"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 Timothy 3. 16, 17).

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**VI: Scripture Truth.**
The Spirit of Prophecy.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19. 10).

In the thoughts of God Christ is supreme, and in the mission of the Holy Ghost to earth Christ is supreme, as John 15. 26 and 16. 14 declare, and in the hearts and minds of all the children of God who walk in the Spirit Christ is supreme. But God has decreed that the supremacy of Christ shall be universally acknowledged, and His overruling providence in this world, His present work of grace amongst men, and His swiftly coming judgments that shall overwhelm the ungodly, as well as the unceasing labours of the Holy Spirit in the assembly have the supremacy of Christ as their goal.

The testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy is, that, the once despised and rejected Man, who was mocked, buffeted and crucified by men, has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, and He shall "reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15. 25).

The natural eye cannot and will not see this, the natural heart cannot and will not understand it, and so the ways of God remain a mystery to the multitude, and the Bible a book of riddles. The natural heart hates the very thought of it, and often bitterly resents the word which brings it to it as testimony, and this is why at the beginning of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which shows us how God will effectuate His purposes as to Christ in judgment where His grace has been refused, the servants of the Lord are suffering persecution; and the one who was chosen to receive the Revelation was an exile in Patmos for "the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (chap. 1. 9, N.T.). But vain is the frenzied rage of feeble man against the will of the eternal God, for God must triumph in the end, and His triumph will be when every creature owns the supremacy of Christ.

Every Christian heart must rejoice that Christ who is Heir of all things shall yet come into His own. His rights were refused when He appeared first, a Man amongst men, for the world did not want Him. Its doors were closed against Him when He came into it, so that His mother had to seek a stable for His birth. Its doors were closed against Him when He went about in it doing good, so that when the night storms raged He wandered a homeless stranger without a place to lay His head. And they said, "This is the Heir, come let us kill Him"; and though no cause of death was found in Him His name was written upon the criminal roll of Jerusalem, and the princes of the world with the rabble held high festival when He was cast out of it as a common felon. But God hath raised Him up and highly exalted Him. He is great David's greater Son, and Israel's royal diadem shall rest upon His worthy brow, and the very trees of the holy land that witnessed His deep humiliations shall clap their hands with gladness as He rules with equity for the meek of the earth. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords and He shall judge and make war in righteousness, until every throne be between the poles is made subject to Him and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord. He is the Heir of all things, and to the uttermost reaches of the infinite universe of God His fame shall be told and His glory shall shine, until every creature, from the most exalted spiritual potentate in the heavens above to the meanest devil in the depths beneath, shall acknow-
ledge that He is Lord of all, for to Him has been given "a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9-11).

This is "the testimony of Jesus" which is the spirit of prophecy, i.e. that just as the spirit of a man gives life and force and direction to his body, so this is the life of the whole body of prophecy; and as a body is one, so is all prophecy one, whether the earliest predictions of the distant days of the Old Testament or the latest prophecies of New Testament writers. All are one, and the ultimate supremacy of Christ is the end and theme of all, binding all together into one body, and giving to the whole life and force as a testimony to men and for the blessing of the servants of God who look for this glorious consummation of all things. It is entirely useless to study the word of prophecy as a whole, or any part of it, if this is not understood, or is not the earnest desire and hope of the heart and mind that studies it. We speak of the "prophetic word" and are sometimes tempted to place certain parts of Scripture only in this category; but the truth is that the whole force and push of the sacred writings and of the Holy Spirit by whom they are given to us is toward this great objective. There are things of unspeakable blessedness presented to us in the word that we may enjoy now, but these are not given to us to make us satisfied with the present, but to fill our souls with a sense of the exceeding greatness of God's purposes, and to strengthen us by the way, that we may press on to what is coming; or, in the words of Scripture, "Go forth to meet the Bridegroom." If we are not moving in this direction we are not walking in the Spirit or following the drive of the Word of God.

The call to us is clear and insistent. "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM, GO YE FORTH TO MEET HIM." And the wise will forget every other consideration; they will allow no question or device to detain them, but with eyes enraptured and hearts united by the glory and love of the Bridegroom they will respond together to that divine trumpet call. And to help us to do this with burning hearts and shining lamps we publish the papers of this issue of Scripture Truth, which shall be followed by others, if God will.

The Father's House. (John 14. 1-3.)

In considering "the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ in relation to things to come" we naturally think first of the Father's House. The catching up of the saints—which is undoubtedly referred to in John 14. 3, though unfolded only in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-17—will be followed by their introduction to the Father's House. This will be the prelude to the further manifold display of His glory in the assembly, the kingdom, and the eternal state. John 14. has been in all ages the downy pillow upon which the sorrow-stricken and troubled children of God have ever rested their weary heads. In fact, all believers, in all circumstances, have read it and re-read it; their hearts have been warmed as they have realized the love breathed forth in every sentence; they have written across it that sweetest word on earth, still sweeter in the spiritual realm, HOME, and with glad anticipation they have looked forward to exchanging their "moving tent" for "the dwelling-place of God." On this occasion, however, we invite our readers to contemplate that scene as the place where our Lord Jesus Christ is at home. There everything is
suited to His presence. It is the place of the Divine Presence, where all His glory shines forth in brightest effulgence, and there in His own glory He is at home. It is "before the presence of His glory" that He will present His own "with exceeding joy" (Jude 24.), and it is there that they will find their home. It is interesting to notice the only other occasion on which Christ spoke of "My Father's House," and it is recorded in John 2. 16, where He referred to the temple. That had been the place of God's presence, and when His glory filled it none dare enter; but no longer in a temple built with hands is that presence known, but in a place designed by love and prepared for us by His entering there as Man risen from among the dead. A brighter glory shall fill that scene, for there the Father shall be fully known. And Christ shall be the centre of it, and we, with bodies of glory like unto His body of glory, shall dwell at home in the presence of that glory through God's eternal day.

But we cannot divorce from the contemplation of His glory the thought of the magnificence of His love, for it is in the manifestation of His love that His glory shines the brightest. He came here that He might declare the Father's name and reveal the Father's heart. As the result of His death and resurrection He has set us down, in association with Himself, as sons before the Father's face. Only He who is the Son of the Father's love, and who is Himself one with the Father, could do this. When we see Him, we shall see the Father, and when we recline in His bosom we shall feel the throbbings of the Father's heart of love.

Perhaps a reference to one or two passages in John's Gospel may help us. In chapter 1., verses 35-39, we find that John, attracted surely by the glory of Christ's Person, for "He could not be hid," exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God." Immediately two of John's disciples left him and followed Jesus. The result of the little interview that ensued was that they went with Jesus, "saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."

Was this not a foretaste of "Where I am, there ye may be also"? We can imagine how those disciples would feast their eyes upon His beauty; and we can understand how there would fall upon their ears the most wonderful outpouring of divine love. They "saw where He dwelt," that was in "the bosom of the Father" (John 1. 18), for He never left it, and as He unfolded what in that bosom lay their hearts would burn. Now let us connect this with John 13. The day, far spent in chapter 1., had ended, the night had fallen (ver. 30), and the blessed Lord gathered "His own" around Himself. Apart from the world, He was the centre of that circle that was so dear to His heart. One of the number, who had tasted deeply of His love, and who knew himself to be an object of it, lay with his head on the bosom of Him who dwells in the bosom of the Father. Presently, the precious ministry contained in chapters 14., 15., and 16. being ended, He speaks, not to His own now, but to the Father. HUSH! Let every voice be still. We are permitted to enter the divine Presence and to listen to communications between divine Persons. His requests are for "His own," they are prompted by His love for "His own," and the climax is reached in His closing petition:

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be WITH ME WHERE I AM; that they MAY BEHOLD MY GLORY, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24).

Now come back to chapter 14. He points His disciples on to the passing of the night and to the ushering in of the day of exceeding joy of His heart, when in a prepared place He shall have a prepared people, and to them in the Father's house it shall be given to gaze upon His glory, who is the most glorious Person in the universe of God.
JOHN 17. stands alone. It is the language of the Son as He addresses the Father on His own behalf and on that of the apostles and those who should believe on Him through their word. None but He, the Son of God, and both Shepherd and Advocate, could have breathed such a prayer. It was in no sense a pattern or model for the use of others, as was that which He gave to His disciples on an earlier day when He said to them, "After this manner pray ye."

There is no such injunction here, nor could be. It is the language of a faithful steward who recounts His work as done and well done. "I have finished," He says, "the work which Thou gavest me to do," speaking in anticipation of the moment, so near at hand, when He should loudly and triumphantly cry, "It is finished."

On this ground He claims restoration to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was—a glory which He had never forfeited, a place which He had left in order to glorify God on earth in perfect manhood. He justly claims reinstatement in that place and in that glory which He had never dishonoured during His period of suffering here below. The defilement of earth had not affected Him. The water rises pure as ever to its level in the heavens.

Who but He could speak after this fashion? The prayer is therefore peculiarly His own. How worthy of our deepest meditation! What a privilege that we should be permitted to hear its sacred accents and to listen to the intercourse which passed between the Son and the Father at such a moment. Of the twenty-six verses of our chapter He spends but five on Himself; then follows eighteen which are occupied with the good of others, expressing as they do the most intense solicitude for their preservation from the evil of that world which He was about to leave, but wherein they were purposely left to fill His place in testimony and to exhibit the very unity of life and nature that existed between Himself and the Father. These verses, too, should be our constant and prayerful study. They will greatly enhance our appreciation of the Father—the holiness of His name, the sense of His preserving care, the blessedness of our relation to Him as children, and also the character of the world through which we are passing, its essential evil, its hatred of the Son, its ignorance of the Father, its absolute and hopeless alienation, even though grace may work in it, from all that is of the Father. How a clear sense of all this would, and should, draw together in holy separation from it those who love the Father and belong to the Son as given Him of that Father! Oh! for a deep realization of this new life, its meaning, the blessedness of the links that bind all the precious children of God together in relation with each other and the Father and the Son! What a conception! What a fact, and what a testimony! All will be gloriously accomplished ere long; and in the visible and indefectible display of this divine unity the world, so incredulous to-day, shall yet know that the Father sent the Son, and that, wondrous to say, He loved us (even us) as He loved the Son!

These eighteen verses—with all their wealth of interest, and their more than prayers for the preservation and unity of all His believing people—over, the blessed Lord, the Son loved of the Father—observe, "before the foundation of the world," and able, assuredly, on the ground of such a love so strong, so eternal—may well assert, in verse 24, His will as to those very people. Given of the Father, and purchased by His own precious blood, He may surely affirm His title to them. He may demand His personal gratification as to
first, their being with Him, where He is; and, second, that they should behold His glory—the glory given Him of the Father.

Just as a bridegroom would find pleasure in conducting his bride through their common home and in pointing out to her his varied possessions, so now the desire of the Lord is that those who had seen and shared His sorrows and who had, like Himself, been refused by the world should behold His glory. How great the difference! We have seen His cross, now we are to behold His crown!

That they may behold my glory! Not now the “moral glory” of chapter 1—that of an only-begotten Son with a Father, for this had been beheld, as we know; not now that of the Mount when He received from the Father honour and glory, for this, too, had been witnessed, but the glory given to Him as the result of His atoning death and suffering, a glory millennial indeed, but surely more extended than that, just as the effects of Calvary extend infinitely beyond the confines of time or the sceptre of the Messiah.

Nay, He seeks, and how rightly, His own gratification in the full and unreserved exhibition to “His own” of the glory which for ever shall be His God-given compensation for His anguish and agony, His obedience unto death, the death of the cross, here below. How richly deserved! “Father, I will,” He says—it is no prayer, but the assertion of the same will which, in a few moments, was to be set aside for that of the Father and the necessity of the cross, when He prayed in the shades of the garden: “Not My will but Thine be done”—here He wills that those given Him of the Father may be with Him where He is, and why? “That they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me.” Yes, His gratification indeed, and as truly ours—mutual, eternal! It is His longed-for prospect and ours! And so soon, please God, to be realized! The “will” of verse 24 exceeds prayer, or petition, or demand. It is a claim. Demands had preceded; this, fully in accordance with the good pleasure of the Father, is a righteous title to those who are “His own” on the basis of everlasting love. The result is sure.

Verse 24 stands by itself. The two which follow are a beautiful summing up of the whole; the world is seen in its awful moral distance; the Father and Son are viewed in fullest intimacy, and the Father’s name revealed perfectly to the highly favoured company which knows and possesses the love of the Father and the indwelling of the Son. Wondrous grace indeed. Oh! for hearts to worship and adore!

There Remaineth a Rest.

My longing heart now pillowed
On Jesus’ breast of love,
Hath oft to me foreshadowed
That blissful rest above;
But, O my soul, remember
None shall be weary there,
The ransomed without number,
God’s blessed rest shall share.

The Saviour’s face in glory
With rapture we shall see;
His wounds will tell a story
To swell our Jubilee.
The subjects of salvation
Will praise Him ever there;
While all the new creation
God’s endless rest shall share.
The Promise that Makes the Heart Glow.

"Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22, 20).

THERE are not many things connected with our lives on earth about which we can use the word "surely." We cannot say, "We shall surely wake to-morrow morning," nor even "We shall surely reach the end of this day."

But, thank God, there are some things with reference to which we may use the word without any reservation. We may say that of all the days that make up our lives, 365 every year, there is not one but what goodness and mercy shall SURELY follow us. For does not the word of truth itself say so? (Ps. 23. 6). When IT says "surely" we may with boldness do the same.

The Word of God, to our great blessing and encouragement, talks with us of the things of which we may be assured. I say "talks with us," and not merely to us; for thus we read in Proverbs 6. 22. To talk to a person is one-sided, the giving of an address. But to talk with a person implies that the one addressed replies. There is interchange of thought and word. How wonderfully great is the privilege of having IT talk with us! But how supremely great when the IT is exchanged for the Lord Himself, and when HE talks with us as He did with two of His disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24. 32). This is the sort of talk that makes our hearts glow within us, even as it did theirs.

And it is just this that we have in the last verse in the Bible (except the final benediction). He speaks; His words stir our hearts; they leap within us at the sound of His voice and we respond "Amen! Even so!"

What then does He say? What is His final message? A retrospect? An assurance of present grace? Or a promise?

A promise indeed it is, and a promise concerning Himself.

It is to be noted that whenever He personally promises to return, He lays emphasis on the fact that it is Himself who will come. He counts on the affection of those who are so dear to Him, and knows that nothing will arouse their hopes and delight their hearts like this. To His sorrowing disciples He said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself," the great point of the promise being "that where I am, there ye may also" (John 14. 3). When making a special communication on the subject to Paul (as we learn from 1 Thess. 4. 15), the fact is again brought into prominence that it is the Lord Himself that shall descend from heaven. The shout of triumph and joy that will ring out and fill all heaven with gladness shall not be our shout but His!

So let us frame the second word of the final promise. Underline, if you will, the word "surely." Take to heart all the comfort that lies therein, but let the word that follows be line-circled, not only on the printed page but in your heart:

"SURELY I come quickly."

Comfort one another, not only with these words, in general, but with this word in particular.

How offensive this word "I" often is on the lips of other people! The self-confident man; the self-important man; the self-occupied man: with what nauseating frequency does the monosyllable fall from their lips! We can almost sympathize with the severity of the sentence passed upon the young man who came to David saying, "I stood upon him and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the
crown," etc. (2 Sam. 1.). Even Job's unquestioned excellence does not prevent a shudder when we read in his reply to Bildad: "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness ... I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked ... then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand" (Job 29.).

When we go back to the chapter that contains the glowing promise of which we speak, even there we find the word "I" in the mouth of John in a way that excites our wonder and even our pity, declaring as it does a grave failure of his. "I, John," he says, "... when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel!"

But however offensive it may be to hear others, full of themselves and their own experiences incessantly repeat the personal pronoun, we can never hear it too often from the lips of Him who has won our hearts. We love to hear Him say, "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the Bread of Life." And to have Him talk with us and say, "Surely I come quickly." This indeed is bliss!

His kingdom is coming; the prayers of centuries, "Thy kingdom come!" will at length be answered. Righteousness is coming and will reign. Peace is coming and will abound as long as the moon endures. Angels are coming! Glory is coming! These things all stir our hearts, but none of them affects us in quite the same way, none produces quite the same impetuous and longing response as the fact that He is coming, and that at last, at last, we shall see His face.

Do we find it difficult to understand that word "quickly"? How is it that long years have intervened between the promise and the fulfilment? Whatever the explanation it is not to be found in any lack of love or desire on the part of the Lord Himself. Has His church had to exercise patience, and be satisfied to wait, as the days roll by? The astounding fact is that it has been the same with Him! "The patience of the Christ" is the expression, so full of meaning, that we lose by the A.V. rendering of 2 Thessalonians 3. 5. Do we wait, with longing hearts, for Him? He also, with longing heart, waits for the day of our coming to join Him in the many mansions. As Mrs. Bevan beautifully puts it in her poem, "The Bride":

"Midst the light and peace and glory Of the Father's home, Christ for me is watching, waiting Waiting till I come."

"There, amidst the love and glory He is waiting yet; On His hands a name is graven He can ne'er forget."

How eloquent all this is of the love wherewith He loves us! Love always desires the company of its object, and who shall measure the depth of desire with which He awaits the day when

"He and I, in that bright glory One deep joy shall share,— Mine, to be for ever with Him, His, that I am there."

Let us, Christian reader, now at the commencement of another year, kneel down with the Bible open at its last page. With our finger on the golden words of promise (ver. 20), let us breathe from our inmost heart the response: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He will surely hear; He will surely come. And how soon? Maybe sooner, much sooner, than we think we shall hear His footfall at the gate.

Earth, with its warring peoples, its cries of despair, its sins and strife will fade into the dim distance of the past, and with the everlasting arms of well-known love around us we shall be at HOME!
In the very dawn of the world's history the lamb was evidently marked out by God as the animal of sacrifice. The "firstling" of Abel's flock is witness to this, as also is the question asked by Isaac in Genesis 22.

That question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" seems to ring all through the Old Testament pages without finding any conclusive answer, for no lamb that fell upon Jewish altars possessed any intrinsic value or was able to take away sins (Heb. 10. 1, 2). Abraham's reply was prophetic, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering," and with such a promise men had to rest content, save that the prediction was amplified with further details as time went on. A grand example of such amplification is found in Isaiah 52. 13 to 53. 12, where it was revealed that Jehovah's Servant who should deal prudently, who should be exalted and exalted and be very high, was He who should be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter" for the transgression of Jehovah's people.

To find the glorious New Testament sequel we have to turn to the writings of the Apostle John. Hardly have we commenced his Gospel when the words "Behold the Lamb of God" meet our eyes. We have not proceeded far with the Revelation ere we find heaven's worship centering round the Lamb and expressing itself in the cry, "Worthy is the Lamb."

The Revelation indeed is the book of the glory of the Lamb, and it is worthy of note that the Spirit of God has selected a diminutive form of the word for use in that book, a word meaning "little lamb." It is as though He would heighten the effect of the contrast by presenting us with the One who became the Sacrifice, and was despised and despised as such according to Isaiah 53, now exalted to the highest pinnacle of glory.

The "little lamb" is mentioned at intervals right through the book of Revelation, but it is in connection with the account of the heavenly city (chaps. 21. 9 to 22. 5) that we have Him mentioned no less than seven times. A city is a place of permanent dwelling, a place of centralized authority, and hence the seat of an influence which permeates the territory comprised within its sphere. It becomes a fitting symbol for the place the church will occupy in the coming age, as the dwelling-place of God, the seat of divine authority and the heavenly centre from whence flow divine and heavenly influences to the earth.

The church, be it ever remembered, is only to be the seat of these excellent things and not the source. The source is found in "God and the Lamb."

The seven things stated concerning the Lamb are these:

1. The church as the city itself is the wife of the One who once was the despised and suffering Lamb of sacrifice (ver. 9). Amid all the surroundings of external glory and the glad service of ten thousand times ten thousand, He is to possess an object for His deepest affections who in return can intelligently reciprocate them; who can be to Him what in prophetic type Eve was to Adam amid the unfallenSplendours of the first creation. This will indeed be the very crowning recompense, the richest fruit of the travail of His soul which He shall see.

