation to the Divine nature, glory, honour, and immortality. Thus Jesus declared that for His faithfulness He had been rewarded by His Father with a place in His throne" (Rev. 3. 21).

How base is the thought of man when brought to the test of the Word of God!

The underlined words are underlined by ourselves. Does Scripture then not teach that the Word was first God, and then became flesh? Does Scripture not teach that in Him all the Fullness was pleased to dwell? Does Scripture not teach that after laying the foundations of the earth and making the heavens by the work of His hands He remains the same in essential glory throughout eternal years? Does Scripture not teach that the Son of Man ascended up *where He was before*? The Bible speaks of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, and it speaks of His exaltation; but not in the terms of the theological explanation quoted above.

May we see the greatness of the glory from which the Son came, that so we may better understand the greatness of the humiliation of the Lord; and may be enabled the more to love the mind He showed and the pathway He took.

“When He Cometh Home” (Luke 15. 6).

(H. J. VINE).

THERE is something singularly sweet in these words of the Lord. They find an answering echo in most hearts, and that in a special way just now; but in none more so than in the heart of him who knows the love of Christ.

We heard an anxious wife, who had received an official report that her husband was missing on the battle front in France, use these words concerning him the other day: she had turned to the Lord in her anxiety and had found Him as her own personal Saviour. Two of her children also trusted Christ; and they together joined in their mother's words, and said: “Yes, *when father comes home*, we'll always bring him with us to hear of Jesus.” But, we wondered, will he ever come home again?

The affectionate parents whose only son is facing the dangers of the pitiless battlefield often think of the time when he shall come home again. And the widow of whom we heard to-day who has lost three sons in the great conflict is longing to see her youngest and only remaining boy safe at home again. The wife is longing for her husband and the mother for her boy; the father for his son and the children for their father; the girl or boy for the brother, the master for his faithful servant, the man for his friend and the lady for her lover; each one longs for the home-coming—“when he cometh home!” The heart's longing has been turned into popular song, but it is the sad uncertainty of it all which brings a softening to the hardest heart—a strange tenderness and sympathy.

The one who has learned of the Spirit the true teaching of the words which we quote will be touched by them in a deeper, because a divine, way, for he knows that they speak so eloquently to him of his Saviour, Shepherd and Lord; of His home-coming from the far battlefield; of His return with the prize of His toil and suffering: when He cometh home from the scene of conflict

and blood-shedding, from Calvary, where He went in the love of His heart to save us from everlasting misery and woe. Truly, He cometh home rejoicing and victorious. There is no uncertainty in this case. Nevertheless, the heart is deeply touched, as the eye of faith beholds the eternal Lover of our souls returning home from His toilsome task, bringing the saved one with Him: “*He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing. And when He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost*” (Luke 15. 5, 6).

His home-coming is ours! Well may our hearts rejoice! When He cometh home, He brings us with Him! As sure as He came from that home to save us, so surely He brings all those that He saves to that home from which He came!

“Oh, what a home! But such His love
That He must bring us there,
To fill that home, to be with Him,
And all His glory share.”

“Home.”

The redeeming blood of Christ has secured it for us. His finished work, His present service, and His future power, all combine to the same end. The work of the Holy Spirit, too, is also in view of the same blessed result. And the Father, as we see in the third part of Luke 15., runs to meet the returning one, and receives him into the home with joy and gladness; and the merry-making, the music, the feasting, and the dancing of that home of the Father's love begin. The Son rejoices! The Holy Spirit rejoices! The Father rejoices! There is joy in heaven! There is joy in the presence of the angels of God! Well may we rejoice also! It is meet that we should make merry and be glad. The lost one is found. The dead is alive again. He is received home again. He is safe and sound.

We are told in the parable, When the Lord Jesus comes to the house, He Him-

self calleth for rejoicing. What a different view this gives us of the house of God to that which is common in Christendom. The sad, the sorrowful, and the solemn obtain there, the mournful and the funereal is prevalent; whereas rejoicing and feasting, merry-making and dancing, music and praise characterize that holy home of the Father's love. It is true that the beautifully drawn picture of Luke 15.—probably the most beautiful of any writing extant—is illustrative of that which is spiritual; of that which is only known by those who have the Spirit of God. But, then, that only emphasizes the fact that the reality surpasses the figure, however lovely that figure may be: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

Yes, that home is infinitely more bright and blessed than the best picture of it. And it is to such a home that the saved sinner is brought by his precious Saviour—"when He cometh home." There is a time when its joys and its feastings begin for us, but they will never end; there is a moment when we first know its merry-making and its dancing, but it will go on for ever; there is a time when its music and praise first reach our ears, but its rich and varied melodies are eternal. Words fail to express the deep and everlasting love of that home. As we think of it, how sweet are those words—"When He cometh Home." The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, knew the love of that home well. He was the well-beloved Object of it. He ever dwelt in its divine fullness and blessedness. It was the love wherewith He was loved before the foundation of the world, and He came from the Father to redeem us, and bring us into that same wonderful love. Therefore He can say to the Father concerning us, **THOU HAST LOVED THEM AS THOU HAST LOVED ME** (John 17. 23). Oh, what a dwelling-place!

Oh, the love that fills it! Oh, the love that sought and saved us, to bring us in where He Himself dwells.

"Thou abidest in the bosom of the Father's love:

In that love for ever living, love—all thought above:

And we know that Thou would'st have us ever dwell with Thee,

In that holy, heavenly dwelling, home of liberty."

"Nearer Home."

If it is ours to enjoy the love of that home now, and to enter in faith and in the power of the Spirit into its joy and rejoicing, what will it be when in changed and glorified bodies, fashioned like unto Christ's own body of glory, we are actually there with Him where He is? Even as He said—that where I am there ye may be also. Truly that will be a blessed home-coming!

And we are nearer, dearly beloved brethren, to that moment than we ever were. Another year gone—and such a year of strife and sorrow and suffering as regards the world, finds us closer to the portals of that desired place. Each month, each week, each day, each hour, each moment brings us nearer home. Some have had a long and rough journey, but the Lord has kept them safely and securely. Trials and testings have been the lot of us all, but His love has never failed. Uphill and difficult the road has often been, but fresh grace and strength have been ministered. Sorrow and joy, storm and sunshine, tribulation and peace have been experienced by us, but He has never left us. An old saint meant much when she said, "I have proved Him in winter and summer." When Israel journeyed through the wilderness to Canaan, their companion was the tabernacle, and the Lord's presence was there. They travelled through the wilderness of testing to the place of their rest. There remaineth a rest for the people of God; and each step we take brings us closer to its welcome threshold.

"What will it be when dangers all are past,
We reach our home—the Father's house,
at last."

We rejoice in hope of the glory; but our Lord Jesus Christ rejoices even more than we do, as He looks on to our home-bringing. He is there, and we must be there. His home-coming secured ours. He would not be there without us. And though, on the way, all things work together for our good, yet the predestination, and the purpose of God also, involves our being fully conformed to the image of His Son in the glory, that "HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN" (Rom. 8. 29) in that place of ineffable delight. The Father's foreknowledge took everything into account, our poor, feeble, sinful selves, and all the circumstances of the way; and He made full and perfect provision in Christ. Blessed be His holy name.

The Lord Jesus shall shine pre-eminent as the centre of the glory. All things shall be centred up in Him. And

who can tell the deep joy that shall fill His heart, as He sees around Him the fruit of all His travail and toil; as He sees those He loves with an infinite love around Him in that home of gladness and glory. Our hearts praise Him, and shall continue to praise Him for ever and ever. He is worthy—ininitely worthy! His finished work and His present work prove both His love and His worthiness. Oh, what a Saviour is ours! Well may songs of praise fill our hearts, and our mouths also.

"Sing of His dying love; sing of His rising power;
Sing how He intercedes above for those whose sins He bore.
Sing on your heavenly road, ye sons of glory sing;
To Him our Saviour, Shepherd, Lord,—
your cheerful praises bring,
Soon weshall hear Him say, 'Ye ransomed pilgrims, come!'
Soon He will take us hence away to our eternal home."

The Manner of Christ's Service.

(J. McCULLOCH).

THE title "My servant," given to our Lord by Isaiah, is especially beautiful as historically recorded in Mark's Gospel, which systematically portrays our Lord's service of grace in manhood. *He had a method and manner all His own*, and His servants would do well to study afresh this record of "Love serving in the midst of evil." That love, unchecked by all the opposition, went on dispensing the mercy of God on all kinds of objects.

Let any one classify the various persons that our Lord healed, the forms of need that He met and supplied, and we are amazed at their variety. Yet they were all met.

"He gave to all and empty
None He sent away."

Through that Gospel we trace the Lord in the pathway of love serving in the midst of evil until the moment of supreme sacrifice—His act of dying for sin.

That was the highest expression of holy love.

For the *Father gave the Son*.

And the *Son gave Himself* for our sins.

To that supreme event the Spirit bears

witness. It is very noticeable that Mark and Luke in their Gospels record our Lord's ascension, and the same activity that characterized Jesus on earth is pursued from the Throne of Power in heaven (see last chapter of Mark).

We do well to remember this, and that the same love fills His heart for a world of need to-day, and men and women are just the same to-day as then, but the Lord has His elect vessels of mercy on earth through whom He ministers to all peoples and climes.

It becomes all His servants to study the holy model, to drink in His spirit of holy love, and out of the abiding fullness of the Spirit of Christ which ever abides as the Agent and power of grace to go on the current of the Spirit. On Him we may count for unfailing support if our souls are in accord with the spirit of a serving Jesus.

He went about continually doing good.

Let us seek like Jesus Himself *to be good*, and *do good*. But it is only as imbued by His spirit our good will be good and our manner of doing good will have the beautiful savour of the method and manner of Jesus Himself.

“For the Sake of the Name.”

(J. WILSON SMITH).

I QUOTE the above words from the Revised Version of the Third Epistle of John.

The Name! What name? “Because that for the sake of the name they went forth,” writes the beloved Apostle.

In this brief, fervent letter three names are mentioned: that of Gaius, that of Diotrephes, and that of Demetrius, whilst certain others are spoken of as “strangers,” but are unnamed.

Yet, with a significance which should command all attention, allusion is made to some one of whom “the name” is deemed sufficiently descriptive. It is clearly assumed that merely the word “name” calls for no elucidation. This is quite intelligible. If “the day” had a meaning of profound significance to some who thought of a moment which would bring a world-wide history to their arms—“the day” which was whispered, and spoken of, as a secret, but which, having come, would exhibit the result of long years of expectant toil, how much more did “the name” pass as a watchword in the ranks of those early Christians who were the honoured subjects of the Apostles’ ministry? That name stood pre-eminent with them; but shall it not do so to-day?

As to the three men mentioned by name in the letter.

First, of Gaius we read that he enjoyed more prosperity of soul than of body; but, spite of physical infirmities, he walked in truth and charity, and thus caused great joy to the heart of the Apostle, who had, indeed, no greater joy than to hear that his “children (in the faith, no doubt) walked in truth.” But Gaius was a lover of hospitality; his charity was witnessed publicly. He maintained, in equipoise, the balance of truth and love—not love at the expense of truth, nor vice versa. He exemplified, in practice,

the “better way” of 1 Corinthians 13. He was a fine specimen of an all-round Christian. No wonder that he gladdened the heart of the Apostle!

Second, Diotrephes comes before us, but in a deplorable contrast to Gaius. His sole object was self-exaltation; he loved to have pre-eminence (mark the word) in the church, refusing the Apostle himself and the brethren—the “strangers” referred to above, who “went forth for the sake of the name,” forbidding those to receive them who would do so, and casting them out of the church. This is that Diotrephes! In him, cold, stern, hard officialism; rank, rigid ecclesiasticism, and a kind of papal tyranny combined with the zeal of a Jehu, outweighed the grace, patience, meekness, and lowliness that should characterize a servant of Christ. For such an one the Apostle had no regard. He would remember his deeds. He turns quickly away from thinking of Diotrephes; and, in his gentle style, he writes: “Beloved, imitate not that which is evil (let not the high-handed, merciless, inconsiderate ways of such an one be copied), but that which is good” (kind, profitable, beneficent); for, notice, “He that doeth good is of God (let these words sink into our consciences), but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.” So much for Diotrephes!

Third, Demetrius. What of him? He carried “a good report of all, and of the truth itself.” Happy Demetrius! Like the elders of Hebrew 11, his record was good. The truth had his name on its pages; the Apostle found pleasure in the very thought of him; he adorned the doctrines of Christ.

Each of these men had his history; but what of the mysterious name which exerted so great an influence over these “stranger” brethren who went forth expressly and solely for its exaltation, and under its exclusive authority, at

all cost to themselves? What of its omnipotence, its charm, its all-sufficiency, its infinite magnetism over heart and mind and hand and foot—the name that captivated, that saved, that delivered, that constrained, that separated, that entranced, that controlled without a rival, that commanded, and that obtained obedience unqualified? What name was that?

It was not that of an apostle, nor of a church, nor of a school, nor of a mission. It favoured no party, nor clique, nor section, nor division. All such things were annihilated in the immensities of that name.

“He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father (Father of eternity), Prince of peace” (Isa. 9. 6).

“God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2. 10, 11).

Now we understand why these devoted strangers “went forth.” They had come under the spell of that name. It meant, first, their complete salvation—their purchase at a price incalculable—even His precious blood. They were slaves no more; they were Christ's free men and servants. He was their Lord and Master, their leader and commander, their treasurer and source of supply. From Him they had received and held

their commission. They owned His absolute pre-eminence. These were some of the brethren whom Diotrefes would not receive! Then he should receive his own judgment. He may not be imitated. Happy it is to turn to a large-hearted, loving, and truthful Gaius; or to a record like that of the upright Demetrius, and seek to follow their faith while honestly and before God loathing the spirit of the wilful, place-seeking, domineering Diotrefes; or to tread humbly in the self-denying, devoted footsteps of the strangers and brethren who went forth, independently of man, simply and whole-heartedly “for the sake of the name.”

It is just possible that this epistle was the last inspired writing. Anyhow, it is striking that the expression “THE NAME” should have such prominence. For these last days are, alas, witnesses of a vast Babel of party names; sects are distinguished by the names of men, of doctrines, of places, to our common shame, all of which would, if the supremacy of “THE NAME” were but owned, sink into their own miserable nothingness, as, thank God, they certainly shall, when, as the rising sun outshines all lesser luminaries, that name which is above every name shall obliterate for ever the petty names and designations to which we attach so much puerile importance to-day. Oh! that the Spirit of God may magnify before the hearts of all the children of God the worth and glory and power and excellency of “THE NAME.” It gives its outline to the Philadelphian.

Prayer.

IT is not always more *praying* that is wanted, but more *prayer*. Praying may be vociferous, it may be long, logical, or oft-repeated, and effect nothing. *Prayer* may come to little more than the lying down in the hollow of God's hand, in the sense—I had nearly said agony—of utter helplessness and powerlessness; but the quiet confidence flows over the soul that God *is*, that God

knows His ways, that God *will* fulfil the uttermost thought of His heart of love. But prayer, the soul's holy reverent contact with its God, its grasp of His promises, its confidence in His character, its free access to Him with the pressing need, the urgent request—this is the frame almost invariably connected with deep and widespread blessing.

(W. H. W.)

God Revealed (Ps. 22. 21-31).

(JAMES BOYD).

NOTHING is more trying to one who desires to benefit his fellow-men than to have his actions misunderstood and subjected to hostile criticism. With men the tendency is to paralyse all useful activity. It is apt to dry up the fountains of philanthropy, and cause people to disregard the woes of those whose circumstances appeal to sympathy and compassion.

Parents wish their children to understand that all their wisdom and all their resources are at the disposal of their parental affections, and that all their dealings with them are prompted by the love that would lead them, if necessity arose, to give their lives to save theirs. And nothing could be more painful to parents' hearts than to see their children mistrusting them, and imputing their well-meant actions to unworthy motives. When one is striving might and main to help others, to find oneself suspected of selfish considerations is one of the most trying ordeals to which an honest and sensitive nature can be subjected.

But if this be true of us in our fallen and selfish natures, what must it be to the living God, whose faithfulness and infinite compassions shine forth in all His dealings with His rebellious creatures, to have these compassions met with reproaches, suspicion and mistrust? To think that He who has in His hand the disposal of His creatures, who is able to kill and make alive; to whom the creature can give nothing, and from whom he can take nothing away; against whom he can practise no evil with the least hope of inflicting damage; who can be neither enriched nor impoverished by anything the creature can give or withhold: that He should be suspected of carelessness regarding His creature's happiness, indifference to his miseries, jealousy of his advancement, and only waiting a favourable opportunity of casting him down to destruction, is surely beyond measure provoking.