2. The city clearly is the fruit of His own work. Its foundations have their origin in connection with Him—"twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." The names inscribed are the names of the sent ones of the once suffering Lamb of sacrifice. Had there been no Lamb there would have been no apostles, and if each foundation had upon it one apostolic name, every foundation of the
twelve was reminiscent of the Lamb whose apostles they were.

Evidently then He will find His solace and joy in that which is itself the direct fruit of His own work.

(3) Every earthly city is built around something. It clusters around some seat of learning, or religion, or authority. Rome was centred in its capitol; Ephesus in the Temple of Diana; Jerusalem was the city of the great King and found its centre in His temple. Of the heavenly city, however, it is said: “I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Upon earth a sanctuary is needful. Disorder and defilement are upon every hand. In that abode of serene order and purity the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple as well as the Deity enshrined therein—that is, they put themselves directly and unhinderedly into contact with the city itself. No longer do men see “through a glass darkly” but “face to face.”

(4) There, too, no created light is needed. “The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Moreover the nations spared to enter the millennial age will walk in the light of the city, so that it will be a sort of luminary or light-bearer for the earth. The light which glows in and through it is, however, the light of the One who became the despised and suffering sacrifice for men. Oh! what a light is that.

“But who that glorious blaze
Of living light shall tell,
Where all His brightness God displays,
And the Lamb’s glories dwell?”

(5) Into all this great blessedness none are admitted save those “which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

(6) Next we find that a pure river of water of life proceeds “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” and connected with this is the tree of life which affords both fruit and healing for the nations on earth. All life and fruitfulness and health-giving influence flows forth from the Lamb who is now upon the throne. He is indeed, as John the Baptist foretold, not only the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but also He that baptizes with the Holy Ghost, the result being that they who once were submerged in sin are now flooded with life and blessing.

(7) The curse goes out, and “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” The authority of God is finally established, but in connection with the Lamb. Who would not gladly bow to such authority—the authority of the One who sacrificed Himself for us.

This is the last mention of the Lamb in Scripture. He is upon the throne.

One practical word. He who is the Lamb is also the Lion of Judah. Yet it is not as the Lion but as the Lamb that He sits upon the throne. The “Lion” is a character He wears; the “Lamb” is what He is. (“I am meek and lowly in heart.”)

And the Lamb, though not yet manifested, is upon the throne to-day. Let us more fully own His authority, and in endeavouring to submit to it, and perhaps to enforce it on our fellows, let us remember it is the Lamb’s authority we maintain.

Authority has often been enforced with lion-like energy during the church’s sad history, and always with disastrous results. It is Lamb-like authority which prevails.

In that day “His servants shall serve Him,” i.e. the Lamb’s servants—the servants of the once despised and suffering Lamb of sacrifice—serve the Lamb; and we may depend upon it that in this day we shall not properly serve Him except we are dominated by that spirit.
To prove that a God of infinite goodness is not the author of this world in its present state requires no elaborate argumentation, nor does it make any demand upon the least ratiocinative ability. It is everywhere, and in everything, abundantly manifest that a beneficent Creator would not voluntarily give His unoffending creature, whom He has endowed with intelligence, affections, sensitivity, accountability to Himself and to his fellows, into the darkness, the distress, the sufferings, the sorrows, the woes that are the portion of the whole human family.

There must be some terrible reason for the state of things we find in this world—the pestilences, the horrors of war, the hatred, the murders, the corruption, the fear of death, the silence of heaven, the shrinking from the grave to which all are hastening, and the dread of something after—these evils cry out against our attributing to a benevolent Creator the invention or origination of such a woeful state of things.

Yet even on this earth we have indications, many and varied, that it is a beneficent Creator who watches over the history of the earth's generations and teeming multitudes. The sunshine warms and comforts our bodies, and between its kindly influence and the rain from heaven the hearts of men are filled with food and gladness. The seasons come round in their appointed courses, and fulfil their several functions of mercy. Under the night-cloud man lies down to rest, and his weary frame becomes thus refreshed and ready to answer to the demands of another day. And all this bears testimony to the goodness of God, and is given that men might feel after Him, and find Him; for He is not far from any one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17).

Thank God for His Word, the revelation He has given us concerning Himself. Where would we be without it? Would we be able without it to pick out of all His ways with us the witnesses of His faithful and generous care for our welfare, and, in spite of the innumerable evils that afflict our souls, to encourage our hearts in such a sense of His desire for our welfare that we would put out the hand of faith in the midst of the surrounding gloom, that it might lay hold upon His?

No: we require this precious revelation of Himself which He in His infinite love has given us, that by it we may be made wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3. 15-17). And how beautifully this revelation sets before us the great thoughts of God, and how all His purposes, even before the beginning of His works, centred upon man. Man whom we supposed He had neglected, and to whose sorrows He was indifferent, is supreme in the eternal thoughts of God.

But for almost six thousand years men have groaned under the oppression of the enemy, and as far as any public display of power is concerned it is all in the hands of the enemy, and deliverance seems as far off as it was at the beginning. Man is still under death, still dominated by sin and the devil. Through what mighty man is the deliverance of the oppressed to be effected?

We are, blessed be God, left in no doubt as to this. Almost the first words that fell upon the ears of our fallen parents from which they could derive any hope were those that were spoken to the serpent that deceived them: the Seed of the woman was to bruise his head. Adam could effect nothing. His own deliverance, as well as the deliverance of any of his posterity, depended upon the Seed of the woman. Not Adam, but the Son of Man is the One whom God has made strong for Himself (Ps. 80. 17).
He is to be supreme in the universe of God. Everything is to be put under His feet. The only exception to this is God Himself. He is to be pre-eminent in every department of the universe, for this is the decree of God from all eternity. Around Him all the thoughts of God centre. He is the object of all prophetic scripture. The prominent men in past dispensations were only figures of Him, shadows of the Man that filled the vision of God.

When the Psalmist looked up into the heavens and contemplated the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which He had ordained, the littleness of man came before him, and he wondered that God took such account of him. But if the littleness of man filled the vision of the Psalmist so that he was forced to exclaim: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" it was Christ that filled the vision of the Spirit: not Adam, but the Seed of the woman, the Son of Man, the object of divine counsel, and He saw everything put under His feet; and though this is not manifestly so yet, the same Spirit fixes our attention upon the Man in heaven who is crowned with glory and having tasted death for everything. If we see not yet all things put under man, we see the Man under whom everything is to be put, and we see Him in the highest place in glory.

We find a most interesting reference to Him in the eighth of Proverbs. There speaking as Wisdom He says: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old... then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

Now when we come to the truth regarding the greatness of the Son of Man we find that He is the Creator Himself: all things were made by Him (John 1.; Col. 1.; Heb. 1.). And yet He is viewed here as "by" the Creator, when He made the heavens and the earth. The reason of this, I have no doubt, is that He is there viewed solely as the Man of God's counsels, and that He was the object of purpose with regard to creation; and everything was made with regard to its being taken over by this Son of Man who gave direction to the whole character of the work. "As one brought up with Him" is translated in the Revised Version: "A master workman" (ver. 30), and it has also been translated: "His artificer." The meaning, I am persuaded, is that everything was created in view of Christ taking it under control as Man on the ground of redemption.

For we must keep in mind, as I have said, that He is Creator, and that He made the universe and all that is in it for Himself (Col. 1. 16); and when it became necessary for the glory of God, and for the fulfilment of divine counsel, that He should take the place of Leader of the salvation of the many sons that God was bringing to glory, and when it was necessary for the exigencies of that glory that redemption should be wrought, He tasted death for everything: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Therefore the One who created everything has tasted death for everything, that everything might be placed on the ground of redemption to the glory of God.

His sufferings were first of all for the glory of God; that in the creation where God was so dishonoured through sin, sin might receive its judgment, and that when and where sin would receive its judgment God would be glorified, not only in every one of His attributes but in His very nature. In the second place, He suffered the suffering of death in order that the devil, who had the power of death, might be annulled, and that deliverance might be effected for those who, on account of the fear of death, had been all their lives subject to bondage. In the third place, He suffered to make propitiation for the
sins of those who were to be His companions in the day of His glory. And in the fourth place, He suffered, being tempted, in order to be able to sympathize with our weaknesses, and to be able to succour us when we are tempted.

In the Old Testament, and in the New, by all the writers except Paul, the use of the title "The Christ" connects, as far as my memory serves me, the Saviour with the people of Israel. I know that the woman of Samaria connected the Christ with the world; but though this be true, the Lord had already told her that "salvation was of the Jews," and the salvation of the world really depends upon Jehovah's resumption of relationship with His earthly people. To this great truth the prophets bear abundant testimony, and so also does the Apostle of the Gentiles in Romans 9. 12-15.

But under the title of "Son of Man" He is not viewed in connection with any special family upon earth. It is a title that speaks of universal headship and blessing. At the same time we must keep in mind that the application of this title to the Saviour and the order of things that are connected with it do not set aside, disarrange, or alter the conditions of blessing that are brought before us under the title of the Christ. It is simply that the title Son of Man extends the field of vision to the utmost limits of the universe, including all that is brought before us in the titles "Son of Abraham," "Son of David," "King of Israel," "The Christ," or any other.

In the Gospels, rejected by the Jews, He will not allow Himself to be called the Christ, but tells His disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the priests and elders of the people; and be delivered to the Gentiles, who would expose Him to every indignity, and in the end put Him to death. To Nicodemus He testifies that—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up," not for the sake of Israel only, but that "WHOSESOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life." The title Son of Man carries with it universal power and blessing.

But not only must the Son of Man come under the suffering of death, but He it is who breaks the power of death, for since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of those that are dead (1 Cor. 15. 21). If man in the person of Adam brought in death, the Son of Man has broken its power and brought about resurrection in the power of God.

But the first to be raised is Himself: He is Firstborn from the dead (Col. 1. 18), and God has set Him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and given Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1. 20-23).

And all that are His who have passed away from earth shall be raised in His likeness, for He is the pattern of the redeemed family. He will raise His sleeping saints in glory, and change the living along with them into His own image: for we shall bear the image of the heavenly Man.

And because He is Son of Man all judgment is committed to Him; and the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5.). He has authority everywhere. And He has a right to this authoritative position in the universe: first, because He created it; second, because He redeemed it; third, because for the glory of God He was humiliated in the sight of it.

What a multitude of varied glories cluster around this title of Son of Man
The Lordship of Christ.

**M**AN was made to rule the universe. The last act of God’s creative power placed him in that position (Gen. 1. 26–28). This same truth runs through all Scripture as the destiny of man, to be accomplished finally in Christ and those associated with Him in times to come. This primordial position assigned to man in the beginning is confirmed to him after the deluge (Gen. 9. 1–7), with the added power of capital punishment specified to effectuate this ordinance. The sphere of his administration is extended to its utmost limit in Psalm 8., from which the Apostle Paul quotes three times as the basis for the far-reaching truths that he sets forth. In 1 Corinthians 15. 27, etc., he argues from it to the extent of the overlordship of Christ as including every existing thing, God alone excepted: “For He must reign till He hath put all things under His feet.” But this again implies the revolt of the creature against the Creator, intimated already in Genesis 1. 28, until all is finally brought into subjection and the supremacy of God is established. “But now,” says the Apostle, “we see not yet all things subjected to Him, but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour . . .” (Heb. 2. 9).

Again he quotes the same psalm in Ephesians 1. 19–22 as showing the exaltation of Christ; but while this is the subject of these verses, the object of the Scripture is to show the relation of the church to Him so exalted, and the part allotted to her in this administration, as His body, the efficient instrument of His purpose, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, i.e. she completes, gives the fullness in operation to all that is sketched out in purpose according to the mind of God.
It is important to notice this as a key to the object of the epistle. It was necessary to set forth the position of Christ as "head over all things"—not here of, but—"to the church," giving her thus her place as the instrument of His designs, i.e. as His body, that she should find her task—her raison d'être—and her resources in Him as head for the performance of the allotted task for which she is appointed.

Hitherto, so far as we may infer from Scripture, the world seems to have been ruled in departments, autonomous in their respective spheres. In this heavenly hierarchy we read of different families, principalities, authorities, powers, so arranged according to the wisdom of God as to show to succeeding ages the lessons to be learned therefrom, whether or not these powers operate in their respective spheres independently rather than under the direction of an imperial administration, as will be by and by (Rev. 19. 16). Scripture is quite distinct as to the universal revolt effected under the malign influence of an evil spirit, as well as to the purpose of God from before the ages in the exaltation of a Man, as overlord of the universe, whereby to meet it. And whereas before such an One was not designated, we now know that "He is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him" (1 Peter 3. 22).

Ezekiel 28. 2–10 pictures for us the "Prince of Tyre," the actual ruler of that merchant city, the then commercial capital of the world. From verses 12–19 we have a description of the "King of Tyre," apparently a picture of Satan himself, set up in the perfection of creature beauty, walking in the holy mountain of God in the midst of the stones of fire, till iniquity was found in him, as his heart was lifted up in pride, and he is cast down in eternal judgment, a lesson, and a terrible one, to all beholders. To this no doubt the Apostle refers in his warning against pride in 1 Timothy 3. 6.

Whatever preliminary system of government the wisdom of God first set up it is plainly set aside by the introduction of this new system that has raised up man to be Lord of all. The highest angelic being fell into condemnation, as we have seen, because of pride; God has raised up a Man,—feeble Man, Adam's Son—and made Him Lord of all.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, taking His place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and granted Him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory."

He rules now, not by the affiliation of independencies, but as "head over all things to the church" which has this character, that it is (ἡττης) His Body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

That all this creature pride of will should be broken by humble obedience to the will of God is extremely galling to the flesh and the spirit that moves in it. Not among angels, nor among the highest ranks of men was the warrior found to face the "Champion" of the Philistines. How humiliating to be beaten by such humble means as the smooth sling-stone of a shepherd lad! "And the Philistine cursed him by his gods" (1 Sam. 17). In these weak means we see prefigured the cross of Christ. Truly the cross of Christ is wonderful. How feebly we apprehend its meaning.

Revolt is in the air; opposition to God is everywhere; and the sleepless energy of the enemy to frustrate His designs, and create disorder all around. His
power is terrible, but his subtlety is more to be feared. The history of the world begins with these words: "Now the serpent was more subtle . . . and he said to the woman . . ." the weak, sentimental and subjective part of man (1 Tim. 2. 11-15).

In the Babylonian mythology there is a festival to Bacchus, in the month Thebet, answering to our December, known in Roman times as the Saturnalia, when "it was the custom during the five days during which the festival lasted for masters to be in subjection to their servants, one of whom ruled the house, clad in a purple garment like a king." This man was called "the lord of sport and wantonness," and answers exactly to the "lord of misrule," that in the dark ages was chosen in all popish countries to lead the revels of Christmas, as we see kept up in our days professedly in honour of the birth of Christ. This "man of misrule" was Satan's forethrust against the Lordship of Christ and the purpose of God to reduce everything to order under His righteous rule (cf. Psalm 101.).

"And the Lord God said it is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helpmeet for him . . . and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man." So Christ receives the church, a body complementary to Him for the execution of this great design. Her work in association with Him by His Spirit begins now (Eph. 3. 10), to be continued in the age to come (Eph. 1. 21). She will be for the display of His grace in the ages to come (2. 7), and for His glory for ever (3. 21). Jerusalem below will be called "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in" (Is. 58. 12). Jerusalem above will fulfil a similar task on a vaster scale (Rev. 21. 22).

She is called "the house of God, the church of the living God," the "habitation of God in the Spirit" (1 Tim. 3. 16; Eph. 2. 22). There everything is holy and order rules. Discipline of the strictest kind maintains its purity (cf. Num. 5. 1-4; 1 Cor. 5.; Rom. 16. 17; 2 Tim. 3.). It is a time-honoured principle: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. 8. 11). Neglect discipline, and disorder rules.

She is growing to "a holy temple in the Lord," a settled sanctuary for the glory of God dwelling in restful pleasure in the midst of His redeemed.

She is moreover "the bride, the Lamb's wife" in the intimacy of this heavenly relationship to Christ (Rev. 21.; Eph. 5. 23-30). And here we get two things: He is head of the church—not here to her, as in chapter 1. 22—and He loves her. The relationship is most intimate, the love is all supreme; but the authority on the one hand and the subjection on the other are maintained in their undiminished force. There is with Him no lowering of His authority because of His love, no pandering to mere sentiment, as Adam did to Eve: there is with her no self-assertion, no self-will on her part, because of her intimacy with Him. How lovely it all is! "He hath made everything beautiful in His time" (Eccles. 3. 11).

The Apostle says, "The mystery is great." Truly so, and it is but little understood, either in the world or in the church. What domestic troubles would be saved if it were observed! What troubles in the church likewise!

Now the church is the tablet on which all these beautiful things are exposed for public gaze and enlightenment, and we may regard Ephesians 3. 10 as the central purpose, the pivot of the epistle. For this purpose was this revelation made known to the Apostle as the speciality of his ministry, and through him to us, "that NOW unto the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the church the all-various wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Some of the Food in Heaven.

1. The Hidden Manna. (Rev. 2. 17.)

THE miraculous food of Manna was a temporary supply for the nation of Israel alone during their passage of forty years through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan.

Incidentally it is a proof of the power of God to sustain His redeemed people even when they are cut off from every earthly resource, however great may be their number and however incessant their need. Nature may supply no answer; the heavens rainless and the earth barren meant neither food nor drink for that mighty host, yet they lacked neither food nor water; and so far as we read not one Israelite died from either hunger or thirst.

But from 1 Corinthians 10. 3 we learn that the manna had a spiritual significance over and above its meeting the hunger of Israel. There is certainly one spiritual lesson which it was intended to teach the nation to whom it was given. This is found in Deuteronomy 8. 3: "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

The commissariat department of an army is indispensable, and we have a saying that an army fights on its stomach. But in things divine our great concern is to live under the control of the Word of God. We may be most amply supplied with rations, and yet not truly live according to God. And we may be tested as was our most holy Lord in the wilderness by the lack of provisions (and indeed later by Satan himself) and yet live to God in absolute dependence, refusing even to work a miracle unless directed by Him (Matt. 4. 1-4). Though Jehovah, Jesus took the place of man Godward, and no temptation could ensnare Him, no bait induce Him to depart from that dependence proper to man; He would not move under any direction save that of God. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Hence Satan was foiled. Perhaps nothing contributes so much to spiritual disaster as the saint acting before he has received guidance from the word of the Lord. But when subject to Him, our bread will be given and our water be sure.

The discourse in the latter part of John 6. seems to warrant our seeing in the Lord Jesus the Antitype of the manna, although (as is always the case) the Antitype appears to be so much greater than the type. For example, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." Again, the manna was for Israel only; not for Amalekites, or Moabites, or any Gentile nation. But, says Jesus, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The manna came noiselessly into the scene of need, falling so gently that it did not disturb the dew. It was God's provision and gift, a heavenly food, unthought of and unasked by man, by no means the product of chemical analysis or experiment, nor wrought by labour; but God's own and ample provision to meet the need. In it was every element to sustain life and to give the people strength for their daily march or daily duty. It baffled Israel; the very name they gave it (manna; what is it?) showed it to be outside the range of their ken or their comprehension. But its suitability for its purpose is proved by the fact that they lived on it, and on nothing else, for the whole of their
sojourn and journeyings in the wilderness. It was just as nourishing for young as for old; the man partook of it with his household. It was lovely in appearance, the colour of bdellium, free to all, without money and without price; and as it followed the Israelitish camp in all its travels it was always within the reach of all. It was in the simplest of positions, upon the dew, and none could complain of the effort required to come at it, unless it were the effort of going down. It was a small round thing, such as the veriest infant could pick up and feed upon without detriment; and it had a most wonderful elasticity in its properties; for he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. None of it, if taken according to divine instructions, had ever to be thrown away. Everyone who fed upon it was happily satisfied as long as his heart was right with God; a little made him happy, yet as long as his appetite craved more there was always more for him. It was only when his heart murmured against God that he pretended to find fault with mankind. It was capable of being ministered and taken in a variety of ways; there need not have been any monotony in the food. Eaten as it fell, its taste was sweet and its quality sustaining; but it could be baked or boiled, it could be ground in mills or beat in mortars, and cakes be made of it, and it was in every form pleasant to the taste and sustaining to the whole person. It was indeed a stupendous miracle of forty years' duration, and its cessation, when other food came in Canaan, was just as remarkable as its provision had been so long as it was needed (Exod. 16. 35; Josh. 5. 12).