Who cares about God? I look around me upon a world of fallen men, and find myself, in my natural condition, one of the meanest of its wretched myriads. I see every one seeking to exalt himself, and that regardless of the fact that he may have to victimise his neighbour to accomplish his object. Pride, covetousness, hatred, malice, injustice, murder, meet the eye wherever one may look. And I ask myself, What is the meaning of it all? From whence has it all proceeded? Where is it all drifting?

Religion has a huge place in the midst of this Babel confusion, for every one must have a religion of one kind or another. But in this the evil of the human heart displays itself in its most deadly form, for the advocates of one religion are ever ready to persecute to the death the advocates of every other. And those that profess the Christian faith are not different from others. And when I wonder how God bears with it all, I have to ask myself how it is that He bears with me, for I am like all others in my natural condition; a man of unclean lips, and dwelling among a people of unclean lips (Isa. 6.). If I should say, There is none righteous, I should have to take my place as a sinner in God's presence. If I should say, It is a hard world, I should have to own that I contribute to its hardness. If I should say, All men are liars, I should have to own to my own deceitful tongue.

Who can diagnose the disease from which the human race is suffering? and who can prescribe an unfailing remedy? The quacks are innumerable. The physicians of no value are everywhere vending their *cure-alls*. The markets are glutted with their sugar-coated pellets, their bitter draughts, and their ointments. But in spite of all that is done the virile plague takes deeper root in the human soul, the canker spreads, and all human remedies are seen to do nothing but increase the malady from which the creature suffers.

Has there never been a true diagnosis of this fearful malady? Has nothing ever been produced that is a perfect antidote to this fell disease that afflicts mankind the wide world over? The answer to both these questions is in the affirmative. The disease has been carefully and perfectly diagnosed, and the one unfailing remedy produced and published to the utmost limits of the world; and every human being who has availed himself of it has been perfectly and permanently made every whit whole. It is a powerful antidote to the very worst form of the fell disease, and in the one in whom was exhibited the disorder in its most dreadful virulence, in him have been exhibited the most potent health-imparting properties of the priceless potion (1 Tim. 1. 14, 15); for in him the cure was instantaneous and complete.

The antidote to this fell disorder is *light*, a light above the brightness of the sun (Acts 13. 47; 26. 13); the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4. 3-6); light that is *life* to the soul into which it gains admission (John 8. 12); light that dispels the darkness, in which alone this disease can exist.

This light came into the world in the person of Jesus. He Himself was this light (John 9. 5). The light was the revelation of the love of God to men, and this Jesus was. It is not only that He brought it here, but *He was it*. He says: "I am the light of the world." In Him the Creator was here in His own creation, and in the midst of His rebellious creatures (John 1. 10); and He was here that they might know Him.

In the previous dispensations He had spoken by angelic means, and also by His prophets, whom He had endowed with His Holy Spirit in order that they might be able faithfully to declare His mind to those to whom they were sent. But in Jesus He was here Himself, bringing Himself before the minds and hearts of those with whom He came into contact. He was veiled in flesh;

for He was a Man in the midst of men, but no less God than before He emptied Himself of the form of God and took upon Himself the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men.

It was the Son upon earth declaring the Father, that God might be set before the poor benighted creature in His true nature and character. To this end was He on earth, and to this end were His words spoken and His works performed—words that were not with the deceptive and bewildering eloquence of the hypocritical imposter; nor with the subtle arguments, flattering phraseology, rounded sentences, and thrilling perorations of the orators of that day, but they were the plain, unvarnished, and incorrupt truths from the very heart of Him that dwelt within the veil, and which fell from the lips of Jesus as pure and unadulterate as the fountain from which they flowed—words, every syllable of them demanding and deserving the fullest confidence of the heart of the hearer—words the like of which never before had fallen upon mortal ears—words that set forth, not what man should be, but what God was—words of love—words of life eternal—words of salvation: and not one of them ruffled by the harsh curse of a broken law.

Works also performed, not for the empty and useless display of supernatural powers, to excite the wonder and admiration of the brainless multitude of the sightseers, but for the manifestation of the mercy of the maligned and mistrusted Maker of men, and to leave upon the human heart the indelible impression of the compassions of a Saviour-God—works that were all for the benefit of those who suffered from bodily infirmities, and that were the touches of the hand of Him who dwells in light unapproachable, and a hand that was moved by infinite and unfathomable love: such were the works wrought by Jesus.

Concerning those that rejected Him He says: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last

day" (John 12. 48); and: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15. 24). Through the veil of His flesh the Father came to light, and in this revelation lay eternal life for all, but men by their rejection of it turned the word of life and salvation into one of death and condemnation. How sad that it should have been so! But so it was.

Because of this—the revelation of God—it was not only necessary that such wonderful words should be spoken, and that such mighty works should be shown forth, it was also necessary that He should lay down His life. And only in this could the full extent of the love of God be declared. Satan had sowed the seeds of mistrust of God in the human heart by telling Eve that God had withheld from them the only tree whose fruit was capable of advancing them to equality with Himself, and this, alas, was too readily believed by the weak creature who had lent her ear to his dark insinuations. The serpent of falsehood was believed rather than the God of truth.

The great, glorious, and overwhelming reply to this horrible and deadly falsehood is given by God in the cross of His beloved Son. There He who knew no sin is made sin for us. The fruit of a tree in which lay the seed of death was withheld from a pair of innocents, but for a guilty world God in His unspeakable love gave His only begotten Son. And at the cross God is declared in His true character, and "God is Love."

Is this not a light above the brightness of the sun? What now about all the hard thoughts of God that are natural to the heart of fallen man? The risen sun dispels the darkness of the night; cannot the cross of Christ dispel the darkness from the human soul? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" *Why?* Is it not God commend-

ing His love to us, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). Has not the day broken for thee, my soul? Is this not the dawn of a day eternal? For thee does not the glory of that light flood the heavens? and does not that heart in which it is shed by the Holy Spirit leap for joy?

But all that came out into display has to be made good in the souls of those who put their trust in Him. Heard from the horns of the unicorns, brought up out of death's domain, planted upon the rock of resurrection, He has yet to illuminate the souls of His followers with the light that shone forth in that cross, where He gave Himself for our sins, and where He bore in His own body the awful judgment that would have overwhelmed us in everlasting dishonour. He says: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." He says, as it were, I will let them know what Thou art; I will see that they have true thoughts about Thee; I will make them conscious of Thy grace, Thy faithfulness, and Thy love.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom. 5. 5). He has not only caused the light to shine, but He has opened our eyes to take in the light. The love of the heart of God manifested in the death of Jesus has got into our hearts in the power of the Holy Spirit; and we can say: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love" (1 John 4. 16).

The devil told us God was a hard master, and without any evidence of it we believed him; Jesus has told us that God is love, but there has been given to us the evidence of His cross of woe, for that love has not been in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and how slow we are to believe it!

How encouraging it is to hear a voice in this world lifted up on behalf of God. In the highways, in the places of public resort, and even in the pulpits, we can

hear the orators of this day voicing the glories and the claims of their fellow-men. But how little one hears said on God's behalf! And the little that is said on His behalf is to a large extent met by mockery, scorn, ridicule, and personal abuse; and that, too, in Christendom, where His gospel is supposed to be believed and revered.

But Jesus has not, and never had, anything to say on behalf of the creature; all He has, or had to say on behalf of any one has been said on God's behalf. His life and His death was one complete sermon, setting forth the goodness, faithfulness, righteousness, and love of God. If men refused to listen, if they would not believe His words, if they persecuted and slew Him on account of His testimony, He would be faithful to the end for which He was born, and on account of which He came into the world, for He was here to bear witness to the truth (John 18. 37).

"*In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.*" The congregation shall also sing, but He will lead the singing. It is a new song He sings, a song of accomplished redemption, a song setting forth the intervention of Eternal Love for the deliverance of His people from the pitiless thralldom of the oppressor. The congregation shall join in His song. How can they help it? They have been brought out of the darkness and the distance in which they were by nature. They must join in that song in which is celebrated the wonders of eternal salvation. How could they keep silent? Has He not broken the power of the oppressor? Has He not annulled the death that was to them the king of terrors? Has He not declared to them the Father's name? Has He not placed them in the same relationship with God as those in which He Himself is? Has He not said to them, "I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God"? Is it not true that "as He is, so are we in this world"? And shall their song be silent when they look forward to a day in which no creature, lost

or saved, shall have one wrong thought about God?

How could we refrain from singing when we hear His heavenly voice rising from our midst in such heavenly melody? We *must* sing. It cannot be otherwise with us. But not the songs of earth that have for their theme the pleasures and enjoyments of this godless world. No; we have something better to sing about. The song we learn here we shall sing in the courts of glory at His coming again. So that with an eternity of unspeakable joy before our souls each of us may say: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being" (Ps. 104. 33).

He says, "*He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath He hid His face from Him.*" One would have thought that at least He had hid His face from Him; for the opening verse seems to convey that impression to the mind, and surely it was so, as to any intervention on the part of God; while the question of sin was between the holy Sufferer and a God of judgment there could be no indication of His being heard, though never in His whole history was He more the delight of the heart of God than when He was made sin on that cross.

But when the judgment of sin had taken place, and when God had said all that He could say against that accursed thing that was so obnoxious to His holy nature, and which had wrought such havoc on earth, the spotless Victim who gave Himself to bear that judgment could be heard in the sense of vouchsafed deliverance: His feet are planted upon the firm rock of resurrection.

"*When He cried unto Him He heard.*" How could it be otherwise? How could God ever forget the afflictions of His beloved Son? How could He turn a deaf ear to the cry of distress from the One who was ever the delight of His heart? How could the tears that He shed, the sorrows that He suffered, the anguish of His soul, the reproach, the

shame, the rejection, the innumerable and indescribable woes, that were like thickets of thorns heaped all about His path by His unreasonable and wicked adversaries, ever be forgotten by Him whom He had so fully glorified? Impossible. Not one tear that He shed; not one groan or sigh or cry of distress ever uttered by that lonely, lowly, faithful witness shall ever perish from the memory of His Father and His God. His afflictions are too sacred and too precious ever to be forgotten.

"My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation." The whole vast assembly of Israel, which shall be gathered together in the day of His glory must hear of the mercies of God, which shall be sung by the Messiah in

their midst. In that song of praise He will recount the mercies of Jehovah, and the deliverance effected on their behalf, and every soul in that vast multitude will with the whole heart join in the song, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

What a song! What music! What melody! Then surely God shall have His glorious dwelling-place in the praises of Israel. Like the voice of many waters, and like mighty thunderings, that song shall arise, awaking the echoes of Zion, until all the ends of the world remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations worship before Him, and everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. XI. (A. J. POLLOCK).

The Curtains and Coverings. (Read Exodus 26. 1-14.)

THERE were two sets of curtains and two coverings placed over the tabernacle. They were:—

- (1) Ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work. Size 28 cubits × 4 cubits.
- (2) Eleven curtains of goats' hair. Size 30 cubits × 4 cubits.
- (3) Rams' skins dyed red, called "a covering."
- (4) Badgers' skins, called "a covering."

In different ways the typical meaning of these curtains set forth the moral glories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The order in which they are presented is significant. The innermost curtain is given first, then in order to the outermost covering. God ever begins with that which is most precious. Leviticus begins with the burnt offering, not, as in *our* experience, with the sin offering. Ephesians 1. 3-7 begins the exclamation of worship at the highest note: "Blessed . . . with all spiritual bless-

ings in heavenly places in Christ," ending up with where *we* begin, "the forgiveness of sins."

How delightful it is thus to trace the very heart of God in all this. His delight is in His well-beloved Son.

The Linen Curtains.

As we have, in a previous issue, dwelt upon the typical meanings of the materials of the curtains, we will content ourselves with a recapitulation. In type

Fine twined linen—the spotless purity that marked our blessed Lord when on earth, "Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21); "Who did no sin" (1 Peter 2. 22); "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5).

Blue—heavenly in character—"The Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3. 13).

Purple—imperial glory, that is as indicating the Lord's title to *universal* dominion as Son of Man. "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8. 6).

Scarlet=kingly glory, setting forth the Lord's title to Messianic glory as King of Israel. "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1. 49).

Cherubims=judicial authority. "The Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5. 22).

What a wonderful presentation of the glories of the blessed Lord.

The number and size of the curtains are not without significance.

The number of the curtains was ten, divided into two sets of five, whilst fifty loops of blue in each set, joined together by fifty taches of gold, made the curtains into "one tabernacle" (ver. 6).

Ten is the number that speaks of responsibility Godward, whilst five speak of responsibility manward. There were ten commandments, five commandments regulating our conduct to our fellow-man. To love God and our neighbour is the summing up of man's responsibility. The numbers ten and five are likewise stamped by a wise Creator upon the human frame. Man has ten fingers and ten toes divided into sets of five, and five senses—all speaking of human responsibility to God and man.

Then the size of the curtains was 28 cubits long by 4 cubits wide— $28 = 7 \times 4$. We see then the numbers, seven and four, are stamped upon the tabernacle—seven = perfection, four = that which is universal, as the four winds of heaven, the four Gospels, the four elements (land, water, air, fire), etc. Does this not signify perfection and completeness in every form, and is this not seen, and seen alone, in Christ? None is perfect, none is complete, but He.

Character is described as that which is prominent in a person. It has been reverently said that Christ alone *in that sense* had no character. Where nothing

was prominent, because everything was perfect and mature, there could be no character *in that sense*. Blessed Master!

Finally the fifty loops of blue in each set of curtains and fifty taches of gold set forth the heavenly and divine nature of the Son of Man, exemplified in the perfection and completeness of every step of His journey down here, whether seen in the blessed Babe in Bethlehem's manger at the beginning of His pathway, or on the cross itself at the end of His journey, whilst all between was perfect.

The Goats'-hair Curtains.

The material used typifies the rigid separation the Lord maintained in holiness from evil of every kind and form when on earth. The hairy garment was the mark of a prophet (see Zech. 13. 4). John the Baptist had a garment of camels' hair. The number of these curtains was eleven, formed into two sets of six and five. Their dimensions were 30 cubits \times 4 cubits. One thing is plain from the instructions given, viz. that the extra curtain and extra length in the curtains was designed that the whole might cover and overlap the linen curtains.

Thus we see that Christ's public life tallied with His inner life. There was no discrepancy in any way. His public life *amply* and *fully* covered His inner life. "He could say, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true" (John 8. 14). When the Jews asked the Lord who He was, He could say, "Altogether that which I also say to you" (N. T., John 8. 25).

Fifty loops were to be placed in each set of curtains, but it does not specify that they were to be of blue, whilst the fifty coupling taches were to be of brass. Brass sets forth the test of man in responsibility, but not as in gold setting forth divine righteousness. Thus in these details we learn how the blessed Lord stood every test that was placed upon Him as man (though always "God over all, blessed for ever").

The Covering of Rams' Skin Dyed Red.

It is no longer a woven texture that we have to do with, but skins used as a covering. The choice of the *rams'* skin brings before us at once the great thought of the ram in connection with the offerings, viz. *consecration*. "The ram of the consecration" (chap. 29. 27) it is called in connection with the consecration of the priests. "Dyed red" seems to set forth that the blessed Lord was consecrated to the will of God even to death. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 7), were His own words. How perfectly He carried out that will even to death. He was indeed *the* consecrated One, perfect in all His ways.

The Covering of Badgers' Skins.

Apart from its use in connection with the tabernacle, the word badgers' skins is only once employed in Scripture. Jehovah, addressing Jerusalem, says, "I clothed thee with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen" (Ezek. 16. 10). Evidently from this passage "badgers' skin" symbolizes protection in walk, and tells us of that holy care and vigilance the Lord manifested in all His ways down here.

Notice nothing is said as to size or number of either rams' skins or badgers' skins. One verse suffices to give instructions as to them. Each covering sets forth *one* idea—consecration and vigilance, both seen so perfectly in Him, who alone was perfect.

It might be pointed out that the priests inside saw the fine linen, not "the common people" outside; whilst the outsider saw the badgers' skins, and not the fine linen. What beauties does the believer see in His adorable Lord, beauties that ravish the heart as more and more the Spirit of God would lead on the enquiring soul by a deeper acquaintance and apprehension of them. As to what man sees outwardly in

Christ we have the lament of Isaiah, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (chap. 53. 2). Christ's separation from evil and holy vigilance of walk formed no attraction to the unregenerated mind.

One final thought. The linen curtains as a whole form "one *tabernacle*" (ver. 6). The goats' hair curtains are spoken of as "the curtains of the *tent*" (vers. 12, 13). The rams' skins dyed red, and the badgers' skins are simply designated in each case as "a covering" (ver. 14).

The *tabernacle* sets forth the wondrous thoughts of God's dwelling-place. How true this was of Christ personally! "He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2. 21). "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John 3. 34). And even now, as risen and glorified, we read, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" [*i.e.* in a body] (Col. 2. 9). How wonderful, too, that God dwells now in the midst of His people by the Holy Spirit.