Of what was it the type? Of Christ surely, of Christ come down from heaven to earth, of Christ the Incarnation of God's grace to His people; primarily available for Israel, but as we shall see, ultimately for all believers through faith and by the Spirit. How truly was He sent of God! How really was He out of heaven, a heavenly stranger here! How gently He came as the Babe in an unambitious household! How lowly was the place He took and the path He trod! What food there is for the people of God as we see Him from the outset of His life here, increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man; subject to His parents, yet His heart set on His Father's business! How absolutely was He here for the good of men and for the will of God! But in what language can we unfold all the grace that came by Jesus Christ? It is especially set before us in the first three Gospels; and the fourth, written from a different standpoint (assuming His rejection by Israel from the first), presents some of the most charming examples of the same theme although overlapping it.

He was Man here. The greatest element in our apprehension of Him must be God's appreciation of His worth. He was here for God. His motive in coming into this scene of need, and primarily to the chosen nation of Israel, was the fulfilment of God's will. He was sent by Him, and came here, a new order of manhood. It was not as a superman, an evolution of the old Adamic order, a phenomenal production of human generation that He came. He was born of woman truly, or else He would not have been Man, but He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and not of Joseph, and so was a Man of a new Order, holy from His birth, Son of God eternal, but now Son of God in manhood. No wonder that the world has been trying ever since to unravel the profound mystery of His glory, and has in effect been saying, "What is it? What is it?" Darwinism knew it not; Spencer has no light to offer; German philosophy stumbles over it and gives it up; Jew, Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, all in turn examine it, attempt to analyse it, and still say, "What is it?" But our hearts, taught of God, echo the Master's own words, "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."
He is the Bread of God. Not only might men delight in Him, but the heart of God traced His way, and in His every movement found satisfaction as when man taketh food. Over Matthew's Gospel the living God can write "Satisfied." Over Mark's Gospel, "Satisfied." Over Luke's Gospel, "Satisfied." Over John's Gospel, "Satisfied." In thought, in word, in deed, He did always the things that pleased Him. In His birth it was announced "Good pleasure in men." At His baptism, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At the transfiguration, "Well pleased; hear Him." At the grave in the garden of Calvary not words greeted Him but deeds. For God raised Him from the dead and gave proof of His infinite delight in Jesus by exalting Him to the highest heaven and investing Him as Man with eternal and unbounded glories. But more of this in a moment.

He was characterized by obedience. He truly lived by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. His experience tallied in every point with all that was forecast concerning Him in Holy Scripture, because He was always found in the pathway of God's appointing and in a condition in absolute accord with the mind of God.

He was never at fault, however circumstanced, because the grace of God could always express itself in Him without friction or loss. The resources of God to meet man's need flowed most fully where the need was greatest; and the greatest marvel was where man's unbelief hindered its outflow. In the expression of that grace He was accessible to all. His activities were chiefly in the lowest walks of life; one feature of His service so markedly in contrast with the hirelings of His day was that the poor had the gospel preached to them. He brought all the fullness of God into contact with empty vessels. In Him the fatherless found mercy. He healed the broken in heart, and bound up all their wounds. His disciples in zeal for His comfort might repel and drive off little children; He recalled them, and by laying His hands upon them and blessing them has taught us for all time that God's blessing is for little ones. He encountered the woman at the well with that marvellous tact which fills our inmost soul with delight, and that won her from a life of shame to be a worshipper of the Father and a messenger for His Christ. He met a dying thief on the verge of death and damnation, and though in trials of His own unfathomed by mortal ken, found leisure to pour in oil and wine from the resources of God when He found repentance there.

But these are instances; there are multitudes more of them. The manna was found in every camping place of the Israelites. The grace of God in Jesus was found wherever human need presented itself. In many cases, all unsought and unasked, the Lord from heaven touched men. The pool at Bethesda bears witness to it. The blind man in the ninth of John tells the same tale. Did the demoniac in Mark 5 seek the Lord, or did the Lord seek Him?

In other cases He was sought after, and wanted. The bearers of the palsied man, the woman of the seventh of Luke, the centurion, the nobleman, the woman with the issue of blood—such swiftly occur to mind. Did He turn one away? Did not the boundless grace of God show itself to be at the disposal of human need?

He was as tender as He was gracious. He understood the shock on Jairus' heart when news came of the death of his little daughter. Instantly comfort flew as on seraph wing to the breaking heart: "Be not afraid, only believe." He knew that amid all the crowd at the gate of Nain one widowed and bereft woman knew not where to turn in her grief, and He hastens to her side with His most compassionate "Weep not." But wonder of all wonders, that, in Martha's and Mary's sorrow, the Lord of glory brings down the crowning dis-
play of divine sympathy, mingles His tears with theirs, and (as the narrative all but tells us) in a voice broken by a sob, says, "Where have ye laid him?" Others might discuss His apparently unkind ways in permitting Lazarus to die; but some who seemed most touched by His grace could only say, "Behold how He loved Him!"

Not alone in His compassions and resources in meeting others do we see His suitability for meeting our need. His own experiences qualify Him to be support and strength to us. He was in all points tempted as we are apart from sin. He chose a life of poverty and exposure. He who laboured for the comfort and good of others, and used God's power to supply all real wants, suffered want and hunger and thirst Himself without working any miracle. He often spent nights under the open canopy of heaven; He had no place to lay His head. His labours were so arduous that at times He had no leisure to eat bread, and His friends thought and said He was beside Himself. He was ever the target of men without principle. Time-servers and hirelings, who fleeced the flock but fed them not, regarded Him remorselessly as an enemy. They watched Him that they might accuse Him, they intrigued to entangle Him in His talk, they prejudiced the common people against Him where they could, they misrepresented His works and His mission, they spent money freely to overthrow Him and, by and by, the truth of His resurrection. He told them the truth of God; they sought to dash Him over a precipice and to stone Him, and in the end they crucified Him. They sought to turn Him from His service and His path by the threat of what Herod would do to Him. But nothing stemmed the flow, the torrent of grace. No murmuring, no failures on the part of Israel in the wilderness stayed the rain of manna from heaven; and no opposition and no treachery stayed the goodness of Jesus. He was just Himself all through, infinitely well-pleasing to God, and full of blessing for men. His disciples misunderstood Him, and often practically misrepresented Him, their loved master, to those around. He patiently corrected their mistakes, showed what His mission was, and made their every failure not an occasion of depressing them but of lifting their thoughts on to a higher plane, even into fellowship with His own. No wonder they loved Him! Yet in their weakness they shrank from full identification with Him, they forsook Him when He looked for comforters, they failed Him when He wanted them to watch with Him one hour. Yet He patiently excused their sleep when He needed them, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." He would fain have let them sleep on and take their rest while He went on in His magnificent devotedness to shame and death, but that He knew how their hearts would reproach them if He did not give them opportunity to follow Him. So He said, "Rise up, let us be going." Yet they failed Him, and He was left alone. Lover and friend were far from Him, and His acquaintance hid away in the darkness. How capable is He of understanding our every loneliness, our whole adversity, even the worst of sorrows, the being misrepresented and deserted by our brethren and our friends!

And sorrow? And suffering? Ah! Whose suffering and whose sorrow were like His? For we must remember that Jesus was holy. His sensibilities of body and mind were not numbed as are ours by sin. We often reach the don't care state; He never did. Every slight was felt, every unkind look or remark as we never could feel them. Above all, who can measure what He felt as He bowed in Gethsemane and looked the morrow in the face? Who has ever prayed with the intensity of His prayer, the heart-agony expressing sweat of blood from His sacred Person, "Abba Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt"?

Why do we speak of all this? Be-
cause in these things we read the heavenly grace presented in the Lord Jesus. We are not speaking to-day of His atoning sacrifice, though by means of it we are set in peace and rest before God, and are enabled to discern in the humbled Christ these beauties and attractions. But our faith and our affection attach themselves to Him as the Spirit shows His ways to us. We come into the company and share the feelings of His disciples, although separated from their era by hundreds of years. We love Him in measure as they must have loved Him. He was more to them than all beside. Their hearts burned within them as He talked with them by the way.

Yet He was rejected by Israel and by the world, and was taken from them. The manna ceased to be seen here on earth, and the Person who was It, the Life, the Food of their spirits, was transferred to the regions unseen, to the presence of God in the holiest, up to His place within the Throne. Was He now beyond their reach, never to be known again in all His lovely grace?

So far as the world is concerned it will never see Christ in lowliness and humiliation again. The same so far as Israel after the flesh is concerned; they will know Him thus no more. When again He appears it will be with the splendour of many crowns upon His brow and with ten thousand times ten thousand in His train. No more the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief; never more the suffering, the despised, the rejected One.

But dear fellow-Christians, has God lost that precious One? Does Christ cease to be all this because He has gone from earth to heaven? Nay, what He was He ever will be; God will never lose it, nor shall we. Do we not remember even in the history how that a pot of manna was gathered and laid up before the Testimony in the Lord's presence to be kept for their generations; that they might see the bread wherewith He fed them in the wilderness? Contrary to all precedent, outside the experience of any Israelite, this pot of manna was kept, not days and weeks only, but months and years, in pure and uncorrupted state. God ever had it near Him, and although it was hidden manna, it was not for Him only, but that other privileged eyes might see it too. It is to this that Hebrews 9. 4 refers; and it is from this that the figure of Revelation 2. 17 is borrowed.

In uncorrupted and incorruptible excellency and sweetness does Christ remain. Every grace which made Him precious and indispensable in His life and ways on earth is perpetuated in Him where He is. He is hidden from men's eyes; but the Spirit has come from the very spot to which He ascended, empowered to conduct the faith of every believer to where He is, and to inform the heart of every saint in what He is. He is accessible to us all; He is food to our souls, He is sympathetic as ever, full of grace and truth, not a feature lost of all His infinite attractiveness. The greatness of His resource is the same, His obedience and love to His Father still the same. His circumstances are altered, but nothing can alter the beauty, the sweetness, the sustaining character of this "manna."

But it is only to be found in the presence of God. It is only to be appreciated by faith and true affection. It is only to be apprehended by the teaching of the heaven-sent Spirit. Those who are indifferent to Christ, and those who know not the privilege of access into the Holiest, cannot be said to understand it, still less to feed upon it. It is mentioned in Revelation 2. 17 in contrast with Revelation 2. 14. Such as eat things sacrificed to idols may not eat of the "hidden manna." Those who participate in the food of a world estranged from God may not feast on God's treasured store. Those who wish to get on where Satan's seat is (ver. 13) will never understand fellowship and intimacy with Christ once humbled here. It is he that overcometh that feeds upon Him, not he that is overcome.
Such then is some of the saints' food in heaven. For ever to revel in, and to be in contact with, the perfections of Christ as they were brought out in His circumstances of humiliation here. They required the setting of humiliation to bring them out, and the environment of human need, yea, even of opposition; His obedience and love, His meekness and lowliness, His patience, His suffering grace, His sympathy and tenderness, His faithfulness to God, His compassion toward men; how could we have learned them fully apart from His incarnation, His coming down out of heaven to earth? But once known, they remain for our eternal delectation and satisfaction, a support and a stay to our spirits for ever. If the Tree of Life (Rev. 2. 7), the food of saints, represents to us the fullness and charm of Christ's glory and greatness, the manna in the same chapter brings home to us the eternal freshness and grace and charm of all that was learnt through Christ's humiliation.

As we learn what is to be our portion for ever, may we seek grace to feed upon Him now, being overcomers and not overcome.

Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus.

As the great Apostle of the Gentiles looked around upon the scene of sorrow, in which the beloved flock of Christ were common sharers with all men; as he thought further of those other sufferings which came upon them as followers of their Lord and Master for His name's sake, added to which were the afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the gospel which he himself endured; there was something which sustained his heart in the midst of deepest trial. Something that though he experienced trouble on every side, yet made the distress never absolute; though he saw no apparent issue to the difficulty, yet he was not left without help; persecuted, yet conscious always of succour; death working in him, yet knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Ah! here was the secret by which he lived, the power by which he passed on uncrushed by hatred, trial and sorrow, the purpose of God had been revealed to his soul. For this reason he fainted not and even counted his afflictions light, for he saw by faith the unseen things which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man. Unique things, for they were revealed only by the Spirit of God; eternal things, beside which the temporal things grew small in comparison with the exceeding excellence of the glory to which he looked forward, and which he would share with all saints when they with him should be raised up and presented by the Lord Jesus. Furthermore he knew that in view of those realities God was working in the saints, using their sorrows to accomplish His own will, that already the seal of His Spirit was upon them, by whom also they stood anointed for that day.

In Romans 8. 18 the Apostle views the relationship in which the children of God are set, he thinks of the dignity of their position, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and with this he measures the sufferings of this present time, and he concludes that they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. One sight of Christ the Heir of glory, the First-born with whom they inherit, one look at Him who has led them all the desert way, one glimpse of that face once so marred, but now resplendent with the glory of God, and all the toils and sufferings of the journey will be forgotten. Behind for ever will lie the weary and darksome land, with its thorn-strewn lonely path; before, the glory and the eternal company of Him whose presence makes the joy of heaven. Transformed
into His likeness, our bodies, changed by His power, shall no longer be a hindrance to the life within. With bodies fashioned like to His body of glory, not only will the saints be in the glory and gaze upon its splendour; comprehend its breadth and length and depth and height; but in the knowledge of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, the glory will be in the saints, filling and flowing through them as they are filled into all the fullness of the revelation of God which has been declared by the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.

Glory is the manifest expression of excellence, and when power shall display all that Christ has made known in grace, the day of glory will have come. The saints will be in it; it will be in them their very being and power of life; they will adoringly contemplate it in Christ, and they will come forth with Him to make it known. Blessed privilege indeed, only possible because of the mystery which makes the church, the body and bride of Him in whom the full revelation of Godhead is, so that she is filled full in Him who is the Head of all principality and power.

Great and far-reaching will be the effect of the coming of Christ in glory with all His saints, extending to the "all things" over which He is head. The creation which has so long groaned under the effects of sin, and which the liberty of grace proclaimed in the gospel has left untouched, shall then be set free from the bondage of corruption by the glory of the children of God. God shall have the last word, and before the new heavens and earth shall come to pass in which righteousness shall dwell in peace, triumphant righteousness shall reign here where sin has so long held dominion.

What an answer to all the grief with which the hearts of God's children have been filled as they have suffered for righteousness in the fellowship of sorrow with their Lord, that they themselves shall be the channel of blessing to the earth which their weary feet once trod. Then shall they see its wars, its pestilences, its convulsions cease, and its struggling dynasties give place to the rightful King of kings and Lord of lords, the only one who is worthy to wield the sceptre of universal dominion, and Christ Himself shall be glorified in His saints and admired in all those that believe. In that day the world shall see the One whom they despised and rejected. Then shall they learn His worthiness by the sight of the countless host of the redeemed in glory and learn God's thought of Him in those trophies of His grace. The church in glory will be an object lesson to the world of the love of God and the demonstration without question that the Father sent the Son. The church is the body, the fullness, the complement of Christ; formed by divine power in a unity in which the Holy Ghost is all-pervading, and every member is instinct with the life of the Head; it is therefore fully capable of expressing His mind and will, the result being the production in that day of such a manifestation of the perfection and grace of the Head that men shall be constrained to admire that which they have despised, and the kings of the earth will use their glory and honour not for themselves, but to pay homage to Him so revealed. Gladly will they cast away the weapons of war, the implements of their imperious will, and yield themselves to the omnipotent sway of blessing which will be administered from Christ through the saints.

Revelation 21. shows the perfection of this administration in the description of the heavenly city. Intimately connected with heaven, for the glory of God enlightens it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof, its gates with their angel attendants are connected with the twelve tribes on earth. In Micah 4. 1-3 the place that Israel and Jerusalem will have in blessing for the earth is told us. That long-scattered but then restored people will be the means
of making God's saving health known to all nations, their land shall be the glory of all lands, their city the metropolis of the whole earth. But there was a secret hidden in God and not made known to the sons of men when the prophet wrote; he spoke of the glory on earth but he knew not the link that would connect it with heaven. But now God has made known the mystery of His will for the dispensation of the fullness of times, to head up all things in Christ, a headship which He will administer through the church, and by means of which His manifold wisdom shall be known, not only to Israel and through them to the inhabitants of earth, but the principalities and powers in the heavenly places shall learn it, and even now are they able amidst all the confusion into which the professing church has fallen to discern the workmanship of God and give Him praise. The purpose was from eternity; God created all things as the scene in which He will display it. At the present time each component part is being formed and fitted for the place it will occupy in God's great scheme; the millennial world will witness the perfection of its working and eternity shall bring glory to God in the church by Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. God has told us of His work. He has revealed His purpose, He has spread the plan before us that we may be fellow workers with Him. He desires that the end for which He is working should govern our thoughts and shape our ways; that the good works suited to such a scheme may be manifest now, even that we should walk as He walked in whose perfect likeness it is our destiny to shine in that day. This high and holy calling became the one absorbing pursuit of the beloved servant who penned the Philippian epistle. Forgetting the things behind, he strained every nerve towards that which was before and pressed toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. He saw its glory, he appreciated its worth, for was not the church the pearl of great price for which Christ had given everything? The value of its treasures of wisdom and knowledge entranced the heart of Paul; for him creation's brightest light was eclipsed in the blaze of His splendour. His heart was full of that which will include all saints, and his desire went out in earnest appeal to as many as were perfect to be thus minded. In the presence of such a revelation of love and grace, perfection consists in allowing its constraining influence to dispossess all other desires and objects, so that it becomes the victory which overcomes the world. It is the one thing which will preserve the soul in these evil days from being tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine and the preservative against those systems of error by which Satan seeks to seduce the saints from their allegiance to Christ. It is the joy that is able to make our cup run over in the darkest day, when we can say:

"Far within the depth of glory,
In the Father's house above,
We have learnt His wondrous secret,
We have learnt His heart of love.

"We have seen the jasper city,
Shining as the jasper stone;
Heard the song that fills the heavens
Of the Man upon the throne.

"There where Jesus, Jesus only,
Fills each heart and tongue,
Where Himself is all the radiance
And Himself the song."

When Christ has us with Him where He is His love will be satisfied and His joy will be complete. Then shall we know even as also we are known. We shall apprehend His knowledge-surpassing love, we shall see in full fruition all that He has accomplished. With admiring eyes we shall behold the full blaze of His glory—His glory as Son of the Father, His glory as Man, His glory in Redemption, His glory as the revealer of the Father. All this will fill the vision of our souls, and gladly shall we lay at His feet our willing tribute of worthy praise. (W. B. D.)
IT is indeed great grace which has granted to us the divine revelation of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and made known to us His relation to the whole creation, and also given to us the Holy Spirit to lead us into the understanding of these things.

In speaking of the whole creation, we have in mind that which is so often spoken of in the Scriptures as ‘all things,’ and that which is commonly called The Universe.

This last term is sometimes used to designate what is simply world-wide: it is, however, creation-wide when we read, ‘All things were made by Him’ (John 1. 3). It is universal in the all-embracing meaning of the term. In one whole is comprehended the most distant ranges, and the most immediate parts, along with the vast and varied interweavings and interdependencies of all the material, the intelligent, and the moral creation; the animate and the inanimate; the breadth and length and depth and height; the UNIVERSE—one all comprehended in one whole. The hearts of those who know the surpassing love of Christ may well aspire to know the relation of our blessed Lord and Saviour to it all. And God would have us to apprehend this. The Holy Spirit is here to enable us to do so. Liberty, fullness of joy, life and peace, are thus maintained in the soul.

Leading on to the time when our great and glorious Saviour shall shine publicly as the Head and Centre of the universe, we must necessarily pursue our subject in the following order: (1) His glory as the Creator of all things; (2) His glory as the Reconciler of all things; (3) His glory as Filler of all things. With the last we shall have to notice the peculiar place of the assembly, which is His body, in relation thereto.
O God, is to the age of the age” (8, N.T.). And when entering this habitable world even, it is said, “Let all God’s angels worship Him.” The second scripture recognises other thrones. All of them were, however, created by Him,—by the Son of the Father’s love. Now these great and glorious positions in the seen and in the unseen, which are expressed to us as thrones, lordships, principalities, and authorities, all subsist together by Him. The Spirit constantly indicates to us that there are mighty dignities in the heavens, and we see around us very high and exalted dignities upon the earth, in the various nations where authorities are divinely set up. We are to view all these, apart from the disorder which has come in through sin, as created primarily “in” the Son, and also “by” Him, and “for” Him (Col. 1.16). How all this greatness enhances before our gaze the glory of our adorable Lord. And when, as we shall see, all these glorious thrones and authorities are reconciled, He shall shine in supreme splendour and royal majesty above them all. This place is His already; it will be seen publicly soon. Faith takes it in now. The third scripture embraces not only the worlds mentioned in the first, and not only the thrones and authorities named in the second, but everything,—the universe. “All things received being through Him, and without Him not one thing received being which has received being” (John 1.3, N.T.). This work was done, as we have said, by the eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God. HE IS THE CREATOR.

“His almighty power and wisdom
All creation’s works proclaim,
Heaven and earth alike confess Him,
As the ever great I AM.”

2. The Reconciler of all Things.

And now, this august Creator, the mighty God, deigns to come into the creation which His own omnipotent hands had made. He stoops to His footstool, and takes a place thereon as Man upon the earth. What a wonderful sight! the Creator amongst His creatures! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1.14). Passing by the holy angels, He came down to us, being made “some little inferior to the angels” (Heb. 2.7, N.T.). And even then, such His lowly mind, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death,—and such a death as it was,—a death of shame and ignominy,—the death of the cross!

“Yes,” the youngest believer can say, “it was for me He came down; He died for me, to save me,—to make me His own.” Another more advanced in the knowledge of the truth can say, “He loved the assembly and gave Himself for it.” Both blessedly true, but in the aspect of His death of which we have just spoken it is the culmination of His pathway of obedience to God, for His glory. We may well bless His holy name when we see such an One come down to the very bottom, to lift us up to the very top!—when we behold the One who was rich, for our sakes become poor, that we through His poverty might be enriched!—we cannot cease to praise the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ! But, oh, how our hearts are moved to adore Him, when we see that lowly, holy One treading the path of perfect obedience (in which we had so sadly failed), and thus bringing glory to our God and Father, where we had dishonoured Him. Blessed Lord! Blessed Saviour! There is none like unto Thee! None so high. None went so low. We adore Thee now and evermore.

We must turn now to the immediate aspect of the death of Christ which is before us. Enmity and alienation having taken hold of man through sin, and disorder having come into the creation through the fall of Satan, one of the great dignities in the heavens, who sinned before man, and who compassed the fall of man, it became necessary, if peace and reconciliation and order were to be established, for the
Lord Jesus to undertake the work. And this involved His death;—a death, not only for the salvation of the individual sinner, but to lay a righteous basis for universal peace, reconciliation and order, so that all things might be adjusted in a new way to the Fullness that dwells in Him. We are therefore told, He tasted death for everything (Heb. 2. 9, N.T.); also, "By Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS to itself, having made peace by the blood of His cross—by Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens" (Col. 1. 20, N.T.). We have little idea how great has been the disorder brought into the heavens through the irredeemable fall of such a great dignity as Satan, who dragged others with him to hopeless doom. We see something of the awful results of sin in this world; and how terrible will be the eternity of those who refuse to repent! But, blessed be God, already the firm foundation of reconciliation has been laid by Christ in His death; and the work of reconciliation has begun already with those who believe. They "have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5. 10). Or, as it continues in Colossians 1,—You hath He now reconciled. Afterwards He will reconcile all things.

There is a new creation in Christ, and the assembly of which He is the glorified Head is brought into reconciliation in a way distinct from the rest. We are told that it is "in the body of His flesh through death"; whereas the things in the heavens and on the earth are to be reconciled "by" Him. We are reconciled "in" Him. When the assembly is glorified, and Christ has that with Him in glory which is a new creation in Himself, then He will reorder the wide creation. What glory and gladness shall then abound in those reconciled realms! What peace and rest and divine direction shall then bless those holy scenes! All confusion shall cease, and contented creation shall sweetly sing the praise of its CREATOR AND RECONCILER.

"Joyful now the wide creation Rests in undisturbed repose, Blest in Jesus' full salvation, Sorrow now nor thralldom knows."

How deep will be the joy and satisfaction of God when all is thus reconciled in and by the Son. His rest shall be disturbed no more. If He said, It is meet that We should make merry when we were reconciled, what shall such fullness be?

3. The Filler of all Things.

We have spoken of Christ as the Creator of the universe, and also of Him as its Reconciler. The Holy Spirit further tells us, in Ephesians 4. 10, that He has ascended up above all the heavens that He might fill all things. And with this object in view, it is made known to us, the assembly which is His body is being formed during the present period. Christ is going to fill the universe, and He will do this by means of His body. It is, however, Himself who does it. We must keep this in mind, or we shall fall into the error of those who exalt the assembly at the expense of Christ's glory. The hope of our calling is so exalted and so glorious that the very knowledge of it becomes a danger, unless the pre-eminence of Christ is rejoiced in with reverence and love.

The sweet singer of old said, The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The earth is full of His riches. The singers to-day, when the full revelation of God has been made known, may sing, The universe is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The heavens and the earth abound with His riches.

Now, if in view of the reconciliation of all things He made peace by His precious blood, so, in view of filling all things with divine blessing, He came down to the deepest depths and then ascended to the highest heights, after having overthrown and spoiled the one who had brought in the curse. The language of the Holy Spirit as to this is most expressive: "But that He
ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens that HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS.’’ Let the thoughts travel up to the highest of the heavens,—He is above them all! Let the mind discover the multitudinous marvels of the material and moral universe,—He is to fill all things! How great and wise and glorious then is our blessed Saviour. And shall not He who can do this, and whose love for us led Him to die for our sins, fill our hearts?—yea, fill them to overflowing. Oh, that those who comprise His well-loved assembly had simply clung to Him! He is enough the mind and heart to fill! But how early the assemblies left their first love!

The scripture above quoted passes on to tell us that the gifts were given from the ascended Head of the assembly in view of its edifying, that we might grow up to Christ in all things. For from Him the whole body is fitted together, and receives that which is for its good, and growth, and self-building up in love. Now the wonderful thing is that when the assembly is complete, and glorified together with Christ in His exalted place as Head over all things, it will then be the perfected instrument whereby He Himself will fill with order and blessing all things over which He is the glorified Head. This is made known to us in that unparalleled scripture, in this connection, at the end of Ephesians 1., where we are told that Christ is set above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, all things being put under His feet; and that He is Head ‘‘over all things to the assembly, which is His body, THE FULNESS OF HIM WHO FILLS ALL IN ALL.’’ What honour then is bestowed upon the evangelist, and upon the shepherd and teacher, to have part now in the edifying of this body of Christ. Could any service be greater or more dignified and gracious? And what is it to be part,—even a feeble part, of so blessed and eminent an assembly?—the most eminent and exalted in the universe, because it is the body of Christ. Oh, that we might show our deep appreciation of the love that has taken us up for this, by seeking the exaltation of the Head of the assembly at all times.

It is He Himself who shall fill all things. What would the body be without Him? But how little we grasp what ‘‘all things’’ mean! The more we do so, the more the greatness grows before our eyes of Him who is to fill all things. That is if we look at them rightly as in relation to Him who is the exalted Head of all. Psalm 8. tells us of some of these things: ‘‘All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.’’ But there is also the earth itself, and the heavens above the earth. There are the peoples in distant climes who have not yet heard of Him; and the nations where thrones and authorities are set up; and then in the heavens there are intelligencies with their powers, and authorities, and principalities, and dominions, and thrones,—all,—all things are to be filled by our Lord Jesus Christ. The place is His already, but He awaits the time when the assembly shall be glorified. And what a response shall be given to all the blessed beneficence, and direction, and gladness, and glory with which He will fill the universe! ‘‘To Him shall every heart be love and every lip be praise!’’ All will redound to the praise of God’s glory. The wicked and all wickedness shall be removed. And in the assembly in Christ Jesus shall be everlasting glory to God. He has revealed Himself to us in the Son,—in the One who is the Firstborn of all creation, the Son of the Father’s love. May we know Him and His relation to the universe better. He is its CREATOR, RECONCILER, and FILLER.

‘‘How great our glorious Saviour is, All radiant on the throne! The universe He’ll fill with bliss, And gladden everyone.’’
The Kingdom of the Prince of Peace.

We may continue to pray "Thy kingdom come," earnestly and with importunity, for it were never more needed than now, and we have the sure and certain hope that the answer cannot long be delayed. But that prayer will not be answered, nor will that longed-for kingdom come by the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the world as is popularly supposed, for if that were to precede His coming then all the nations of the earth would be ready to meet the King when at last He should appear, and would receive Him with songs of gladness. But as we "seek out the book of the Lord, and read," we discover that the very opposite will be the case. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him, Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1. 7). Why should they wail instead of sing at the sight of Him? Because they will not be ready to meet Him, and will be filled with terror when they see Him. But why should this be? Because of the character of His coming. He will come to judge the nations. He will come as the Faithful and the True to judge and make war in righteousness (Rev. 19. 11). He 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 from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9). Solemn statements these, plainly indicating that the world, especially in those parts of it where the gospel is preached, will continue to refuse that gospel, and to ignore the claims of God until His fierce and righteous judgments burst upon it.

Then when those forces of evil that have been opposed to God and His Christ have been utterly broken in the "wine-

press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19. 15), His kingdom shall come, and the restless fevers of the world shall be quieted, its deep groanings hushed, and its sore sickness healed by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the golden era of peace for which the saints of God have sighed throughout the ages shall dawn at last for this troubled creation.

"The Light of the Lord" and Universal Disarmament.

Exceedingly beautiful are those passages in the Word that describe this coming kingdom. The first that we will consider is found in Isaiah 2. 1-5.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

All the efforts of men to bring about such a state of things as this have utterly failed, and the greatest achievements of science and education in which they have boasted with a presumptuous pride, and which they imagined would lift them at last into a millennium of human glory, are being pushed to their utmost limits to devise fresh and more frightful ways of destroying life, and the whole energy of all industry is being subordinated to war. Senates, universities, laboratories, factories and foundries united in one purpose, brain and brawn combined at last, not to uplift but to
cast down, not to dry tears but to shed blood; and the roar of the furnace in the homelands and the shrieking of the shells over the stricken fields, where the warm blood of the world’s manhood is flowing, are but the echoes of the laughter of demons over the blindness of men, who thought they were wise when they chose their own way and refused to walk in the light of the Lord.

But the day is surely eorning when those upon the earth, who through the mercy of God shall have been delivered from the judgment that shall come upon it, shall say, “Come, and let us go to the house of the Lord, and He will teach us of His law,” and if they learn of Him they will become like Him and they will walk in His ways, and these are ways of pleasantness and peace. He is the Prince of Peace and He will stamp His character upon His kingdom and men shall learn war no more.

“That age of peace shall be AN AGRICULTURAL AGE; men will go back to the land, and God’s primal purpose for man upon the earth shall come into effect (Gen. 2. 15), and forge and anvil shall no longer groan and toll the death of millions, but shall ring out their gladness in unison with the songs of the field and vineyard.

The prophecy of Micah (ch. 4. 4) tells us further that “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”

Every man will have his own holding, whether large or small we do not know; but this at least is evident from the passage, each will be contented with that which is given to him. I do not say that his heart will be satisfied with his earthly possession, for nothing here below can satisfy the heart. Alexander the Great conquered and possessed the world, and then wept like a disappointed baby because there was no more world to conquer. But if earthly possessions cannot satisfy the heart, God can, and when Christ reigns supreme He will not only fill the earth with peace but fill the hearts of men with satisfaction, for He will fill their hearts with the love of God. So we read for this present time “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6. 6). No godless man is contented no matter how vast his possessions, but when God becomes our exceeding great reward we at once become contented with our lot. So in that age shall men find their joy in God, whose lovingkindness will be plainly told in the sway of Christ the King.

“And none shall make them afraid,” but “ye shall call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree” (Zech. 3. 10). And the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

They will sleep in peace at night when the day’s glad work is done, and locks and bolts and bars and watch-dogs will be needed no more, for where all are contented none will want to steal. And none will keep what he possesses for himself alone, for each will love his neighbour as himself. All rivalry will have disappeared from the lives of men, except the rivalry of love, and the skilful agriculturist and vine dresser will not boast that the fruit of his labours are finer than his neighbours, but he will place all his skill at his neighbour’s disposal until the yield from his land is as rich as his own. Happy state, resulting from the righteous and beneficent sway of the One whom men crowned with thorns and put upon a cross.

“The Spirit of the Lord” and the great change in Men.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

And righteousness shall be the girdle
of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11.).

In Isaiah 2. all outward evidence of hostility between men is abandoned; here the passions that give rise to that hostility are subdued and quelled, for the wolf and the leopard and the young lion represent uncontrolled passions of men; these animals will no doubt cease to be beasts of prey, but a greater change, because moral instead of physical, will take place in men, and this we are taught by the figure used, a little child shall be the leader.

It is an interesting fact that in Matthew's Gospel, in which the Lord Jesus is presented as the King, there is more about the little child than in any of the others, and we are told there, that to become as a little child is the sine qua non for entrance into His Kingdom (Matt. 18.). Those who compose that Kingdom will be meek, lowly, gentle, unobtrusive and dependent. So used are we to kingdoms set up and maintained by violence and force that such a kingdom as this is almost unthinkable, and yet this will be the character of the kingdom in which Christ is supreme.

It is a worldly maxim that "the weak go to the wall," and unless a man has grit enough to stand up for his rights he must suffer, and the men who are great and applauded are they who unscrupulously force themselves into the front of the stage, men of ambition and will-power, who carry their designs into effect regardless of the consequences to others.

Who are they who occupy the greatest space in this world's histories? Not the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, they have no place in them; nor yet the men who have laboured for the good of their fellows, their names are mostly forgotten; but the mighty conquerors, the men who have marched through seas of blood to the goal of their ambitions, and have founded dynasties upon the tears of widows and orphans. To the Napoleons of the world have men paid their greatest tributes and raised their most costly monuments.

It is not the little child that leads now, but this is to be completely changed, for the coming Kingdom will take its character from the King, and He is meek and lowly in heart; He never strove for His rights, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was dumb before His enemies as a sheep is dumb before her shearsers. There never was such an exhibition of apparent weakness as that which was seen in the lowly Nazarene when men rose up against Him; and they despised Him for it, for He was not only rejected but despised of men. If He had defended Himself, or even made an effort to do so, they might have respected Him, for is not self-preservation the first law of nature? But He did not use His power, and the bitter taunt that they cast upon Him, as He hung in His last agony upon a malefactor's gibbet, was "Himself He cannot save." This was the jest of Jerusalem on that day.

Need I say to you, that that which they despised as weakness was the very might of God; that there and then omnipotent love, girded for the great conflict, grappled with the powers of darkness, overthrew the dominion of the devil, and gained a signal, overwhelming, and eternal victory.

"By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown,
Trod all our foes beneath our feet
By being trodden down."

"The Glory of the Lord" and

Abundant Fruitfulness.

A third passage descriptive of this coming Kingdom is Isaiah 35.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon,
they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.  
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The whole chapter is full of beauty, it tells us of the effect of the shining of the glory of the Lord upon the earth. The blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the lame shall leap for gladness, and dumb lips shall sing the praise of the Lord, and sorrow and sighing, part of sin's sad brood, shall flee away, and the earth shall rejoice. No need then for vast irrigation schemes to make the earth a fruitful place, for fountains of water shall break forth in the most barren of places; the very desert shall become fragrant with roses, the howling wilderness shall rejoice, and everything that hath breath shall sing the triumph of the great Deliverer. All this blessing for the earth and for men rests upon the one foundation—the redemptive work of Christ; and it will all be brought into realization by Him as the great and righteous Administrator. 

He was once the Lamb upon the cross He will soon appear as the King upon the throne, and when He rules with equity for the meek of the earth His work upon the throne will be as perfect as that which He accomplished upon the cross.

Now a practical word as to these three Scriptures. There are three expressions prominent in them; they are (1) The Light of the Lord (Isa. 2.), (2) The Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11.), (3) The Glory of the Lord (Isa. 35.). We have seen the mighty results that these things will bring about in that coming kingdom, but we are now in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1.), and these things which are present in that kingdom now for us, should have their effect upon us now.

"The light of the Lord" for us is the gospel, it is the revelation of God in grace to us in Christ.

That grace revealed to us in the risen Christ, who was delivered for our offences, has brought us into peace, for we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we know God as the God of peace, thence should we seek peace and pursue it. As to the nations we cannot escape the sorrow and strife in which they are involved though we may be in spirit apart from it. But we have been set in God's husbandry (1 Cor. 3.), which is His assembly, not there to use the sword and spear of sectarian strife, but the ploughshare and the pruning-hook as labourers together with God in His garden, and thus be contributing to the prosperity of those who are precious to Him.

When we believed the gospel we received the Holy Ghost, who forms within us "the spirit of the Lord," that we may manifest it to our fellow believers and before the world. It is only thus that we shall be known as His. Instead of the passions that once marked us—"hatred, malice, emulation, strife, envy," we shall bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and manifest the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It will be our pleasure also to behold "the glory of the Lord," and as we do so we shall be transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3.). Our hearts that were once a veritable Sahara for barrenness will become fruitful and fragrant to God, and out of our lives, once only evil, will break forth streams of refreshing, for did not the Lord Himself say of those who drink of Him, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7.).

If we are living in the power of these things we shall be of use to weary hearts in this sad and cruel world, and for the Lord's glory during the time of His absence. And it is by these things that we hold the fort for Him until He comes.

Thank God we know Him well who is coming, and we can raise our joyful voices together and say of Him: "TO HIM WHO LOVES US, AND HAS WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS BLOOD, AND MADE US A KINGDOM, PRIESTS TO HIS GOD AND FATHER: TO HIM BE THE GLORY AND THE MIGHT TO THE AGES OF THE AGES. AMEN" (Rev. 1. 5, 6, N.T.).
On His Head were Many Crowns.

"AND I saw heaven opened" (Rev. 19. 12). So wrote John as he unfolded the inspired "Revelation of Jesus Christ."

On earth he sees in vision a scene of unparalleled horror. Energized by the three unclean spirits emanating from that unholy trinity of evil—the head of the revived Roman Empire, the antichrist and the devil—he beholds "the kings of the earth and of the whole world gathered to the battle of God Almighty" (Rev. 16. 14).

The scene could not be more terrible. Man, who has attempted again and again to shake off God in every shape and form, is here seen attempting to do so on the greatest possible scale, dwarfing everything that had gone before.

It seems as if at last the whole power of hell was mobilized in one last tremendous effort to overthrow the purposes of God in regard to the earth.

In the midst of all this dark and lurid scene of unmitigated frightfulness John, in vision, sees heaven opened and a glorious Person appear. His description is glorious—His names are Faithful and True, The Word of God, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, besides a name written that none knew but Himself, the name indicative of that wondrous mystery, the inscrutability of His person.

Says John, "On His head were many crowns" (diadema). He alone has the right to wear the diadem.

"All hail the power of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all."

The devil snatched at dominion, and put upon his own head seven diadems (see Rev. 12. 3); the head of the revived Roman Empire, energized by the devil, snatched dominion and placed on his head ten diadems (see Rev. 13. 1); but their triumph is but short-lived, and the height of their ascent in blasphemous ambition only measures the depth of their fall and judgment.

Yes, the Lord’s brow alone is worthy to wear the diadems—the imperial crowns of universal dominion. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords—the true Emperor at last with world-wide dominion. Note, no number is given. His glory cannot be confined by numbers. No creature mind can encompass the thought of the fulness of His glory.