The *tent* speaks of the stranger and pilgrim character of the Lord Himself when down here, as of His people now. We learn our position here, and our portion there, by contemplating Christ. The believer must take his character from Him.

The *covering* tells us that though He was in a froward scene, where all was contrary to Him, yet there was power to throw off all that was of this scene, and was not of Himself in all His heavenly perfection and beauty. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John 14. 30). And is this provision not made for His own? "We know that whatsoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5. 18).

What a Christ we have! What depths of beauty, what heights of glory are found in Him! May we come to such a study of such a Person with reverence and worship!

The Old Men Weeping and The People Shouting for Joy.

(An Address by
J. T. MAWSON).

“And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off” (Ezra 3. 11-13).

NEITHER encouragement nor strength can be derived from the backward look on the failure of the church in responsibility on earth to maintain the truth and testimony of the Lord. The failure cannot be ignored, and every one of us must give an account to God for his part in it—truly a solemn consideration—but too much occupation with it will not help us to be overcomers in the future, it can only weaken and discourage us. Now to discourage and weaken His saints and servants is not God’s way, that is the devil’s own particular job, but the pity is that he finds so many who otherwise are most estimable, to help him in it; let us beware that he does not make use of us in this godless work.

There are both encouragement and strength for us, so that we may be more than conquerors, but these are drawn from God’s faithfulness and ever-enduring mercy, and from the fact that there abides that which all the machinations and powers of hell cannot prevail against.

An Impregnable Structure.

It is my intention to notice, before speaking on the passage in Ezra, that which cannot be overthrown. You will find the first mention of it in Matthew 16. 18—a most familiar passage. There we read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to Simon, “I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church [assembly]; and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” This of which the Lord speaks was

something entirely new; there had been an assembly in the wilderness when Israel sojourned there for forty years (Acts 7. 38), but it was not this that the Lord calls “My assembly,” for the building of this was still future when He announced His intentions with regard to it. But that of which He speaks in this first revelation of it is now a fact. And Christ has upon this earth His assembly which He is building. It is His special and prized possession, He calls it “MY ASSEMBLY,” and the longer you dwell upon those words the more your heart will be moved by them, especially if you realize that you are part of that of which He so speaks. You may ask: but has not that assembly been smashed and marred? Is it not now a battered ruin, witnessing only to the devil’s strategy and power, and the feebleness and failure of the saints of God? No, the very opposite is the truth, for Christ is building it by the unconquerable power and all-prevailing wisdom of God, and, fitly framed together, it groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. It is a special object of the devil’s malice, but it will withstand all his assaults. Neither by frontal attack nor by subtle flank movement can he take it; he cannot undermine its foundations, and his big guns will thunder against it in vain: “*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” It may seem otherwise to you, but if so you are walking by sight and not by faith, and you need to meditate upon this wonderful triumphant declaration, “*I will build My assembly, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

Every stone placed in this impregnable structure by the Lord's own hand is a living stone, living because brought into vital relationship with Himself, the living One, and the whole building is unified and bound together by His life, which animates every stone in it, and by the presence of the Holy Ghost who dwells in all. It may increase your interest in this great subject if you realize that you are a part of this living building—a living stone in it, if you have confessed that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God," as Peter did; but what should move your heart most profoundly is the fact that your Saviour calls it "My assembly."

The Foundation of It.

The foundation of it is Himself, as the One who has gotten the victory over death, for this is what Peter's confession of Him implied. He did not say when challenged by the Lord, "Thou art Jesus of Nazareth," or "Thou art the Messiah," but "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The mightiest foe in the universe—DEATH—has fallen before the victorious advance of the Son of Man. He has been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). Consider for a moment that lonely Sufferer, weak and despicable in the eyes of men, hanging on a cross between two malefactors. Every element of defeat judged by human standards was there. He would not, or could not save Himself. No voice was raised on his behalf; by universal consent, as far as could be seen, He was condemned to that death of shame. Yet going down into death He overthrew the power of death, and having come up from the tomb He will die no more. And from that point of victory He has begun to build His assembly. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a heartening theme. Do we realize what it means? He is on the other side, beyond all the misery of this world, having gone out of it by death, but He has come up out of the

desolation of death, having conquered it. He has taken up new ground—resurrection ground, where man never stood before. He is there as the Last Adam—a *life-giving Spirit* (1 Cor. 15. 45). He is there as the Builder of His assembly, and all to whom He imparts this new life are put by Him into the assembly as living stones; He is there as the Chief Corner-Stone upon which the whole building is immutably founded. The life which He gives is not of the world, it is resurrection life—Christ's own life, in fact. The Spirit that dwells in those whom He makes to live is not of this world, nor can the world receive Him (John 14. 17); He belongs to heaven, and is only imparted to those who own the supremacy of Christ. So that Christ's assembly though still in the world is not of it. It had no existence until Christ was glorified in heaven; from thence the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost and by His coming formed it. So that its origin, as well as its character and destiny, is heavenly. What glorious liberty of soul the realization of this gives. It is true that those of whom it is composed, you and I, were of the world; we had no portion but its evil and no hope beyond its misery, but in the very gutter of it the Lord sought us. We heard His voice saying, "Come unto Me." We came and tasted that He was gracious, for He pardoned our sins and lifted our burden and gave our tired hearts rest. His precious atoning blood wiped out all the guilty past, and we found peace in Him. But there is more. Having come to Him we learn that He is the living Stone, rejected of men, having no place in the pretentious edifice that they are building, but nevertheless a chief corner-stone, elect and precious. And the more we consider Him in this character the more we shall praise Him, and the fuller will be our appreciation of that grace that has put us into His assembly.

Thus the building goes on, and when it is completed the assembly, in another aspect of it, shall share the glory of its Builder as the Son of Man. It shall be

His help-meet in that glorious day when everything that hath breath shall own His supremacy. Faith will then have given place to sight, for then no veil shall hide His glory from the admiring eyes of countless hosts. But now it is a question of faith, and I would challenge all our hearts as to whether our faith has laid hold on Him in the way we have considered Him, and owned His supremacy. Have we come to Him as the Living Stone, and owned Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the builder of His impregnable assembly? If so, God be praised; let us hold to that whatever the appearances may be.

He is Himself the foundation of this structure, a foundation that cannot be moved. The Popish church claims that Peter is the foundation, and I sometimes wonder whether the devil in his lack of perception did not so interpret the Lord's words, for from that moment he made Peter a special object of attack. Notice in this very chapter that he put it into Peter's heart and mouth to endeavour to turn the Lord from suffering and death, the only way by which He could obtain the right to build His assembly. Failing to accomplish his end at the first attempt he next forced the impetuous and self-confident disciple to deny that he ever knew the One whom He had confessed as the Son of the living God. And finding at length that the building of the assembly which he would have frustrated had begun, he used Peter again in making his first great attack upon the structure itself in an endeavour to destroy the unity of it. (See Gal. 2. 11, 12, 13.) And every division and sect maker or maintainer from that day to this has followed the lead given by Peter when he did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. It may be said that there was some excuse for Peter's failure before the death of Christ, for he had not then received the Holy Ghost, but there was no excuse for his sectarian act at Antioch, and the lesson we should learn from it is that man cannot be trusted; we must look wholly to the Lord. Let us thank God

that Christ, not Peter, is the foundation, and resting securely upon this unshakable rock let us use diligence to understand the truth of Christ's assembly and how we should be affected by it who form part of it.

We Must Walk Worthy of It.

We are called to walk worthy of this vocation wherewith we are called, and this can only be done with "*all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*" Nor is that all. We might do that as fellow members of a society who had no link with each other save a common cause, but we belong to a living unity; every one of us is an integral part of one whole, and we have to use diligence to keep this unity—which is the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace (Eph. 4. 1, 2, 3). It is here, in the practical carrying out of the truth that the failure we have to deplore has come in. Instead of using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, men have arisen who have looked upon it as a sacred duty to make and maintain sects and parties for the upholding of their own special views on doctrine or church order. The result is that instead of the assembly presenting its proper and unchanging indivisibility before the world, the world only sees it broken up into warring factions. But this does not affect the truth that we have been considering; that abides, and it is a perpetual rebuke to our failure to carry it out.