And what shall the saints of God do with their crowns?—not diadems, be it noted, but the crowns (stephanos) of reward, such as the victors in the Corinthian games were familiar with, the crown of laurel leaves or of parsley, but in the case of believers "a crown that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5. 4). What shall the saints of God do with their crowns? we ask again. John can enlighten us as to this. In his inspired vision he tells us, "The four-and-twenty elders (representing the church and Old Testament saints) fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power" (Rev. 4. 10, 11).

Yes, He is worthy. On His brow will rest the diadem of the Son of God (John 1. 49); of the King of Israel (John 1. 49); of the Son of Man (John 1. 51) with widespread dominion from pole to pole; of the eternal Word (John 1. 1); of the Creator and Sustainer of all things (John 1. 3); of the Lamb of God, "which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29); of the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2. 10); of the Head of the church, His body (Col. 1. 18); of the Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1. 22). But no list of His glories can be complete. Let each reader in reverence and worship fill in what he himself has learnt of those glories that surpass all telling.
Our Great Example.

The incomparable perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ shines in unsullied beauty, whether in His exaltation and glory or in the lowly circumstances of this life. It is this unchanging excellency which distinguishes Him from all others. The "yesterday" of His humiliation, and the "to-day" of His patience, as well as the "for ever" of His great glory, finds Jesus Christ to be "the same." Blessed be His name.

The earth and the heavens are the works of His hands; and presently He will roll them up as a garment, and they shall be changed; but He is the same, and His years shall not fail.

What a wonderful sight for our eyes to see Him down here in this world with His loved ones around Him—to see Him at that last passover supper with His disciples, as it is pictured for us by the Holy Spirit in John 13. He is so great, and yet so lowly. He loved them with a perfect love that sought to serve them even as He does His own to-day, and yet He was their Lord and Teacher. The Father loved Him: He ever did so: but the blessedness and perfection of His life in this world called out the Father's love to Him in a special way. We are told in John 3. 35, the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. The knowledge of this was specially with our blessed Lord at the sacred hour of the last supper. He knew that universal glory and authority and pre-eminence were His; but that in nowise altered His own personal lowliness and loveliness. He was quite cognizant at this moment that the glorious governance of everything was given to Him, and that the wealth of the universal inheritance was His: yet His moral grace and glory were unaltered; and they shine with exceptional lustre here. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands," rose from supper, and stooped down, and washed the feet of His disciples. What a sight indeed! One so great and glorious at the feet of His followers! The Lord at the feet of those He loved! The appointed Head over all things washing and wiping the feet of His own!

Ah, but He would have them and us to have part with Him. And He said to Peter, who refused to submit to the Lord's hands, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." It is the desire of His loving heart that His own should enter into that which He now has with the Father. It was concerning His own that He said to the Father, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them." We are his co-heirs. Oh, how blessed to be "heirs of God, and Christ's joint heirs." But, beloved brethren, do we cherish the knowledge of this glorious greatness with lowliness and humility, and meekness and love? If so, we too shall then shine in the moral grace of Christ. The example which He has left us will be delightful to our hearts. John 13. will be practically known to us then; and this is what our blessed Lord desires; for He said, "If I therefore, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an EXAMPLE" (13. 14, N.T.).

May we have power to behold adoringly our wonderful Example—to behold the Lord of glory in His lowly loveliness. And He is the same to-day as He was yesterday. He will be the same for ever.

An expert said to me a few days ago, "You can quickly distinguish a real diamond from an imitation. They may appear to shine with equal brilliance, but if you place them in water the imitation becomes like the water that surrounds it, while the real diamond still sheds its own lustre as before." Our blessed Lord, the Son of the Father, whether above in His own glory or below in this world and sin and need, shines unchanged and undimmed, always the same, in His own moral perfection,
Law and Love.

Herein is set before us the solution of the great question as to how justice and mercy can unite together, apart from which no soul can have true peace with God. We commend the paper to the special notice of our readers.

The foundation of any throne is given us in Proverbs 16. 12. "The throne is established by righteousness." No doubt an earthly throne is here in view, but that this truth equally governs the throne of God Psalm 89. 14 clearly proves: "Justice and judgment are the establishment (marg.) of Thy throne." That is, God's throne is unshakable because it is established on absolute righteousness.

Suppose then for a moment the possibility of this foundation being changed in its character; suppose the slightest element of injustice, whether in punishing the innocent or sparing the guilty, to be introduced, then the foundation would be destroyed.

"His throne is uphelden by mercy" (Prov. 20. 28). The change of the word from "established" to "uphelden" is not without significance. The former speaks of foundation, the latter of support; suggesting that if the king cannot exercise mercy his throne is practically of no use—his will is barred, limited—he is no longer supreme (1 Peter 3. 13).

If this be true of an earthly throne; much more must it be true of the throne of God.

There must be no lack of righteousness on the one hand, or mercy on the other, for the integrity and maintenance of the throne of God. If there be an inability to show mercy—speaking with reverence—God's very throne is of no value to Him. But if He pardons convicted criminals—is that righteous? Is not the foundation gone? This is a dilemma out of which apparently there is no escape.

With these scriptures in mind we have in Daniel 6. an illustration. The king, Darius, had exalted Daniel over all the presidents and princes of his kingdom. Jealousy stirred these latter to arrange a plot whereby they will secure their own authority, satisfy their malice, and get rid of Daniel. They approach the king with one of those lies that is covered with enough truth to show its real author. "All the presidents of the kingdom have consulted to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."

"All the presidents," Darius would say to himself, "then my beloved Daniel is also in favour of this decree; and it certainly is a very attractive thought that for a time, at least, I shall be in the place of all that is divine: it shows great consideration for my honour on the part of the presidents and princes."

It was an subtle trap, well baited, and the unsuspecting king walks in, signs the decree, the spring snaps behind him, and he is taken.

Like all trapped creatures, he tries to get out. He desires to have mercy on his beloved Daniel, and "labours till the going down of the sun" to deliver him. He wants to exercise that prerogative of the throne, mercy; and especially to one who has only broken a wicked law.

But it is impossible. He cannot be a just king and a saviour too. He is a helpless king on an impotent throne—a picture of Love powerless against Law.

We turn to a scene in which every factor that we have been looking at in this Persian court is reproduced, but in infinitely stronger colours.

In John 8. we have an incident recorded that, according to the weight
of modern Biblical criticism, should not be there at all, but which, according to any spiritual intelligence, gives such marks of the finger of God that it could not be anywhere else.

No holy man is here condemned by a flagrantly unrighteous law; but a sinner so hopelessly guilty that she cannot say one word in self-defence. No heathen princes press for judgment, but the religious heads of the community, who remind the Lord of the unequivocal words "Moses in the Law" had written regarding the disposition of such a case, and add, "But what sayest Thou?"

And in Him we have another contrast, for He is no Darius. He stoops down and writes with His finger in the dust, and they, poor foolish men, like Belshazzar of old, cannot read His writing.

They continue to press their supposed advantage: "Moses indeed said she should be stoned; now can you be just, and a Saviour too?"

Daniel was guiltless, yet the king could not save him in opposition to an unjust wicked human law. Here is a hopelessly guilty one: can He save such in view of a holy, just, divine law? If He says "Stone her," then is He no Saviour and cannot show mercy: if He says "Stone her not," then is He unjust.

It is a deeper problem than that of the tribute money. The one mighty problem of the ages, a problem that God alone can solve; therefore is it placed in beautiful exactness in this Gospel of His divine glory; and His solution of it marks Him as absolutely divine. He continues to write with His finger on the ground. What sentence was that finger writing? Had it not even in Eden written "Dust thou art"? It was the same finger here, tracing in that common dust from whence all came, to which all returned, a common sin, a common condemnation.

The very dust touched by His finger answered this question.

What message does it carry to the hearts and consciences of the hearers? They read it not; till, lifting Himself up, He tells them plainly, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Do they cast a stone? No, they go out, beginning at the eldest. Convicted by their own consciences, they leave His presence and leave the poor silent sinner there alone—alone with Him who could alone indeed cast the stone. But what does He do? He lifts up Himself and, no condemnner left, says, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

The cross shall soon prove Him righteous in so speaking, for the stones shall fall on Him for the sin then "passed over." There the penalty of the broken law is borne by the One whose law it was; there the Judge suffers for the culprit; the Just One for the unjust to bring her—you and me—to God. Here one sees Law powerless against Love, yet the law not dishonoured but made honourable by love meeting its fullest demands.

Now, leaving many points of exquisite beauty in the narrative, let me ask, Do you think it was any consideration of public policy or care for public morality that governed those men in bringing that woman before Christ? Or that, in so doing, they aimed at her at all? Consider it well. Did they aim at her? Most certainly not: for had that been their motive, there would have been no need to bring her there at all: the law was clear there were plenty of stones and willing hands to throw them. No, they could only be aiming at Him.

Here is a picture of the great arch-enemy who aims to bring sinful man before the judgment-seat, yet does not aim at the man at all, but at the Judge; not at the guilty sinner but at God.

God in His love and wisdom turns all to the blessing of His creatures, by revealing to them the exceeding riches of His grace and His manifold wisdom in meeting the craft of the great enemy. (Adapted.)
Where Dwellest Thou? (John 1. 38.)

WHERE dwellest Thou—Thou whose unfathomed grace
Our souls with wondrous longings doth endow?
Bright visions of a purer brighter place
Before us rise—O say, Where dwellest Thou?

Where dwellest Thou? O Lord, hast Thou not said
Foxes have dens, and birds the forest bough,
But Thou hast not a place to lay Thy head?
Then tell us, Son of Man, Where dwellest Thou?

Where dwellest Thou? Fain would our eyes behold
Love-lighted courts where veiled seraphs bow,
Where shine the jasper and the burnished gold—
Is there Thy home? If not, Where dwellest Thou?

Where dwellest Thou? O be not in our sight
Like a wayfarer with forbidding brow,
That turns aside to tarry for a night,
And passes hence. O say, Where dwellest Thou?

Where dwellest Thou? Here weariness and woe,
Sorrows innumerable, griefs enow;
But where Thou dwellest every heart must know
Eternal pleasures—Lord, Where dwellest Thou?

What Seek Ye? (John 1. 38.)

WHAT seek ye? Is it silver? Is it gold?
To gain such things 'twere vain to follow Me.
My abject poverty your eyes behold—
Way-worn and travel-tainted—What seek ye?

What seek ye? Is it concert with the great—
With princess proud—with men of high degree?
Companionship with empty minds that prate
Of lineage illustrious? What seek ye?

What seek ye? Is it pleasure? Is it power?
Wisdom? or folly? riches? gaiety?
With pleasure would ye fill the present hour,
The life to come forgetting? What seek ye?

What seek ye? Is it life beyond the grave?
Honour and incorruptibility?
Is it a sight of the Unseen ye crave?
What is it that ye covet? What seek ye?

What seek ye? Is it God the Father's face?
Would ye within His presence bend the knee
Where shines the glory of eternal grace
And seraphs veil their faces? What seek ye?
Come and See. (John 1. 39.)

If ye would know the place where I abide,
This world forsake, and follow after Me;
Thither shall I be your unerring Guide,
And there a welcome waits you—Come and see.

How could the splendour of the place be told?
How could its secrets be set forth that ye
Might understand? Its glories multifold
Baffle description—ye must Come and see.

Its brightness from the denizens of earth
Must while this world continues curtained be;
Known only unto men of heavenly birth
Are all its wonders—therefore, Come and see.

The Father's bosom! Who could this dilate?
Who could the fringe of such felicity,
Such Joys immortal, matchless, increate,
Reach by a flight of fancy?—Come and see.

O come and see, for I so long to take
Companions to those courts along with Me
Where from each overflowing heart shall break
Eternal praises—Come, O come and see.

"In the Bosom of the Father."

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18).

Heat, as well as light, is ours, I might say; for this wondrous scripture tells us that "the bosom of the Father has been disclosed to us..." There is nothing like that.

(J. G. B.)

"He never left the Father's bosom. It is His constant place, and His peculiar mode of relationship with the Father. Hence we by the Holy Ghost are in grace privileged to know God, even as the Son declared Him, who perfectly, infinitely, enjoyed love in that relationship from everlasting to everlasting. Into what a circle of Divine association does He not introduce us!"

(W. K.)

"He lived down here full of grace and truth... then we, believers, have received of His fulness and grace upon grace; in short, as the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed the Father."

(J. N. D.)

"The second thing is, that the only Son in the bosom of the Father reveals God, and reveals Him consequently as known by Himself in that position... relationship."

(J. N. D.)

"He gave them the peace which He Himself had with the Father" (John 14. 27).
"The Testimony of the Lord is Sure."
(Ps. 19. 7.)

THERE is nothing variable or uncertain in the testimony which God Himself gives to men. The many may not receive it, and the others who do may but feebly respond to it, but the testimony itself is faultless, like the One who grants it in grace to a sinful world. Where it is believed,—where the heart and mind are open before God,—where there is singleness towards Him, it imparts understanding and wisdom. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

This beautiful scripture from Psalm 19. refers of course to the testimony which God gave to Moses in the mount. Although given so long before, the Holy Spirit reverts to it as still being at the foundation of the people's relations with God. The early verses of the Psalm celebrate the unceasing testimony of creation, at least on its heavenly side, to God's greatness and glory. They also tell us of a tabernacle set in the heavens for the sun. At the appointed time it comes out, radiant with brightness and warmth, so that nothing is hid from its shining. This reminds us of the testimony of the present times,—of that which was to be rendered when its own times arrived (I Tim. 2. 6).

As we look briefly at these three testimonies which God has given to men, we shall see how sure they are, and how utterly without excuse they leave those who have not the knowledge of God. And as we weigh them before Him, in the sense of His grace, they will grant wisdom to us, helping us to walk consistently with them for His praise, while our assured hearts exclaim, "Thy testimonies are very sure" (Ps. 93. 5)—yea, all of them!

God's Testimony in Creation.

The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament gives unmistakeable evidence of His handiwork. For the full revelation of God the world had to wait for Christ to come; nevertheless, creation clearly makes manifest to all His power and divinity. It is plain to any thoughtful and upright mind that the One who made that which we see above and below and around us must have power far beyond the creature, also that He Himself must be above man altogether. And like the testimony sent in grace to man to-day, the voice of creation has gone out into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world (Rom. 10. 18). The powerful eloquence of this ancient preacher has doubtless been fruitful in multitudes of cases, in bringing home to their souls the great fact that God is, and in bringing them to cry to Him in their need. More than one has said, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?" Nor have the words of Isaiah been in vain: "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else . . . a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE."

Moreover, when the Apostle Paul was preaching to the turbulent crowds at Lystra, he reminded them that though the nations had been suffered to go in their own ways in past times, nevertheless the rain given from heaven and the fruitful seasons, the food and gladness that filled their hearts, were a testimony to the Creator. He did not leave Himself without witness. The unceasing testimony of God in creation to men is sure.
God's Testimony in the Law.

As we have said, this was given to Moses at Sinai. It was the moral law which was preserved in the ark and in the tabernacle. These therefore were afterwards called the ark of the testimony and the tabernacle of testimony. The ark, with the mercy-seat of gold above and the golden cherubim, formed the throne of Jehovah on the earth. The law within the ark, — "the testimony," was the moral foundation of that throne. The Lord said to Moses, "Thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exod. 25. 16). Although constantly overlooked, a little meditation upon this will give us to see the great importance of this testimony. The previous one had to do with providence; this with government; the third with grace. Here was to be found the foundation of right relations with God. But because man was a sinner, the law necessarily condemned him,—righteously so; and all the world comes under judgment to God. By the works of the law no flesh could be justified. It gave the knowledge of sin, and stopped every mouth; so that, if God had not found redemption for us in Christ Jesus, we must have remained under judgment eternally. But, through that redemption, He now justifies freely by His grace all those who believe in Jesus.

This does not, however, abrogate the testimony given to Moses. How could it? The law is holy, and the commandment, which may bring sin home to us, is holy and just and good also. Moreover God has given the Spirit to those who trust in Christ, and though they are not under the law, but under grace, yet "the righteous requirement of the law" is now fulfilled in them,—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 4). Indeed, the inward man of the real soul delights in the law of God, and it is as true now as ever,—Blessed is the man that finds delight in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night. Although justification is not to be found there, but only in the blood of Christ, yet true blessedness is tasted as we find Christ in this wondrous testimony of God.

The Lord Jesus said to a scribe, who questioned Him as to which is the first of all the commandments: "Hear, O Israel: THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." The scribe acknowledged that this was the truth; and the Lord said to him: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Later we are told in Romans 13. 10, "Love is the whole law" (N.T.). How abiding therefore is this testimony which was put in the ark. It is indeed sure, and it makes wise the simple. Such are enabled to see Christ in it. He said, "Thy law is within My heart." HE loved in fullest perfection.

God's Testimony in Christ.

"Its own times" having come for the present-day testimony of God to men, Paul tells us he was appointed a herald and apostle to make it known. He was not the testimony, nor was any other servant of Christ or company of people, but he was fitted and appointed for the announcement of it. He carried it to Corinth, and knowing the worldly wisdom which characterized that Grecian people, as a wise servant of the Lord, he did not announce the testimony of God with words of man's wisdom, lest they should trust in that instead of in the power of God. He preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The testimony of Christ was confirmed in those who received it (compare 1 Cor. 2. 1-5 and 1. 6). It is called the testimony "of God" for He is the Source of it, and "of Christ" because He is the Subject of it. Paul also carried it to Thessa-
lonica, where it was believed (2 Thess. r. 10). He exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of himself, the Lord's prisoner on account of it, but to suffer evil along with the gospel, according to the power of God, who has saved us (2 Tim. 1. 8).

Another has said, "Persons who live in the ease of Englishmen do not know what this suffering is, but where Popery is rampant and liberty unknown, to be put into prison, or taken by the gendarme daunts and cows people. The world's reproach is on them. The testimony reduces itself to its simplest elements—not being ashamed of Christ, set before the world in testimony" (see J. N. D. Letters, vol. 2, p. 306; 2nd ed., 399).

From the scriptures given above, we are enabled to gather seven things concerning the present testimony: (1) It is of God; (2) it is concerning Christ; (3) it was announced in the preaching; (4) it was believed; (5) it was confirmed in those who received it; (6) it was in reproach; (7) it was given of God for all men. This last is confirmed by 1 Timothy 2. 1-6. There we are told to pray for all men, for this is good and acceptable before our Saviour-God, who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The Holy Spirit then leads us on to the present-day testimony, and to its bearing towards all. For "GOD IS ONE"—the same who speaks in creation and in the law to men. And now we have made known something which just suits poor, sinful man,—something which did not exist before,—"the Mediator of God and men one, the Man Christ Jesus"; and, wonderful love and grace!—He "gave Himself a ransom for all." This indeed is just what man needed, and this is what our Saviour-God provided in grace for man, blessed be His name for ever.

The Spirit at once adds as to this gracious provision of God for man,—"The testimony to be rendered in its own times" (N.T.). This testimony of God still remains, and, like the others of which we have spoken, it is sure. The times for it to be announced arrived when Christ rose and ascended to God's right hand in glory, and the Holy Spirit was given as the power for its heralding. Those times still last. Christ is still at God's right hand. The Spirit is still here to give power for the announcing of the testimony of God. Are we ready to further this in every way possible? Are we awake as to its importance? Are we prepared, if needs be, to suffer along with the gospel? Or have the ease and liberty referred to above lulled us to sleep? If Satan cannot succeed as a roaring lion, we may be sure he will seek to spoil us by his wiles. But greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. How then do we stand as to the testimony of God? May we be helped to understand it better, to value it more, and to seek its furtherance for God's praise and glory.

For Days of Trial.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Hebrews 12. 5-11).

I WAS greatly impressed when a young Christian by hearing a dear saint of God, whom I knew to be a great sufferer, say, "I feel that I must be a special object of the Father's loving interest, for I receive so much chastisement." Suffering and trial are not generally received in such a spirit, but it is just thus that they are spoken of in Hebrews 12. And I could not help but notice how quietly and trustfully and happily that dear child of God lived her life in marked contrast to many who seemed to look upon every trial as an evil thing.

But what made her accept her trials
in such a spirit and interpret them so happily? Simply this, she read the Word of God, AND BELIEVED IT. She did not question it, but received it with the simplicity of a child. It could not deceive her. Hebrews 12. was her Father's word to her, as well as every other part of Scripture, and so she quietly accepted all as proof of His interest in her, and consequently her trials yielded to her the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Would that we all accepted God's words with the same simplicity. What comfort the Scriptures would yield us if we did, and this scripture in particular, in these days when trials are pressing more or less upon all. What comfort it would give you, dear reader, in your trial, if you realized that it is because you are a child, a son, in the tender hands of an all-wise Father that you are passing through trial at all, that your Father has your everlasting profit in view in all that He permits you to pass through, and that He wants you now to be a PARTAKER OF HIS HOLINESS. And the nearer you walk with Him the more He must correct those things in you which are not suitable to His company. He wants you to walk with Him as Enoch did, to be His friend as Abraham was, to know that He loves you even as He loves His well-beloved Son. He wants you to understand His bright designs for your present and ultimate good, and to trust His heart even when you cannot understand His ways. If you enter into this you will fret and fume no more, but you will raise your thanksgiving psalm to Him for the love that is as real and true in the days of storm and stress as in the quiet days of sunshine and repose. Plainly is it stated in Hebrews 12. that chastisement is a proof of the Father's loving interest in us. Let us believe it and submit ourselves thankfully to the Father of spirits and live.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD" (Matt. 28. 20).

"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless, Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness. Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still if Thou abide with me."

At one of the big training depots I recently met a Christian man of forty, who in subjection to the authorities had left home and wife and family for military service. The change from a comfortable home and easy life to the hardships and trials of a soldier's training told heavily upon him. His drill sergeant was neither considerate nor polite, and seemed to take a special delight in abusing him, until the strain became almost unbearable. One morning on parade he felt that he had come to the breaking point, and cried out in his heart to the Lord, "O Lord, speak to me, for I cannot bear this any longer." At once he got his answer. Clearer and more distinct than the rough profanity of the sergeant the words sounded in his very soul: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." He told me that that was all he needed, and nothing had been a burden to him since. The circumstances were the same, but the sense of the Lord's presence with him had made all the difference. He could pass through the trials serenely and without irritation now because of the blessedness of the company in which he lived and walked.

But the words are in the sacred Scriptures for you and for me, dear reader, as much as for him, and we may read them AND BELIEVE THEM and draw that most blessed comfort that they yield to all who do believe them. Shall we honour the Lord by doing so, or dishonour Him by acting like abandoned orphans for whom He has neither love nor care? Let us take the words as they stand and joyfully sing.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, FOR THOU ART WITH ME. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."
Have the Heathen a "Second Chance" of Salvation?

The writer of the following paper has been a Christian missionary to a heathen people for twenty years and during all that time, with its accumulating experiences and knowledge of the heathen life and practices, he has never for one moment doubted the scriptural correctness of the conviction he held ere taking up missionary work, regarding the final state of all heathen peoples, namely, that apart from a saving faith in Christ Jesus exercised during this present life they are already irretrievably lost. On the contrary he has by that very experience, and profound meditation thereon, been more than ever confirmed, if that were possible, in the above-mentioned conviction. However, not all Christians see alike on this subject, and only lately a very intimate friend greatly startled the writer by expressing a very unsettled mind upon this question. It was this incident which influenced the writer to try to state his views as clearly as possible in the following article, in the hope it may establish some who are wavering and may even recall some who have wandered into what the writer believes are unscriptural and dangerous views. Everything hereafter written is in a spirit of deepest Christian love, and it is hoped the language and form will not give cause of offence to anyone.

This is a very vital question. No child of God may ignore it, or shirk it, if God has been pleased to reveal His mind. Anything He deigns to reveal is vital. The only question, here at this point, is, "Has God revealed His mind upon this matter?" Have the Father's words been spoken in this world? Let every child of God be persuaded in his own mind. As for the writer, he is convinced that the Father has very plainly revealed His mind hereon. Do you, reader, believe He has? If you cannot say,—if you have not yet searched the Scriptures to ascertain whether He has so spoken or not, then you are shirking your duty, and I pray you to no longer remain in ignorance. It is not honouring God to remain so. Whatever our loving Father has revealed be it ours as obedient and filial children to attend to. Let nothing prevent your instant and prayerful study of Scripture to discover whether He has or has not revealed His mind on this important subject. If He has not, then we may trustingly leave the whole matter to His wisdom, yet to be made known, being only careful not to invent conjectures and hypotheses of our own; in fact we may then rightly claim to be agnostics as regards this question, without dishonouring God. But, if He has at all revealed His will,—however much or little, however clear or seemingly hidden,—it is our bounden duty to pay attention thereto; to prayerfully study it, perchance by His Spirit He may enlighten our minds and bring them into unison with His own. Let none say it is not a vital matter, for that is to prejudge it and dishonours God. It concerns the Father's revealed mind, and it concerns the final destiny of a great part of the human race, and this is vitally important.

It is to be feared that even some Christian missionaries, who in their first ardour and consecration to God saw the heathen afar off perishing,—going down to a terrible future of punishment, have, since gaining a more proximate view of the heathen, begun to doubt the truth of their first convictions, while others have definitely renounced theirs. Why is this? It must surely be that their first views, like their later views, were gained from other sources than the Scriptures as far as they themselves went,—i.e. they perhaps gained their views from mere "hearsay," but did not found them on a PERSONAL search of the Scriptures.
If they had done so then no amount of contact with the heathen, no amount of love for them, or horror at so vast a host being finally lost, would have influenced them to change so well-grounded a conviction. They surely must have changed because their views were not grounded on the revealed mind of God, but were merely "accepted" from other sources. Such love for the heathen, such horror at so vast a host being lost,—such appeal to the fact that God is love, is all beside the mark. It is not what a man may think, or wish for,—no matter how venerable, holy, good or experienced the man of God may be; his ideas and wishes must here be entirely rejected if they traverse the revealed mind of God. Let us, then, see what God says, and we will turn first, as a matter of course, to Romans, chapters 1. to 3. There it is clearly stated that the whole human race, Jew and Gentile, is without excuse before God: that for original sin, and personal sin, they lie under the wrath of God, not under the love of God as is often erroneously taught. True, God's love has been manifested, and pardon is freely offered to all who are NOW UNDER WRATH, but all who reject or neglect that pardoning love, as well as all—(please be careful to note and understand this fact)—who have never heard of it, ARE STILL IN ORIGINAL AND ACTUAL PERSONAL SIN, AND, AS A MATTER OF JUSTICE, LIE UNDER GOD'S DOOMING WRATH.

In Romans, chapters 1. to 3., the Holy Spirit was not referring to those who had heard of and refused God's pardoning love in Christ. No, He there speaks of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men—that includes the whole human race. But let us ask ourselves a few simple questions which may clarify our minds and lead us to a firm and satisfactory decision. As to the entire human race (the heathen included, of course), apart from faith in Christ:—

1st. Are they sinners? Yes. In face of Romans 1. 19-32 and 3. 9-18 and Galatians 3. 22 there can be no doubt that the whole human race is IMBEDDED in sin.

2nd. Are they guilty? Yes. Romans 3. 19 decides this question. All mankind are each personally guilty before God.

3rd. Are they excusable? No. They have no excuse, no escape, no loophole. And here I would again state that the Holy Spirit was referring to the entire human race apart from whether they had heard the gospel or not. Not even may any plead that they never heard the gospel of God's pardoning love in Christ. The fact of having heard and refused the gospel is not necessary for the condemnation of the heathen. Though they have never heard the gospel, yet have they no excuse whatever. Anyone who teaches the heathen that they have any ground of excuse before God makes God a liar. Romans 1. 20 is decisive on this point.

Here let it be seen that Romans 3. 9-20 dispenses once and for all with the misleading figment that there are some who are "living up to their light," and that there are those who, as Romans 2. 7 puts it, "by patient well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption." THERE ARE NO SUCH (apart from, of course, those "born again"), no, not one. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way. There is not so much as one that doeth good. Where then are those who are "living up to their light," or who "seek, by patient continuance in well doing, for glory, honour, and incorruption"? Twenty years' experience has taught the writer that in the heathen world none "live up to their light."

4th. Are they under God's wrath? Yes. Note that the wrath of God does not merely abide on those who reject or neglect Christ (John 3. 36), but also upon those who never heard of Jesus Christ and His all-sufficient sacrifice.
(Rom. i. 18; Eph. 2. 3; 5. 6; 2 Thess. i. 8; Col. 3. 6). And if we desire to understand in some measure what that wrath will mean when no longer held back by God's longsuffering we may meditate upon Revelation 14. 9 and 11; 14. 18-20; 16. 1-21; 16. 15-21. These passages refer to the great time of punishment yet to come upon the people of this earth, yet they suffice to show us some little of what the "wrath" of God means.

5th. Are they lying in death and under sentence of second death—condemned already? Yes. See Ephesians 2. i. (Dead in trespasses and sins.) There are many passages to this effect. See Psalm 9. 17. (Note "Sheol" is "Hades," and we are told that "Hades" will be cast into the "lake of fire.") The "nations that forget God," are these not the heathen? They are to be turned into "Sheol" (or "Hades"), and then at the great white throne to be cast into the "lake of fire." Study Revelation 20. 14; 1 Corinthians 6. 9-11; Revelation 22. 15; 21. 8. Let God be true though every man a liar.

Therefore we conclude there is abundance of scripture for stating that all who never heard of God's way of salvation through Christ, as well as all who reject or neglect Christ, are now "lost," and must for ever remain so unless a way of escape after they leave this life be found. But let us continue our questions.

6th. Has God revealed some plan whereby those who never heard of His plan of salvation on earth may be saved after they leave this life? No. There is no such revelation. Not one iota or scintilla has God revealed that will give hope to such heathen. On the contrary, Scripture abounds in statements regarding the irreparable lost condition of those heathen. The views of Conditional Immortalists and Restorationists, and such like, are solely based upon private interpretations, and inferences drawn from renownedly debatable and isolated texts of Scripture. To hold out to the heathen a hope so based is precarious and reprehensible in the extreme. But when we find that those interpretations and inferences are diametrically opposed to the categorical statements and plain trend of God's revelation then the mere entertaining of them becomes a sin against God.

7th. What then is the position of those millions who never heard of God's loving plan of salvation? Their position is just the same as it ever was since Adam our first parent sinned. It has not changed from that they held under original and personal sin. They are "children of wrath," "guilty," "inexcusable," "dead," under doom of "second death." There is no plain indisputable ground for saying that their position will change after death, but there is abundance of ground for saying that death will fix this their present position as final.

"It is incredible," you say, "that all those millions are doomed to be 'lost,' and all because they never heard of God's plan of salvation, which was not their fault." "It is manifestly unfair," you say, "that some of the race,—chiefly occidentals,—enjoy the offer of salvation, while millions,—chiefly orientals,—never had that privilege, and so were, and are, 'lost.'" "God is love," you say, "and He must give them a chance too." Let us continue the questions.

8th. Are we then to believe that God who is love dooms millions to be "lost" when He could save them if He would? But it is not a matter of what we think, or desire, or deem right. It is purely God's matter all through. It is our duty to accept His revelation no matter how it seems unjust or severe. We are not God. Let Him know best. He knows what He is doing. Rest assured He is just and righteous in all His ways no matter how those ways may appear unjust to finite creatures. We are not omniscient, but He is. Finite sinful man, even though redeemed, may not presume to criticize the infinitely perfect God. We can only listen reverently and bow our heads.
9th. But is it not unfair to privilege some with an opportunity to be saved while others are not so privileged? God is SOVEREIGN in all His acts, and righteous and just in them too. He may not be called to account. For instance, God chose the Hebrew nation, in preference to all other nations. In selecting them and giving them the "adoption," the "glory," the "covenants," the "law," the "service," the "promises," the "fathers," and beyond all the "Christ" "Who is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER;"—GOD INCARNATE,—was God unjust? Who were they, and what were they, to be so privileged? See Deuteronomy 7. 7, 8. God could (if it were merely a matter of ability), have given similar laws, etc., to each nation simultaneously, but He did not. He chose the Hebrew. "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." "Salvation is of the Jews." "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." God is SOVEREIGN and works according to His own "good pleasure." Study Romans 9. 13–29, and then consider if sinful creatures may dare to criticize the ways of the infinite God, or ask Him "Why?"

True, the gospel was for all mankind, though even here it was as "to the Jew first, then the Gentile." Here the Jew is privileged again. But suppose the millions since Christ's death had all actually heard the gospel (Col. 1. 23), yet we would have to think upon those millions who died before Christ died on the cross. The fact is, we must leave these "Why's?" alone. We must loyally accept what is revealed. We may rest our minds in God's justice and righteousness. Whatever He does is not "horrible," it is just, pure, and holy. God's love does not dominate His justice, nor vice versa. Even as He can be the "just and the justifier" of believers, so He can be just and the condemner of those who never heard of Christ, the "children of wrath," the heathen, who "forget God."

It is simply ignorance that says God hurl s the heathen into the "lake of fire" and lets Satan rule them there. We must divest our minds of medieval, or Miltonic, ideas of hell, and return to the scriptural view. God is a God of order, as well as of justice. There is no confusion with God, neither in His heaven, nor in His church, nor in His prison. There is order in all God's ways and in all His dominions. Does not hell lie under the domination of His supreme will? and God will impose His will there. Satan will be a confined prisoner there, not a ruling potentate.

Just as with the blessed there will be degrees of rewards so with the "lost" in hell there will be degrees of punishment. Punishment in, as well as consignment to, hell will not be carried out promiscuously. These will be carried through in every way worthy of the infinite, loving and just God. Both the blessed and the lost will equally "at the name of Jesus" bow the knee in acknowledgment "that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Note 1 Corinthians 14. 33; Luke 12. 47–48; Revelation 20. 2, 3, 7, 10. If the heathen who never heard of the gospel of Christ are punished with "light afflictions," or "plagues," "beaten with few stripes," then woe to those who have heard but refused or neglected Christ, for the "heavy afflictions" will be their portion.

In conclusion, it will be seen that the question of the DURATION of punishment of the heathen in hell has not been dealt with in this paper, other than to say that their state there is both final and irreparable.

The writer, "as an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech through 'him, prays 'you in Christ's stead,' dear reader, if you are not already reconciled to God, then to "be reconciled" to Him, "for He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Commending all who love our Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing to God's love and mercy, our final prayer is, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."
Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. XII.

The Boards and their Sockets. (Read Exodus 26. 15-30; 30. 11-16.)

WHILST much that we have considered in the furniture of the tabernacle has referred typically to Christ and Him alone, we come now to the framework, which typifies largely the believer in his relation to fellow-believers and to Christ.

It may be noticed as illustrating the marvellous exactitude of Scripture that when shittim wood and gold are put together in close juxtaposition they typify respectively, as we have seen again and again, the humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus. But when we have the shittim wood and gold not in close juxtaposition the gold denotes divine righteousness and is applicable in type to the believer.

Note in the present case, we have instruction as to the boards, their tenons, their sockets of silver, their rings, their arrangement, their binding bars, before the covering gold is mentioned. That is to say, the divine record commences in verse 15 and runs on to verse 29 before ever this covering gold is mentioned, thus bringing out the typical meaning of gold in this connection as that of the righteousness in which the believer stands before God: what he is in Christ before God.

We read in verse 15 of the boards being made of shittim wood for the tabernacle, adding the two significant words, "standing up."

The power to stand up seems to lie in the tenons that bound one board to another, and in the sockets of silver that were arranged in relation thereto. Notice how the tenons and the sockets are put together in verse 19.

The boards were to be bound together by these tenons, thus making one structure. It is not the believer viewed as an individual that is here typified, but the believers in their collective character, as forming a dwelling-place for God by His Spirit. The individual believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit; but collectively believers are brought into relation one with another so as to form the assembly, in which God can dwell.

Changing the simile from boards to stones the same line of truth is brought out by Peter when he speaks of believers as living stones, built up a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices (see 1 Peter 2. 5).

The sockets of silver illustrate the believer's standing in redemption. Exodus 30. 11-16 brings out the typical meaning of silver. When Israel was numbered, each one accounted for in the census had to bring a half shekel of silver as an offering to the Lord, and this money was called atonement money. The rich had not to give more than the half shekel, the poor had not to give less, thus illustrating that believers, all alike, stand before God in the ground of atonement. The half shekel was but a small sum, worth no more than a few pence. It was a mere acknowledgment on the offerer's part of God's claims, but when we come to the antitype we find the believer is not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish. That is to say, the believer stands before God in the full value of His acceptance of the atoning work of Christ, and that without payment in money or effort of any kind, but in the principle of faith. Thus does Christianity exceed the types and shadows.

There are two sockets of silver under each board, illustrating for us the perfect stability of the believer's standing...
in redemption. They seem naturally to typify the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—the death, furnishing full and free atonement; the resurrection affording a clear emphatic testimony on the part of God to His acceptance of that work. The resurrection of Christ is indeed a vital, fundamental truth of Christianity, and lifts into translucent clearness the blessed testimony of God to the way in which His name and holiness have been vindicated to the full in connection with that wondrous atonement. This testimony is seen in resurrection.

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As to measurements and numbers something may be gleaned. The boards were to be ten cubits long. Ten is the number of man's responsibility Godwards, as witness the ten commandments. How sweet a thought it is that responsibility towards God in which man has so lamentably failed has been met, as it only could be, by the grand foundation fact of redemption, for this ten-cubit-long board stood up on these two sockets of silver. The meaning of the breadth of the board is not apparent, so we will refrain from guessing.

It may be noticed that there were forty-eight boards in all, thus accounting for ninety-six sockets, but as the vail of the tabernacle was supported by four pillars of shittim wood resting upon four sockets of silver we have the grand total of one hundred sockets of silver employed in the construction of the tabernacle.

Now one hundred is ten times ten, that is the square of ten (ten being the measure of man's responsibility Godward), thus emphasizing in a very full and complete fashion how that the satisfaction of all God's claims in righteousness is found in redemption.

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There is nothing like the death of Christ. As another has said, "It is the centre of the moral history of the universe."

We cannot in a short article go into details, but enough has been said to afford ample scope for meditation, which will lead to adoring worship that God desires to dwell among His people and receive their praises. The way God has abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence is truly wonderful.

The Christian's Hope.

Let no one be deceived by the false hope that the war will purge the nations, or that universal peace and brotherhood will be evolved out of this present welter of frightfulness and ensanguined strife. Blind leaders of religion who ignore the Word of God may proclaim it and visionaries become poetical in the hope of it, but the Word of God shows that men will increase in their insubjection to God and their hatred of one another until the word spoken by the earliest of all prophets is fulfilled, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed" (Jude 14, 15). Then shall men be compelled to honour the despised Nazarene, and from multitudes of unwilling lips shall be wrung the confession that He is Lord of all, according to the just decree of the eternally righteous Father. Before that exceedingly great and dreadful day of wrath for this world is ushered in, the saints of God, all who have believed the gospel of His grace concerning His Son, will have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air according to 1 Thess. 4. This is the Christian's hope, based upon the unfailing Word of God. Let us trim our lamps and be ready for the realization of it, and meanwhile push out with the gospel of God's grace concerning His Son Jesus Christ, so that many others may be ready for it too.
The Fear of the Lord.

There are Scripture principles of great importance which are woven into the whole fabric of the Bible without being at any point crystallized into a formal and definite statement. Take, for instance, what is said in the Old Testament concerning "the fear of the Lord." This expression is found throughout its entire range, but it particularly comes into prominence in Deuteronomy, wherein Moses deals with the moral condition of Israel, and also in the Psalms, in Proverbs, and in the later Prophets, where we have words of divine testimony to them in view of their decadence and failure. A survey of these and kindred passages would suffice, we believe, to convince anyone that there is a principle of Scripture which may be formulated somewhat as follows:

God pays comparatively little attention to outward position where there is not a corresponding inward condition, but lays great stress on inward condition.

Let us bring together four striking passages from the Old Testament, two from the Psalms, and two from the last of the Prophets.