Many are mourning this failure. They look back to Pentecost and cry, "Alas, that things now should be so unlike what they were then." They recall revivals that have taken place since then, when the saints of God were brought under the power of the truth, and are cast down at the contrast between the bright "then" and the dead "now." Pamphlets are written and widely circulated calling attention to this sad contrast; we read one of these the other day which to us was full of

pathos. The writer of it was an aged Christian, and he recalls in his pamphlet the bright days he knew seventy years ago—the zeal and freshness of soul; the endeavour that the whole truth might be known and lived; the response to the love of Christ; and the oneness of heart and mind and purpose amongst the saints. I would not quarrel with such a reminder that these days are not as those were, but I would warn you against being depressed by the contrast. I would not say do not look at the failure at all, for looking at it and seeing how that better men, more zealous and enlightened as to the truth than any of us are, have failed, will lead you to be less self-confident and more dependent upon the Lord for yourselves; but I would say do not look too long at it, for there is something better upon which your eyes may rest. The failure will make you weep, that which is better will make you shout for joy.

The pamphlet of which I speak turned my thoughts to Ezra, the chapter that we have read together, and I should like it to speak to you now as it spoke to me then.

The Shouting and the Weeping.

Israel had terribly failed, and that that lay at the root of all the failure and brought in all the disaster that had overtaken them was disobedience to the Word of God. Solomon's Temple, reared in the midst of the beloved city, had been the visible answer in the midst of them for the time then being of God's gracious thoughts and purposes towards them. It was His dwelling-place and there He had set His Name; but it had become a heap of ruins in consequence of their sin, and the city itself had been laid waste. Now they had come to a time of reviving. They discovered that God was faithful though they had failed, and in a mighty pæan they celebrated the fact that, "THE LORD IS GOOD AND HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER." What a consolation was this to them, what a comfort and joy it is to

us. Let the thought of it sing through our souls until it brings us into tune with the triumph of God which shall be celebrated by His church in everlasting praise.

The laying again of the foundations of the temple made the people realise that though Israel had failed God had not. His purposes and promises remained unchanged, and though they were a feeble band and their work as feeble as themselves yet they associated themselves now with GOD, HIS PURPOSES, and HIS HOUSE. It is this that we must do. And though they were a feeble band, a mere remnant, they were able to take up sanctuary service to the Lord and to praise Him "after the ordinance of King David"—and David's day was the brightest hour of Israel's history. This was not imitation on their part, but the joy of the Lord's house, and their devotion to it because it was His house, produced in them the same results that were produced in David. And we only need to come afresh under the influence of Christ, and have our hearts devoted to Himself and His assembly because it is His, and there will be effected in us the joy and liberty of the best days.

But many of the chief of the fathers and the ancient men wept as they thought of the splendour of the former days, so that the noise of the joy could not be discerned from the noise of the weeping. It is the failure that causes the tears, and we must not be indifferent to it. The truth will not make us indifferent to it, the more we know it the more deeply we shall feel the failure; but it will not depress us, for we shall turn from it to the Lord, "*because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.*"

The Brightest Days Are Before Us.

Now let us hear the word that the Lord sent to these weepers through His prophet Haggai in the second chapter of His prophecy: "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now?"

Is it not in your eyes in comparison as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, **AND WORK: FOR I AM WITH YOU**, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, *so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.*"

Note that the Lord goes back to their deliverance from Egypt, and spans the whole period and story of their failure, and says, "My Spirit remaineth with you." He had remained true to His own word and purpose, and if that was true for Israel it is more intensely and blessedly true for His assembly.

"Christ with His church hath ever stood."

And His Spirit is still here.

Then He goes on to tell them that He would shake everything—the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land. So that everything that was mutable and without foundations would be removed out of the way; but He would fill that house with His glory, and the glory of it should be greater than any that had gone before.

The shaking has begun, beloved hearers, and nothing that is not founded upon God's immovable foundation will stand; but His assembly will stand, for it is founded upon **THE ROCK**, and the glory that is coming is greater than any that has gone before. **THE BEST DAYS ARE BEFORE US**, and hope lifts up

her head and rejoices. You may tell me of those Pentecostal days, when all were together of one mind and one heart and the unhindered power of the Holy Spirit went forth in widespread blessing. We can rejoice in it, *but there are brighter days before us.* You may recall later days when God graciously gave revival, and the word was with power and the Lord's name greatly prized. Again we rejoice, *but there are brighter days before us.* We are hastening on to the time which cannot be far distant now when the assembly completed, as the holy Jerusalem, shall descend "out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal" (Rev. 21. 10, 11). In view of that bright day let us labour, for what privilege could be greater or honour higher than to be permitted to hold on to the truth and work on for the truth, and to be found doing this when the Lord comes to catch up His assembly for that glory? Can you imagine anything more blessed than for the Lord to come and find us maintaining His truth and testimony, holding steadfastly the fact of His supremacy and walking in the truth of His assembly? But we must know the truth if we are to hold it, and if we know it and hold it we shall be like the people who shouted for joy in Ezra's day, and we shall not dwell upon the past with its failure, but we shall look onward to the future with its glory, and we shall sing as we press on to that future. "*The Lord is good and His mercy ENDURETH FOR EVER.*"

Walking Together.

CHRIANIANS, God loses much, and you lose much, and Satan gains much by this, that you do not, that you will not walk lovingly together as far as your ways lie together. It is your sin and your shame that you do not, that you will not pray together, and hear together, and confer together, and mourn together, because that in some lesser things you are not agreed together. What folly, what madness it is in those whose way of a hundred miles lies ninety-nine together, and yet will not walk so far together because they cannot go together the other mile; yet such is the folly of many Christians who will not do many things they may do because these cannot do everything they should do. (Brooks.)

The Similitudes of the Kingdom.—VII. (JAMES GREEN)

The Parable of the Virgins (Matt. 25. 1-13).

THIS parable is not introduced with the usual words of present similitude, but is cast in the future tense, the emphasis being upon the fact that the kingdom of the heavens shall be likened unto ten virgins. The real and the unreal are present throughout the series of parables, and here another mark is given of the difference between them. In the last parable the essential was the wedding garment, in this it is the possession of the oil. We must not reverse this order; it is Christ first, then the Holy Spirit; first the work that fits for the inheritance of the saints in light, and then the seal of that fitness. Ten virgins had lamps, professing thereby to be light-bearers; only five had that which was necessary to support the light. "While the Bridegroom tarried," describes the long history of Christianity, the night of the Lord's absence, during which heaviness and slumber has overcome those who should have watched for His return.

At the first all went forth like the Thessalonian believers to wait for the Lord from heaven, but as the energy of Apostolic days passed, gradually this bright hope waned until it was lost, the church sank into conformity to the world, and instead of walking in the power of the precious truths concerning Himself, believers and professors were found fast asleep in the midnight darkness. Ever and again witnesses were raised up to testify to the realities of God's word, but even so great a movement as the Reformation did not awake a slumbering church to expect her coming Lord. So things continued until the close of the eighteenth century, when suddenly like a trumpet call the summons went forth: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom." Men of God were raised up at this time to bear witness to long-forgotten truths, the prophetic word became the subject of earnest study, the heavenly hope of the church, the Bride, took possession of hearts, and practical separation from the world followed as a consequence. The Reformation had delivered souls from

the corruptions of Rome, but it had not detached Christians from earthly hopes; they still leant for support upon the political powers of the world, state churches arose, the king instead of the Pope was the head of the church, the church still slept to the fact that she had a head in heaven. The revival of the truth of the Lord's coming brought to light the true relation of the church to Christ, and with that came a personal affection for the coming One. This was the time to which the parable alludes, "then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps," for the awakening at the commencement of the last century was general; there was activity everywhere, continuing to the present day: Bible Societies, Bible study, Bible schools, missions, conventions, such have been multiplied, never in the history of the church has there been such a trimming of lamps, the whole profession of Christianity has been awakened in all lands, and brightly has the light shone from many a one who has had oil in their vessels with their lamps. This one necessity must be possessed by each, none can impart it to his neighbour, it can be obtained only from the source of supply.

It was said to Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Such is the lamp of profession without the Holy Spirit, the energy of life and light. The great awakening, at the time of the midnight cry, was not allowed to pass unchallenged by the enemy, and soon did he seek to destroy if possible, at any rate to spoil the effect of, the hope of the speedy return of the Bridegroom, upon the lives of those who had heard the call. The virgins were summoned to behold the personal graces of the Bridegroom; it is the apprehension of the personal glory of Christ that Satan ever seeks to undermine. He effects this mainly by imitation of the truth, and many souls have been deluded into exchanging old lamps for new, instead of obtaining the necessary oil. Need we name some of these oil-less lamps: Higher Criticism, Christian Science, New Theology, Christadelphianism, Millennial Dawn, *alias* Bible Students' Association, and the like, some of them even marked by the form of words which

speak of the Lord's return, but all making a direct attack upon the person of the Son of God. What shall the end be? "While they went to buy"—men will be found still seeking after truth, ever learning and yet never able to come to the knowledge of it, because they neglect Him who is the truth, until at last it will be too late—"the Bridegroom came."

Ah! blessed moment for every one of whom it is written, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage," but upon the others "the door was shut." Inside, the joy of His presence at the wedding feast; outside, the cry of despair: "Lord, Lord, open to us." At any instant the future of the parable may become a present reality. Reader, pause. Are you ready? Has the precious blood of Christ made you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light? Has the Holy Spirit sealed you for that day? Rest not until you can with glad heart say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The closing words of the parable are a challenge to every heart, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." The last sentence, "wherein the Son of Man cometh," should be omitted.²

Before He appears to the world in that character, He is coming as the Bridegroom for His church, to take out of the kingdom of the heavens the pearl of great price for which He sold all that He had. Daily the moment draws nearer; the present terrible conflict amongst nations bearing the name of Christian sharply pointing the lesson that centuries of religious profession have not changed the heart of man, and a warning from God not to set our hopes upon a world that, although it may take the name of Christ, will soon hear His words: "I know you not." For His own He comes as the bright and morning star, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

The Talents (Matt. 25. 14-30).

Closely joined to the preceding, this parable describes the scene when the Lord will survey all that has taken place in the Kingdom during the time of His absence. Such a reckoning as we have here described will include all who have

had part in the mystery of the Kingdom, His bondmen during that time, while the judgment scene, which is not a parable, recorded in the latter part of the chapter, verses 31-46, will concern only those Gentile nations found living on the earth when the Son of Man shall come in His glory.

The responsibility varies according to the talents bestowed; these latter represent the varying gifts and spheres of service which each one may have received. A valuable comment on the parable is given in Romans 12. 6-8. Grace has provided the gifts and they vary in character, but all have to be used according to the proportion of faith, the result being seen when the Master comes. One object is governing the servant, "serving the Lord," not in slothfulness but in fervency of spirit. So let us occupy ourselves in service, studying to approve ourselves to Him, for we shall all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. The parable differs from that of the pounds given in Luke 19., for there all are given alike, the pound representing perhaps the name of the Lord which is given to each, for the use of which each will have to render account (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 1. 2; 2 Timothy 2. 19). Some will be found to have done more, some less. In each parable the one who has done nothing proves by his conduct that there is no love for his Master in his heart; like the man who lacked the wedding garment, he does not possess the one thing needful. He has a name, but without the life that produces service and love; and if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, whatever his profession may be, he can only be accursed at His coming (1 Cor. 16. 22). The Master gives in His wisdom according to the particular ability of each servant, to every man his work; and if this be fulfilled, whether the measure be one, two, or five talents, it will receive the approval given on another occasion: "She hath done what she could." Greater than this none can do; less, our Lord will hold us responsible for. The work that He has set us usually lies nearer to our hand than we think, and will be found in the lowly path of His will in the passing hours of each day. Perhaps we are sometimes in danger of overlooking this, in the desire to do some great thing or fretting because we cannot do some of

the deeds which others have done who have received the five talents. Yes, it is in the opportunities of living for Him which He gives us day by day that we may find the talents committed to us, and which faithfully lived will receive His "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." The same commendation was bestowed upon the two talent servant as upon the five talent one. We must not dismiss from our minds the case of the useless servant, with the thought that because he had no link with his Master and found his place in the outer darkness, therefore he provides no message for us who desire to serve. The Lord's words come with point to us all. Do our hands grow slack sometimes when we talk of God's purpose? does the thought sometimes intrude, that if He wills men to be saved, they will be, and if not no efforts of ours can save them?

Let us beware of the spirit of the slothful servant, who talked of the inflexible will of his Master, and forgot that he was gracious. True it is that the Lord can carry on His business without our service and that He will reap where there has been no sowing by His bondmen, and gather where they have not straved for Him. Because we are idle He will not let His work suffer, but He desires that we should be fellow-workers with Him; further He commands us to work, and will call us to account for our idleness, but still more He has granted to us the honour of happy willing service in things both great and small until He shall come.

Another fruitful source of idleness is fear. The slothful servant said that he was afraid. His thought of his Master was that he was exacting, critical, hard to please, and that He would find fault with that which was done. Let not such thoughts hinder our labours. We serve a Master who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, One who knows how small our strength is, but is ever at hand to make His strength perfect in our weakness. He values the smallest thing done in His name, the cup of cold water does not pass unnoticed, and out of very small things done under the constraining power of His love He can make great ones come.

Then there is another kind of fear, and that is, the criticism of our fellow-servants; we may suffer from it ourselves, but alas are too often ready to lay the same burden upon others. Many, many a work of love, many a service which the Master would have us do, remains undone, from the fear that others will not approve of it. It is ever good to remember our fellow-servants, to value their counsel and help, to feel the necessity of their prayers, but when all this is taken into account it remains that each is responsible to his Master alone, and to his own Master he stands or falls. It is not the approval of the servants that will fill the heart with joy in that day, but His "Well done." Then lastly the idle servant said, "I hid thy talent in the earth." How many a life that might have been bright with useful service has been buried thus. The bondman has forgotten that he has been left here for his Lord's interests, and has hid his light under a bushel, obscured it by the pursuit of business aims, and has lived as if the end and object of existence was to provide the means of living. Or again the light has been put under a bed, a place of ease has been sought, and the days have quietly slipped away in quiet retirement, while all around was the call to work for the night is coming when no man can work. Thank God, no true child of His shall ever see the awful end of the wicked and slothful servant in the parable, but the warning is none the less needed, lest the talents committed to us by our coming Lord should be found unused, and that we should not be able to render to Him in that day His own with interest. To use is to have more abundantly, to spend in service is to increase in the true riches, to be idle is to lose that which we have, and become spiritually poor. Let us be up and doing in the service of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.

So ends this wonderful series of parables, describing for us the period of Our Lord's absence, revealing to us the secrets of God's present working, detaching our hearts from earthly hopes and prospects, and setting before us the privileges and responsibilities belonging to those who are subjects in the kingdom of the heavens.

Signs of the Night.

The world's day weareth to its eventide:
 Time steals away.
 The shadows of the eve are stretched wide—
 Wide, deep, and grey.
 In boding clouds sinks down the cheerless light,
 The morning cometh, also comes the night.

"*IT shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light*" (Zech. 14. 17). It is a sign that bodes an evening-time when the shadows are waxing long. While the sun is high the shadows are short; but the lower the sun is, the longer the shadows are. So here it is a sign of an evening-time coming upon the church, when empty shadows are growing long, and of more account than substantial religion. When a man's shadow is two or three times longer than himself, it says the sun is low, and the night is nigh. Is it not so in a spiritual sense, when professors have much more of the form of godliness than of the power thereof; more of the shadow of religion than the substance of it?

It is a sign that bodes an evening-time, when labourers are fast returning from their labour. If you see those who labour in the field returning home from their work, you conclude that the evening-time is at hand. So when, in the church of God, many faithful labourers in God's vineyard are fast taken home to heaven, from their labour on earth, it is a sign that evening-time is approaching. When Lots are taken out of Sodom, it presages a shower of wrath. Methuselah was taken away a year before the flood. We may conclude that when Noahs are taken into their arks it betokens a deluge, and that God gathers His harvest before the winter storm, and calls home labourers before the dark night comes on.

It is a sign that bodes an evening-time, when men begin generally to be heavy and sleepy-headed; for as they that sleep, sleep in the night, saith the Apostle, so, when men begin to fall a-napping, it shows that the night is coming on. When people are saying,

"Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh."

It is a sign of an evening-time approaching, when the air, that was warm with the sunbeams through the day, becomes exceeding cold: when, the sun being away, the air grows cold, it says the dark night is coming on. Even so, when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxeth cold. This coldness of love to God and men is a certain forerunner of a darker evening-time of calamity. The coldness of the air prognosticates a storm.

Another sign of an evening-time is when the light is gradually declining and departing. So it is a symptom of an evening-time coming on when there is a gradual departing of God's glory. We read of the gradual removes of the glory of the Lord from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and there it stood: from thence to the midst of the city: and from thence to the mountain (Ezek. 10. 4, 18; 11. 23), showing us by how many steps and paces the Lord departs from a sinful people, as loath to go away. The gradual departing of God's glory is a sign of a gradual approach of a sad evening-time.

Another sign of an evening-time approaching is when singing birds are silent. A lightsome time is represented by a time of singing of birds (Cant. 2. 12). So, we say, it is a sign of a dark evening-time at hand when the sweet singers of Israel have lost their melody.