1. The Secret.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant" (Ps. 25:14).

The whole of the Psalm is occupied in emphasizing the moral and spiritual condition which is well-pleasing to God. The humble confession of sin, confidence in God, meekness of spirit, and obedience to the divine testimonies, are the things dwelt upon. These things are of great price in the sight of God in all dispensations, as is shown by the fact that although written by David yet he looks on to the ultimate prevailing of this righteous and godly seed in the millennial age (ver. 13). These are the things to which God has regard to-day, and they are summed up in the expression "the fear of the Lord."

Now it is with those that fear the Lord that His secret is. God does not make known His mind and the secret of His ways, nor admit to the intimacy of friendship all His children, and much less the world. Every child of God has the same standing in grace, and enjoys the same life, relationship, and favour, but by no means all enjoy the same intimacy of communion. To know the mind of God one thing is needful, and this is not outward standing, or correct position, or erudite acquaintance with Scripture, but a spirit and a life saturated with the fear of God.

Scripture affords us many an illustration of this. Lot was accounted righteous equally with Abraham, but he was never called, as Abraham was, "the friend of God." While the latter was let into the secret of what God was about to do to Sodom, the former knew nothing of it until the last moment.

An even more striking example is afforded by the contrast between the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. At the moment when the greatest event in Israel's history was impending Jerusalem as a whole was wrapped in ignorance and indifference. Not only pleasure-loving Herod but also priests, and Scribes well-versed in the law, and religious Pharisees were totally unconscious that the long-promised Messiah had been born in their midst. The first intimation of this reached them through wise men from the East, who were aliens from Israel's commonwealth and strangers from the covenant of promise.

Worse than this, when they did know, months, apparently, after the event had transpired, they were able glibly enough, and correctly enough, to quote Scripture as to the place of Messiah's birth, and then proceeded to use their scriptural knowledge in attempting to encompass His death!
Such were the men who at that time gloried in outward position.

Luke's Gospel opens amidst quite different scenes. We are introduced to the cottages of the humble in Galilee—to people unknown to fame and without standing in the world, and we find they were speaking inspired words about Messiah's birth months before He came. And further, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem there were certain shepherds—godly men but of the humblest type, mere night watchmen for the flocks—and by angelic intervention they knew of the joyful event not many minutes after it was an accomplished fact.

How great is this contrast! The men of pedigree and position thoroughly blind—the men with nothing but the fear of the Lord thoroughly conversant with the secret of the Lord.

2. The Banner.

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60. 4).

The setting of this verse is distinctly warlike. The whole context speaks of conflict. Defeat marks the opening verses, and, through God's intervention, victory marks the close.

Now if, through a reverse sustained, a host is in danger of degenerating into a rabble and yet is transformed into a force which can be carried to victory, it must be by some rallying standard being raised. Hence the raising of such a banner was the form God's intervention took.

The varying fortunes of David's contests with Syrians and Edomites gave the occasion of these words being penned, but they by no means exhausted their meaning. The banner of truth abides through all the pilgrimage conflicts of God's saints, and it is for display. A secret is something to be cherished which in its very nature is suitable for the ears of some and not of all; a banner, on the other hand, is in its nature the uplifting of some inscription which everybody is to see whether they take it to heart or not.

TRUTH, then, like a banner is to be displayed aloft; but whose hands are to hold it? The hands of "them that fear Thee." No others.

It has ever been thus. We have but to turn again to those early chapters in Luke to find illustrations of it.

No sooner had the shepherds set eyes on the infant Messiah than they began to testify of Him (chap. 2. 17, 18). When Anna the prophetess beheld Him she at once went forth and "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel" (chap. 3. 38). Thus was the banner raised, though only in a very restricted circle at first.

Again, the early part of Acts is the history of the raising of the banner of truth by "unlearned and ignorant men," who nevertheless "had been with Jesus," to the total discomfiture of those who claimed priestly succession and powers. The latter part shows the banner carried by Saul into the Gentile world and maintained aloft in spite of the fiercest opposition from men of the same stamp.

When we reach the Epistles we find the same Apostle passing on the banner not to men marked by occupying a certain position; not to elders or deacons or men of gift as such, but to Timothy, who was marked above others by an inward condition according to God.

It was of Timothy that Paul had previously written, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2. 20), and that word "likeminded" we must connect not merely with Paul's own example as given in verse 17, but with the infinitely greater example of Christ Himself as given in verses 5 to 8. Timothy was a man in whom in special measure dwelt "the mind which was in Christ Jesus," and hence to him was given Paul's farewell injunction, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord" (2 Tim. 1. 8), and again, "Preach the word" (4. 2).
The banner of "the testimony of the Lord" was handed—we repeat—by Paul the veteran not to a class or band of men marked by a certain outward position, but to one marked by a certain inward condition, one who possessed indeed the mind of Christ.

This excellently illustrates our theme and is most applicable to our own days.

3. The Book.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3. 16).

The book of Malachi affords us the closing glimpse, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, of the Jews who had left the lands of their captivity and returned to Jerusalem. It also gives us the first intimation of the state of things which developed, revealing the true-hearted remnant amidst the self-satisfied leaders and people. The opening chapters of Luke, to which we have already alluded, fit naturally on to the end of Malachi, showing us still a "remnant according to the election of grace." We may assuredly take it for granted that such a remnant was never wanting all through the 350 to 400 years that elapsed between the two.

The very feature that we are dwelling upon stands right to the forefront. Their characteristic feature was "the fear of the Lord." Their minds were occupied with Him, for they "thought upon His name," i.e. they pondered over all that He had revealed Himself to be, and they cared for His reputation in keeping with that. Their mouths were occupied with His word, for they "spake often one to another," and their words met with divine approval, "the Lord hearkened and heard it," so that evidently their communications were "good to the use of edifying." Further, their activities had God as their end and object, for it speaks of "the righteous . . . him that serveth God."

Who these good people were we have no possible means of knowing. They were utterly unknown to fame in the day in which they lived. The prominent people of those days were the priests who were the feeble and deplorable representatives of the once glorious hierarchy established by God. These men had set themselves down in Moses' seat, they were proud, and men called them happy (3. 15). Nevertheless they were crushingly rebuked by the Lord through the prophet. They who "feared the Lord" alone were approved.

And for these the "book of remembrance" was written before the Lord. Their record is on high, to be produced when the earth-recorded histories of the proud are as though they had never been; and not only is their record secure but they themselves are to be displayed as the special treasure of the Lord in the day of the Kingdom that is coming. They "shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." This is predicted in Daniel 12. 1 of the godly seed whose lot it will be to go through the great tribulation in the last days.

It seems pretty evident, from such a scripture as Revelation 3. 7-11, that the book of remembrance is still in use and that in it still are being entered the records of such as fear the Lord and think upon His name—i.e. those characterized by a certain condition rather than by holding a certain position.

4. The Sun.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall " (Mal. 4. 2).

Under this striking figure we have the promise of the appearing of the Lord. He is the Sun, i.e. the centre, the source of light and warmth, of authority
and rule and power. He is the Sun of righteousness, since appearing in a scene of moral chaos and unrighteousness, that must necessarily be His outstanding characteristic.

But when He arises as the Sun of righteousness will it not be for all? Truly; but He will not arise for all with healing in His wings. To many His arising will mean the very reverse of that. He will arise with fierce and scorching heat: "For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4.1). He will arise "with healing in His wings" only for those that fear His name.

It is highly significant that here in the closing words of the Old Testament we get the two classes not only so clearly distinguished, but so definitely labelled—"you that fear My name," on the one hand, and "the proud," on the other. Significant for this reason, that here at the finish we get clearly revealed the tendency inevitably manifested in the career of those who lay stress on position rather than condition. It ends, it always has ended, and ever will end, in pride. That feature which of all others is most hateful to God.

To lay primary stress on outward position, while relegating questions of spiritual condition to a secondary place, necessarily tends in this direction—since one is then occupied with certain external privileges and points of advantage—whether real or imaginary—in which one can boast, while considerations of one's own definite state or lowly condition which would humble are thrust out of sight.

To lay primary stress on inward condition and to put outward position into a secondary place has the reverse effect. It produces the lowly and humble mind of great price in God's sight—such a spirit as we see, for instance, in the greatest woman who has ever walked this earth, in Luke 1., verses 46 to 55 (particularly verse 48).

In her case, she became the mother of the Messiah, and thus "the dayspring from on high" visited the poor of Jehovah's flock. As "the Sun of righteousness" He will yet arise in glory for the vindication and blessing of those that fear Him.

* * * *

Perhaps two words of explanation may be added. By "outward position" we do not mean the new standing of the believer in Christ nor any of those heavenly and divine relationships into which he is brought. They are of course of primary importance, and the knowledge and enjoyment of them is that which alone will rightly form and maintain a right "inward condition" with any of us.

And further, there is no intention by the foregoing to decry "outward position" as though it were a matter of no importance. Our object has been to simply show from Scripture what is its relative importance, and to put first things first in our minds.

The reminder of it is needed, we venture to think, and never more needed than to-day.

"The Lord Loveth a Cheerful Giver."

I SAW it stated somehow, and the thought struck me, that there are three kinds of givers. One like a flint, another like a sponge, and a third like a honeycomb. The flint gives only at the stroke of the hammer, and the result is—chips and sparks. The sponge only yields to pressure, and the greater the pressure the more it gives. But the honeycomb yields out of its fullness—exudes its own sweetness.
Declension and Restoration.

THOSE who wish to understand the process of restoration cannot obtain a better insight than that afforded by a prayerful study of the marvellous way in which the Lord restored the soul of His wayward disciple, Peter. First He prayed for him that his faith would not fail, then He warned him that Satan was seeking after him that he might sift him as wheat (Luke 22.31,32). How the tender care of the Lord rebukes us as we think how often we have seen a brother going wrong and we have lifted no warning voice nor allowed a breath of prayer to escape on his behalf.

Peter was, however, too proud to heed the admonition. He was puffed up in the sense of security which springs from self-confidence, but the wisest man who ever lived tells us that pride goes before a fall (Prov. 16.15).

The first sign of spiritual declension is evinced in the neglect of the Word of God and of private prayer. No Christian need be in any doubt as to his spiritual temperature while such a delicate clinical thermometer lies within his reach. Do we love to commune privately with God? Do we love to study His Word? These are infallible tests of whether we are on the upgrade or on the downgrade. Are the few lines of Scripture skimmed over as a perfunctory duty? Is the morning prayer uttered mechanically? Then we may not be in any doubt that we need the health-giving touch from the glory. We need to guard against small digressions which end in great disasters. The little foxes spoil the vines.

Peter neglected the Word of the Lord and professed his own self-sufficiency. As a consequence immediately afterwards he was found sleeping at his post. His next step on the downgrade was in taking up human weapons; zeal in the cause of the Lord led him probably to use the sword. Yet may there not have been predominant the determination to show that his boasting was not vain, or to prevent His Master from going to prison and death, wherein an hour before he had professed his readiness to go. Our readiness to justify the cause of Christianity in fleshly zeal is no evidence of our spiritual progress.

Later on Peter was found following afar off. Long after his restoration Peter exhorted the readers of his Epistle to follow in the Lord’s steps, i.e. closely (1 Peter 2.21). When communion is ruptured distance must necessarily intervene.

The next stage finds Peter sitting with the servants of the High Priest. He did not become out and out worldly, he mixed with the greatest religionists of his day, who were nevertheless the enemies of Christ. So Christians who are dropping out of the path of faithfulness often seek to salve their consciences with religious observances and religious company. As Peter sat among the servants he warmed himself at the fire kindled by the enemies of his Master. Distance from Christ always results in spiritual coldness, and a backslider seeks to comfort himself at the various fires provided by the world—pleasures, business, intellectual pursuits, etc.

The culmination of Peter’s declension was reached when the servants of the High Priest sought a declaration of his identity. He repeatedly disclaimed all connection with Christ. So in the space of a few hours the man who had boasted that he would never leave the Lord was found cursing the people who suggested that he had ever known Christ. At that instant the Lord looked on Peter not harshly, but full of exquisite tenderness. Peter was convicted of sin and went out and wept bitterly. A writer has said that he went out into the night of repentance and came back into the morning of restoration.

The various stages of the Lord’s dealing in restoring Peter are very
helpful. Mark's Gospel tells us that on the resurrection morning the Lord left a special message with the angels to bid the women to summon the disciples and Peter. Peter had been ever present in His mind through all the sorrows of the cross, thus His injunction was to make sure that Peter in his shamefacedness would not stay away.

Luke takes us a step further when he states that the Lord appeared to Simon. He granted Peter a special interview that he might have the opportunity of pouring out the whole story of his sorrow unrestrained by the presence of others.

Finally, John brings to light the last touch of restoration. In view of the important part to be taken by Peter at Pentecost, it was necessary that Peter should have the seal of his Master's approval and the confidence of the other disciples. The Lord thus gave Peter the further privilege of thrice publicly affirming his love so as to remove the stigma of his threefold denial.

First and Second Prophecies.

The first prophetic word uttered in this world came from the lips of God. It announced to Satan, that old Serpent, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise his head, and that word was fulfilled when through death the Lord Jesus Christ annulled him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The fact that this has been accomplished is not yet made publicly manifest in the world, for God in much longsuffering is waiting for men to believe the testimonies of His grace which He is sending to them in the gospel, and to yield to Christ who is the mighty Conqueror of Calvary, for He is not willing that any should perish. But soon this longsuffering must come to an end and THE SECOND PROPHETIC WORD will be fulfilled. This word was uttered by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14, 15). Mark well that Christ and His doings are the theme of these prophecies.

Thus will all evil be overthrown and all rebellion against God subdued, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, the mighty Conqueror of Satan, and the righteous Judge of the ungodly, will establish His kingdom in which He will maintain justice and rule with equity for the glory of God and the good of man.

Civilization is a very good thing. That we have railways and telegraphs and intercourse between nation and nation is of great importance. But though many live by those things, rely upon those things, boast of those things, and think that these are the Kingdom of God, it is perfectly evident that such is not God's estimate. Such is not even the verdict of history; for the most civilized nations, as Greece and Rome, perished by their very civilization. The things in which the life of a nation consists are righteousness and justice, reverence and obedience to the sanctity of family life, and not culture. Let the whole race of Adam reach the highest point of civilization and unity, and it may be, like the Colossus, ready for destruction.

(A. Saphir, 1904.)
Regarding the Person of Christ.

A REMARK of J. N. D.'s long years since respecting the Lord is worth recalling. He said, "The mystery of His deity is maintained by the inscrutability of His humanity." The Apostle says, "The mystery of piety is confessedly great. God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations, has been believed on in the world, has been received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3. 16). And from this scripture we are entitled to rank this mystery as not only among the greatest, but among the most practical in its bearing on the Christian path. It is confessedly a mystery, unsearchable, incomprehensible, inexplicable, beyond all human powers of penetration, and yet it is a mystery revealed in such wise that the simplest may know it, while to the highest it is still a mystery. Every attempt to explain it betrays an ignorance that does not apprehend it; every refusal to believe it the hostility of the mind that sets itself against the knowledge of God so revealed in grace.

"The doctrine of the Christ" is fundamental. If you are wrong there you can be right nowhere. On it everything depends. It is basic for the display by God of Himself in the world around. It is basic for the relationship and behaviour of all moral intelligences towards Him. He has appeared to angels, He has been preached among the nations, He has been believed on in the world. Confessedly the mystery is a great one. That the Infinite should come down to the finite, yet remaining infinite all the while; that the Eternal should become the child of days, and yet be the great "I AM," "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." This is absolutely incomprehensible and inexplicable, yet it is revealed for faith, exactly on its own terms, without compromise or explanation.

And here, where the wise stumble, the simple learn, wisdom invites them to her house to hear "plain things, to receive instruction, and so to increase in the knowledge of God." Even in the physical world there are many secret springs untapped (Job 28.), while at the same time there is enough revealed to exercise the faculties in the research for more. Not everyone knows much about the chemistry of heat, but everyone knows the effect of it. There are certain things which are made known that all should know. There are certain things which are not made known, which are not intended to be known—now at least (1 Cor. 8. 2; 13. 12). Into these only the fleshly mind would intrude to its own hurt. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

We know from Scripture that Jesus is God; we know too that He is man. But which part of Him is which we know not; and the use of any such kind of language is to be deprecated as intruding into that which has not been revealed, is unprofitable to discuss, and tends only to evil.

Regarding this subject, the following remarks just received from a brother in Australia will interest the readers of "Scripture Truth." He says, "I am glad of what you say as to the Person of our Lord, and agree as to it. But I still think it would form a bulwark if raised as a standard which we have not without it. I do not speak of metaphysical disquisitions as to it; but what the Scripture says, and of which all may be sure, and hold as a safeguard against metaphysical disquisition. Distinction must be made between what we can not know as to it and what we ought to know, for much has been revealed as to it, e.g. I know He is the Son. I know He is a true and proper man. I know He is 'I AM,' 'the true God.' How to put this together I do not know, though I see and know they are together. I am glad I do not as a creature know it. Did I know it I should have lost that divine fullness, which, if capable of
being fathomed when in Man, would not have been truly divine. I want this put in opposition to the immature meanderings of the human mind. I look that a standard of revealed truth may be raised to command the hearts of those ‘that fear the Lord,’ that they may speak of it together and feed upon the choicest of the wheat!”

These are good words and true. This is a momentous matter for all time, and for the present time it is of paramount importance, when “the mystery of piety” shorn of its divine essential is reduced to a moral code of human excellence, actuated by a gospel that cannot rise above the mind that forms it, and where the Person of the Lord is used either on the one hand as a matter of frivolous speculation, or on the other hand in superstitious pietism as a blind to hide the light that shines in Him. This—and kindred things—is what surrounds us. This is what confronts us. It is not “the Christ of God” as confessed by Peter (Luke 9.20); and it can neither emancipate the soul from the burden of its own estate nor introduce it into the true liberty of the Son of God (Isa. 10.).

How important then it is for us to cleave to the Scripture, not altering it by addition or subtraction, knowing that what is hidden from us is kept secret in the wisdom of God, and what is revealed, is revealed not to satisfy our curiosity, but for “the obedience of faith” (Deut. 29.29).

The Kingly King.

I AM reading the Gospels. I wish I could give an idea of how Matthew impresses me with the kingliness of the King. All the qualities of a perfect king shine out in Jesus. Bless His dear name. He comes down to identify Himself with the condition of His people.

He takes flesh and blood.
He is born under the Roman yoke.
He suffers under the worst of the Herods.
He takes up a life of toil—that of a carpenter.
He lives in the worst of their cities.
He identifies Himself with them as they take their place in repentance towards God.
He meets and conquers their worst foe—Satan.
He becomes their Shepherd in care and teaching.
He removes all their diseases.
He offers them full victory and His kingdom.

He, though rejected, goes to the cross and dies for them.

As to His miracles, they were all mercy, removing the burdens that sin had brought upon a sinful people.

His works were in strict accord with the laws of nature and grace, He never made an old man young, or a young man an elder.

He not only healed but He delegated His own power to the twelve apostles and then to the seventy disciples, over all the power of the enemy and all disease—all disease, and, notice how wide the regions to which that saving health (as the Psalmist calls it) extended (see Matthew 4.8, 9, 10; Luke 4.10). It seems that Satan’s power to hurt men was put forth in its strongest, and in this “due time” Jesus appeared with personal and delegated power to the apostles and disciples over the power of the enemy at its fullest tide.

It was a marvellous moment when the Son of Man was here: “The days of the Son of Man.”
Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

Psalms 135.—136.

PSALMS 135, 136, form an appendix to the fifteen "Songs of Ascents," the first continuing the Spirit's call to praise with which they close, and this, as already mentioned, finds its answer in Psalm 136, verses 4-25.

PSALM 135 is peculiar in this respect, that it is largely derived from other parts of Scripture. Psalm 115, may be specially referred to, with certain passages from the Mosaic revelation, also Jeremiah 10, 13 and 51, 16, and single verses from other Psalms are laid under contribution to form one harmonious whole. The passages parallel with the Psalm that follows should also be noticed. The purpose of all these is to guard against idol worship: they are no doubt gathered here as warning for those returned from the captivity, and are suitable to rehearse in the future day of the establishment of the kingdom.