It is a sign of an evening-time at hand when men are generally tired with toil, and wearied with the work of the day. So it is a sign of an evening upon the church when the generality therein are saying of the service of God, and work of the day, "What a wear-

ness is it:” When people are weary of Christ and His yoke it shows that God is weary of them; that God and they are not to keep company long together.

It is a sign of an evening-time approaching when the light becomes uneasy, and windows become useless for letting in the light; and when men close the window-shutters to exclude any light that is shining: this, you know, is ordinary, when the night is coming on. Even so it is a sad sign of an approaching dark night when the light of the gospel becomes uneasy to men, when they prefer the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, and the darkness of error to the light of truth.

It is a sign that it is an evening-time when artificial light becomes to be in most request, such as that of candles, torches, and lamps, instead of daylight and sunlight. Even so it is an evening-time in the church when, instead of simplicity of the gospel and the plain preaching of the Word of God, preference is given to the wisdom of words and of human literature. When many set up for a new modish way of preaching, with flourishing harangues without studying to preach Christ, and the great substantial truths of the gospel, but rather empty speculation and lifeless morality: when people are pleased with no sermons but such as are artificially decked with the flowers of the gaudy rhetoric and tinkling oratory.

It is a sad sign of an evening-time when all is hushed in silence and the

house kept in profound peace: for in the day-time there is still some noise about the house; but in the night-time there is nothing, for ordinary, but undisturbed peace and tranquillity. Even so it is a sign that it is the dark and dead hour of the night with people when their hearts are resting in the beds of carnal ease and peace: it says that the devil is lulling them asleep in the bed of security: “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11. 21). Some are ready to think, God be thanked, I was never disturbed by the devil. Yea, but, man, why doth he not disturb you? The reason is because he is sure enough of you; but if you were resisting him, he would give you little peace; he would set all the powers of hell on your top. But when all is hushed in a hellish peace, it is black evening-time.

It is a plain sign of an evening-time, yea that it is midnight, when all doors are barred and bolted, and when no knocks are heard or answered, so as to procure an opening of the door. And is it not a sad evidence that it is an evening-time, yea, a midnight time with a multitude in the visible church, when the doors of their hearts are fast shut against Christ; and though He stand at the door and knock, yet they do not hear, answer, and open to Him? When sinners knock at His door He is still ready to open, according to His word: “To him that knocketh it shall be opened”; but when He knocks at the sinner’s door He may knock a thousand times and never be heard or answered.

The shadows have greatly lengthened around us since Ralph Erskine preached this sermon in the year 1723, and the signs are multiplying that the world’s night, when the day of grace shall have closed, is almost upon it, for thickly rise the clouds of sorrow up upon the horizon, and light makes haste to go. How necessary it is in the face of all these signs of coming night that “the children of the light” should “watch and be sober.” To this we are exhorted in the Scriptures of Truth: “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. 9, 10).

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 117.—118.

PSALM 117. This Psalm should be compared with Psalms 67. and 100. In all three Israel, knowing Jehovah's rich mercy towards herself, is longing for the outgoing of grace to the Gentiles: first their instruction in 67., and then their worship in the two later Psalms. In our present study, all nations and all races of men are bidden to praise Jehovah, because "His mercy is great towards us." In His dealings with the Jews they will also have learned His truth or faithfulness to promise, the same attributes for which thanks was given in Psalm 115. 1. There is a citation from our Psalm in Romans 15. 11 to prove the purpose of God to bless the Gentiles which the Jews of Paul's day were so slow to acknowledge.

PSALM 118. With this Psalm the Hallel (*i.e.* praise) sung by the Jews at their feasts closes. Hence it has been thought that this was the hymn sung by the disciples as recorded in Matthew 26. 30 and Mark 14. 26. Some would include the Lord Himself among the singers; but though in grace He associated Himself with the believing remnant of that time, and was indeed their leader, yet in His own spirit He ever lived in the relationships which, the work of the cross having been accomplished, He reveals as ours (John 20. 17). Of these the Psalm knows nothing, and to assume, as some writers have done, that the Lord used the Psalms in His own daily worship is more than doubtful.

The references to verses 22, 23, 26, in the New Testament plainly teach us that the remnant of Israel of the future day is the speaker here. They have been in distress, but Jah upon whom they called had answered them and brought them into a large place, a place of liberty—they shall go in and out—in contrast to the unbearable yoke of legal bondage

(Acts 15. 10). This deliverance is the fruit of the mercy that endures for ever, and the Spirit calls the same three classes mentioned in Psalm 115. to give thanks as the recipients of it.

Suffering is experienced from three different sources: In verses 10–12 from the Gentile nations; these will be cut off, see Micah 4. 11, etc., and Zechariah 10. 12. verse 3, etc. Secondly from Satan, "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall." The definite purpose here expressed should be noticed as in all Satanic opposition. In this case "Jehovah helped me." Thirdly, and separated from the foregoing by several verses, as if to mark the different character of trial, "Jah has chastened me sore, but He has not given me over unto death." This chastening, as always when taken from His hand in a subject spirit, effects purification, and the gates of righteousness are opened to the saints to praise Jah (Isa. 26. 2). But now a deeper lesson must be learned, if the remnant is to be happy with God; the question of its guilt in connection with Messiah must be taken up. The stone had been set at nought by the builders, will they own Him as "head of the corner"? Yes, what Peter told their leaders, and they would not hear (Acts 4. 11) they now recognize as "Jehovah's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." But more than this, their eyes are to behold the return of Him they once rejected, and the Psalm is part of the instruction of the Spirit as to His reception. The Hosannas, that were in a sense premature in the day of Messiah's tears (Luke 19. 41), will sound out with perfect harmony "in the day of His espousals and in the day of the gladness of His heart."

The expression "the day which Jehovah hath made" is found again in Malachi 3. 17 and 4. 3, in each case

looking on to the time of the kingdom when the Hosanna (save now) of verse 25 will be in complete accord with the new scene. In verse 26 Messiah is welcomed as coming in the Name of Jehovah according to His own testimony in the Gospels (Matt. 23. 39, Luke 13. 35), and those who come to worship are blessed by the priestly family out of the House of Jehovah.

In the next verse "Jehovah is God who hath given us light"; there is no

thought of a fresh revelation or even an accession of intelligence, but the fulfilment of Numbers 6. 25, as well as the answer to the refrain in Psalm 80. The praise of a people so richly blessed concludes the Psalm. One other point is interesting to notice; we find in verses 14, 21, 28, and also in Isaiah 12. 2, some notes from the song of the Red Sea, a double witness that the word of the prophet will be fulfilled. "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth" (Hosea 2. 15).

Comments and Communications.

(EDITOR).

The Truth or its Effects.

COMMENTING on some remarks under the above heading which appeared in our September issue, a valued correspondent writes: "Do you not think that Hebrews 6. 12 furnishes light as to 'Is the Truth or the effects of it the Standard?' Your answer seems to me to go rather beyond the question. Of course, the truth is the standard or objective ever, but does not the Spirit-produced and recorded effect delineate a full Christ to the Spirit-taught as wrought out in detail in each one in whom faith worked? It is thus one Christ throughout Scripture—detail of Himself—the Truth."

We could not say that those who have gone before "who through faith and patience inherit the promises" are set before us as the standard to be followed by us, so that we may tread steadily the path of faith, for the passage does not convey such a thought to our minds. It is rather that God has kept the path of faith open for His saints from the beginning; *we are not the first to tread it*. It is a road well worn by steadfast feet, and our turn has now come to tread it. We follow on in the march of the faithful. That which kept those who have gone before in the path were the promises of God in regard to the end of it, and it is faith in the same God and His immutable promises that will keep us in it also.

We have in Hebrews 11. a detailed account of these patient and faithful men, a most encouraging chapter, but having reviewed them we are exhorted to "run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking steadfastly upon Jesus the leader and completer of faith" (12. 2, N.T.). The word translated "looking" here "has the force of looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively on one" (*J. N. Darby*). Jesus is the object and standard (chap. 13. 7). We are to remember our leaders [not them which have the rule over you]; but it is to consider the issue of their conversation: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Every true leader of the saints turns their eyes to Him as the only object and standard for the saints. Those who would occupy them with questions and debates are not leaders, but scatterers, and such we have to avoid.

It is encouraging to see the life of Christ and His various features and characteristics being reproduced in the saints; it is a real help, but this is only done in us and in others as we are occupied with Christ. The moon sheds light upon the earth only as it faces the sun. We are transformed into Christ's image as we behold His glory (2 Cor. 3.). Christ *personally* effects this and nothing else will.