Various reasons for praise are given, electing grace (ver. 4) which in the O.T. is the great witness of Jehovah's love (Deut. 7, 7; Mal. 1, 2); then in verses 5-7 the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of the heathen; in verses 8, 9 deliverance from Egypt, and in verses 10-12 victory over all enemies. Following this in verses 13, 14 we find an interesting reference to the writings of Moses, which, as others have remarked, "afford a remarkable key to the interpretation of the book" (see Synopsis of the Bible in loco.). These two verses bind together the early history in Egypt (Exod. 3, 15) with the close given prophetically in Deuteronomy 32, 36, while the second line of verse 14 shows how God will answer the prayer of Moses in Psalm 90, 13. What a striking testimony to the unity of Scripture and the perseverance of God in His ways of grace according to His counsel.

The different classes of the people, with those who fear Jehovah, as in Psalms 115 and 118, are then called upon to bless Jehovah, but in this case the house of Levi is added, perhaps because in the worship of the coming kingdom, in Ezekiel's temple, to which these Psalms look forward, the Levites have a peculiar position of comparatively menial service allotted to them as penalty for former sin (Ezek. 44, 10-13). In spite of this humiliation, grace assures them, according to our Psalm, a place of honour in the service of praise to Jehovah. It was not otherwise in the early history of the tribe. In the great prophecy of Jacob (Gen. 49.) sentence of scattering among the people is pronounced on account of the treacherous cruelty of their forefather, but according to Moses (Deut. 33, 10) this scattering affords them the opportunity of "teaching Jacob Thy judgments and Israel Thy law." The faithfulness of the tribe at a time of crisis is rewarded by turning the penalty into privilege. United praise is thus rendered "out of Zion," where Jehovah and His long alienated but now reconciled people meet, for "out of Zion," the centre of His kingdom, He blesses them, where finally "mercy glories over judgment."

PSALM 136. The first three verses continue the summons to praise of the preceding Psalms, to which the remaining verses afford the answer, each verse providing the touching formula, which tells of the exhaustless mercy of Jehovah to His people. This was first given them by David (1 Chron. 16, 7, 34) amid the glories of the kingdom and taken up by Ezra (chap. 3, 11) after its ruin, on an occasion when it is extremely probable this very Psalm was chanted by the singers according to its antiphonal arrangement. The Psalm is divided into groups of three verses up to verse 18, the remaining eight verses are again divided into two groups with four verses in each. The subjects of praise correspond very closely to those given in Psalm 135, except that the grace of verse 4 in that Psalm is not mentioned, the writer passing at once to celebrate the wonders of creation and the understanding therein displayed (cf. Prov. 3, 19 and Jer. 10, 12). In the last four verses the subject passes from the mercy of God manifested in their early history to that shown in their restoration from captivity (Neh. 9, 36), where their "low estate" is specially described.
The Fame of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 32. 1-15.

In Deuteronomy 32, we have the publication of Jehovah's name, and in it Moses gives a most comprehensive unfolding of the glory of God. The publication of Jehovah's name is connected with His goodness in coming down to us where we are in all our troubles and need.

Moses calls the heavens to hear, at the opening of his majestic song. It is not the material heavens only, but the intelligent heavens which are called upon to hear something about Jehovah. The great theme is not the people and their failures, but the faithfulness of God: "My doctrine shall drop down as the rain. My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass. Because I will publish the name of the Lord." As in a time of drought, when everything seems burnt up and lifeless, a shower of rain brings life and vigour to the earth, so the publication of Jehovah's name revives His people and makes them like a well-watered garden. The ministry to us of what God is for us through the risen Christ should have this effect upon us, it should refresh us and cheer us amidst all the care and discouragement and distress of these days: "My doctrine shall drop as rain; my speech shall distil as dew." Why? Because I am going to speak about God. I have something to tell you about the fame of Jehovah. There is nothing in the universe of God can lift our heads like the knowledge of God. That knowledge enables us to lift our hearts and lift our heads in praise and adoration to that God who delights to unfold Himself to our hearts. So he says, "I will publish the name of Jehovah." We are accustomed to speak of name in the sense of greatness or fame. That this is the thought in this passage is evident, for Moses continues: "Ascribe ye greatness to our God"—the greatness He has gained for Himself in His mighty acts.

God is not only great in the sphere of power, as is seen in creation, He is morally great also. Not only great in what He has done, but great also in what He is. These are brought together in Psalm 147: "He telleth the number of the stars: He is strong in power, not one faileth." But He also bows down to bind up the broken heart. Which is the greater? For a mighty supreme being to send forth the glorious orbs that fill the heavens, or for that same Being to bow down to interest Himself in poor weak things like you and me? It is the greatness of His love and grace that engages Him with those He has created, cares for them in their sorrows and binds up the broken heart.

"He is the rock; His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment. A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He." This reveals His stability, His unchanging goodness. The blessed God carries out His own purposes in spite of men's failure and evil and wickedness. There is no flaw in His ways. All is perfectly right. He uses everything to serve His own purpose. He is supreme over all. He brings out the divine excellency, the righteousness and goodness and love in Himself. When you come to God you come to perfection, reliability—that which cannot shift. You have come to that which you can stake your soul upon for time and eternity. As we are told in the New Testament, "We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." Everything material and shakable will be moved, but Christ is the one in whom there is eternal continuity. To the Son God says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Then he turns aside for a moment to give a picture of the dark background.
Israel were a people taken up by God, to display His moral government, to display His wisdom, grace and mercy. Where could there be a better place for God to come and display Himself than in a world of sin? But we read: "They have corrupted themselves," and that is true of all: "All we like sheep have gone astray." There were ninety-nine just worlds, and one world fallen, but after that one world God would go, and He has come to our world. He has come to where we have corrupted ourselves. Israel is but a sample of the whole of mankind. We have corrupted ourselves, but our gracious God has come after us. God the Father has sent His only-begotten Son, who has glorified the Father, and brought a people to Himself who can sing His praises now.

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

These verses give us the key to prophecy and of God's government of the earth. We must work from that point, Israel being the centre. Otherwise we shall not rightly divide the word of truth. It is important to notice that when God divided the people in Genesis 10., He gave them all their place in relation to a people that had not been born. His grace was set upon Israel before Israel or their great progenitor had yet come into being. When God allotted the nations their position, He allotted it all round His plot of land, which is now trodden under foot by the Gentiles. He kept that for His people. So His ways with the nations had Israel in view, and now His assembly is His chief interest, and there is not a movement going on under heaven now but God will make it turn out for the good of His assembly. In the book of Esther the king could not sleep, and he had the book of the chronicles of Persia brought before him, and the scene was changed. The people of God were in view and the king's sleeplessness is used in the providence of God on His people's behalf. When we come to the birth of Christ, Micah tells the town. It was Bethlehem. There seemed no likelihood of the Babe being born at Bethlehem, but there was a command from the Emperor that all should go up to his own town for the census. It was so arranged in the providence of God, in order to fulfil His word. So it is to-day. There is not a movement in the world, but God is ruling directly, or overruling indirectly, with a view to the gathering out of His people. There is much spiritual food and comfort in it, when we see in that way the hand of God ruling or overruling all for His people.

Then how sweet is the next verse: "The Lord's portion is His people!" I do not know how far we enter into it. In the New Testament we are told we have treasure in heaven. We are told, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Ah, but Christ has a treasure here upon earth, and in view of that treasure He sold all that He had, and He laid aside all His Messiah titles and rights, that He might secure that treasure. Christ has a treasure here to-night upon the earth, and we have a treasure up there. "The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance." The children of Israel are the people in question in our chapter, but in this present period God is gathering out of this world a people for heaven, He is forming His assembly. You and I belong to it, and it is in connection with that that all the dealings of God are going on at the present moment. "Ye," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "are the salt of the earth." That is, your presence in the world preserves it from total corruption. There is nothing that keeps the earth from becoming wholly a pandemonium but the fact that the church is in it, and the Holy Spirit of God is here in the church. The moment the church is withdrawn, and the Holy Spirit gone at the coming of the Lord for His saints
(1 Thess. 4.) the earth will become the scene of the devil's unrestrained power (2 Thess. 2). The darkest and most awful time it has ever had in its history will be then.

Let us remember that "the Lord's portion is His people." He loves them with a Father's love. The sense of this love refreshes our hearts. This makes us, in the language of Jeremiah, like a well-watered garden. God help us to be in the appreciation of it. We are His, and, thank God, He is ours.

"He found him in a desert land, and in a waste, howling wilderness." Where did God find you and me? In the quarry of nature. We were in the gutter, but, thank God, He came to the gutter for us. We were unclean and sinful. Some of us may have been respectable, and others disrespectful, but we were all covered with sin, that thing that nailed the Son of God to the cross. But He sought us and saved us. How great is the grace of our God!

"He led him about; He instructed him; He kept him as the apple of His eye." There is nothing in the human body so guarded as the eye. The eyelid guards it in a wonderful way. When the miner hits the coal with his pick, and the dust flies from it, the lid closes instantly upon that most sensitive member. God kept His people as the apple of His eye. Think of the preciousness of such a statement. It was good for Israel. It is good for you and me.

"As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young; taketh them, beareth them on her feathers." The last thing we do naturally is to turn to God; we prefer to lean upon friends, or circumstances, and all the gracious dealings of our God are to remove from beneath us the human supports, so that we may use the wings of faith and soar into a fuller knowledge of Himself. The eagle carries her young on her back for some distance, and then she drops it, but is instantly beneath it so that it shall not fall. She makes the nest uncomfortable, so that the young bird has to get out of it, and thus the young bird learns to use its wings and begins to fly. The figure teaches entire trust in God. This is intensely real. We are in a pathway where our God intends us to learn to trust in Himself, and all the varied circumstances have this end in view. There is no book like the Bible for simplicity of figure, and this is one of the finest drawn from nature.

"The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Does the Lord alone lead you and me? In all our life, is the Lord alone before our eyes? "There was no strange god with him." Do not let us allow anything between God and our souls. This glorious God, whose name and fame the Spirit of God is bringing before us, has come to where we were that He might bring us to where He is. He guards us like the apple of His eye.

"He made him to ride on the high places of the earth." Where are your high places and mine? They are not on the earth, but, blessed be God, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1.) Israel rode on the high places of the earth. Read those beautiful prophecies of Balaam, who, though a wicked prophet, was made by God to utter His thoughts about Israel, and see the power and favour and beauty of the people of God as under His eye (Num. 23. 24).

"He made him to taste honey out of the rock." Everything that brings God before the soul is the honey. David says, speaking of God's thoughts, that they are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and more to be desired than fine gold. Is there anything in man's literature like this? It brings food from God in the power of the Holy Ghost to our souls. If we get where Ephesians 1. puts us, if we get into communion with God, into the joy of God's precious thoughts, we know something of what it is to suck the honey out of the rock.
"Then Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." What a response to God for all God's very best! Let me ask, "Has the church done better?" It has remained for the church dispensation, the day in which we live, to perpetrate the darkest deeds that were ever done on God's earth, deeds which must have made the very angels weep. We need to be kept lowly and to remember that all our blessing is the fruit of grace. Let us remember a verse in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Thou shalt remember the pit from which thou wert digged."

Let us remember that the man who wrote Ephesians, which gives the highest truth in all of Paul's epistles, wrote afterwards that he was the chief of sinners. While climbing up the heights of God's everlasting purposes and counsels in grace, in which He displays Himself, let us never forget what we were, and where God's grace found us. So shall we be kept from vaunting ourselves and ever sensible of the exceeding grace of God to whom all the glory must be.

God Can Always be Counted On.

We need never be afraid of conscious weakness. It is affected strength that we have to dread and shrink from. "When I am weak, then am I strong" is ever the rule for the people of God—a blessed rule most surely. God is to be counted upon always, and we may lay it down as a great root principle, that no matter what may be the actual state of the professing church, individual faith can enjoy communion with God according to the very highest truth of the dispensation. This is a grand principle to grasp and hold fast. Let the ostensible people of God be ever so sunk, individuals who judge and humble themselves before God can enjoy His presence and blessing without let or limit. Witness the Daniels, the Mordecais, the Ezras, the Nehemiahs, the Josiahs and Hezekiahs, and scores of others who walked with God, carried out the highest principles, and enjoyed the rarest privileges of the dispensation when all lay in hopeless ruin around them. There was a passover celebrated in the days of Josiah such as had not been known from the days of Samuel the prophet (2 Chron. 35. 18). The feeble remnant, on their return from Babylon, celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, a privilege which had not been tasted since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun (Neh. 8. 17). Mordecai, without ever striking a blow, gained as splendid a victory over Amalek as that achieved by Joshua (Esther 6. 11, 12). In the Book of Daniel we see earth's proudest monarch prostrate at the feet of a captive Jew.

What do all these cases teach us? What lesson do they tell out in our ears? Simply that the humble, believing and obedient soul is permitted to enjoy the very deepest and richest communion with God, spite of the failure and ruin of God's professing people, and the departed glory of the dispensation in which his lot is cast.

Thus it was as we may see in the closing scenes of Malachi. All was in hopeless ruin; but that did not hinder those who loved and feared the Lord getting together to speak about Him, and to muse upon His precious name. True, that feeble remnant was not like the great congregation which assembled in the days of Solomon from Dan to Beersheba; but it had a glory peculiar to itself. It had the divine presence in a way no less marvellous, though not so striking. We are not told of any "book of remembrance" in the days of Solomon. We are not told of Jehovah's hearkening and hearing. Perhaps it may be said there was no need. Be it so; but that does not dim the lustre of the grace that shone upon the little band in the days of Malachi. We may boldly affirm that Jehovah's heart was refreshed by the loving breathings of that little band as by the splendid sacrifice in the days of Solomon's dedication. Their love shines out all the brighter in contrast with the heartless formalism of the professing body, and the venal corruption of the priests.

(C. H. M.)
They spake often one to another.

MALACHI 3. 16 is a very interesting scripture: “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” There is not much to show in these words, but there is much in them. It was the time of the utter decadence of the people: everything worth having was gone; nothing was left but misery and godless pride. What could be done in such circumstances? Yet there were those who “feared the Lord.” Anyway, nobody, nothing could take that from those who had it. Then, what did they do? They did not preach, or make public orations; they had no prophet by whose words they could be spellbound for the time being, even though they would not obey them; there was no Elijah, they had to wait for his reappearance to rebuild the altar with the twelve stones of a united people; there was no king to deliver them from the stranger’s yoke; they had no power to recover the position in the world which their unfaithfulness had lost to them; there was no ground of visible encouragement in their distressful circumstances; it was no time to sing the songs of Zion, to proclaim their divinely appointed privileges, or even to call a general prayer-meeting. What then? What could they do? “They spake often one to another.” In the informal conversations one member of the company was as good as another, none had anything in which to display his superiority, in which to boast in the time of national humiliation; every voice in the company was formed in the common fear of God; and every utterance, however simple or illiterate, expressed that fear. Moreover it was no mere Sabbath day formalism. Days, hours, times, did not govern their conventions. It was no perfunctory thing to be done and to be done with. “They spake often one to another.” How often? That depended on the fellowship of the Spirit and the opportunity afforded them; as it is said, “As often as ye do it—until He come.”

And is it not striking, the exceeding simplicity, shorn of every adventitious appendage, of that anchor-word to keep the hearts of His disciples steadfast through all the stress of times, “Remember Me”? No artifice of the enemy, no failure of the church in whole or in part, can rob the feeblest saint of that. It was left by the Lord at the last supper, to bind the hearts of His own to Himself through all time until He comes. It imposed no burden; it enforced no duty; it demanded no sacrifice; it required no power; it prescribed no ritual; it set forth no times, but only “as often as—until.” A word without a command; a direction without enforcement; a trumpet call without a fixed rallying point; a standard without a bearer; a voice without a crier; a rule, but one of love, it remains by its very simplicity indestructible and efficient for the gathering of every heart loyal to Himself ever since.

And after the same manner of simplicity and efficiency is the picture of Malachi 3. 16, and an immense comfort for us to-day as we consider it. The times are evil and getting more so. How long we shall retain the little we have outwardly who can say? And the question is becoming more than ever serious. Then when “all hope is gone” (Acts 27. 20) what remains in the face of difficulties insurmountable? “God and the word of His grace” (Acts 20. 32). Acts 27. is instructive as regards the dispensation; John’s writings as to what abides unto eternal life.

“If I know that Thou art leading, and Thy well-known voice I hear, Let the way be what it may, peaceful or begirt with fear, I shall dread no demon, devil, principality or power, When the hosts of darkness close about me, this shall be my hour; In Thy might they shall be broken, conquered, scattered, made to flee; Like to chaff before the fury of the tempest they shall be, And my soul, triumphant, shall ascribe the glory unto Thee.”
The Three Great Confession Chapters.

1. A Desolate Sanctuary.

For an illustration of genuine heartfelt confession of sin and true humiliation before God we turn, intuitively, to Daniel 9., Ezra 9., and Nehemiah 9.; for each of these well-known chapters gives a lovely instance of this.

Daniel preceded the others. He was still a captive in Babylon, but instead of being blinded by its glories, or entranced by the dignities it had heaped upon him, his heart clung to that which, spite of its overthrow, had been, and in a sense still was, the centre of Jehovah's interests on earth. Hence he had, when tested, flung open his window in the sight of his enemies, and, at all risk, had prayed toward Jerusalem; for that city asserted its ascendancy over him. But it was devastated and its Temple reduced to ashes. And what to him was the grandeur of Babylon when the sanctuary of God lay desolate? To that fond though shattered sanctuary his affections turned.

He had learned "from books" the length of time this desolation was to continue, and, no doubt, the seventy years had nearly fled as predicted; nevertheless he set his face to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes, and thus he cried unto the Lord his God. He wants light, but he begins by confession. He goes down. He conceals nothing. He had learned that to the God with whom he had to do "all things were naked and open," and who, above all else, seeks in His suppliants candour, truth, and sincerity. He knew that the eye of his all-seeing God had minutely traced the ways of his people from their beginning. "All Israel," he cried, "have transgressed Thy law." "To us," he added, "belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee."

All are involved. Exceptions there are none. Stones are not thrown at others. Blame is placed on the shoulders that should have borne it. There was no such word as: "You did it." When confession to God is true I see the beam in my own eye and not the mote in my brother's; and it is this exquisite feature that shines pre-eminently in the confessions of our three chapters.

And so he concludes by saying: "While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel" (embracing the revolted tribes) "... the man Gabriel ... touched me about the time of the evening oblation," communicating to him, at the same time, not only what should befall the city, but announcing the advent of the Messiah Himself—His being cut off and its terrible effects in judgment on Jerusalem. A more striking or accurate prophecy cannot be found in Scripture.

And thus Daniel obtained, by confession, an answer to his prayer that was exceedingly abundant above all he had asked or thought. He sought information as to the seventy years of Jerusalem's oppression, but received an unfolding of the events of the great prophetic period of the "seventy weeks." On this intensely interesting theme, however, we cannot enter here.

2. The Holy Seed Mingled.

Now we turn to Ezra. His life and history are charming. How deeply we are indebted to him, as a scribe in the law of his God. He threw all his heart and mind into the welfare of the people of God, of whom a remnant had escaped from Babylon and had returned to Jerusalem. There they suffered greatly from the enemies of Israel, whose opposition to their restoration of the temple was as bitter as it was subtle. To them came Ezra with help and provision, both most welcome.
Here he saw the "reviving," and the "grace" shown to this remnant. The hand of God had released them from the ostensible bondage of Babylon. It was theirs now to take their harps from the willow tress and to sing the Lord's song in their own land, to express their gratitude to Him for such a deliverance and to conduct themselves in ways of holiness and separation to Him from the godless habits of the nations around.

Alas, this separation—this one thing that ever marks off the people of God from the world—was lacking. Their true testimony was thus gone—and it must ever be gone, when the saints of God and the world go, freely, hand in glove. Separation, of this order, there must be, even as we, in our day, are commanded to "come out from among them and be separate."

Ezra, to his grief, found that there had been unrestricted intermarriage between the remnant and the nations. The holy seed was mingled with the people, and the hands of the princes and rulers were chief in the trespass. Hence all was in moral ruin. The case seemed hopeless. He sat down astonished. But the example of his grief affected others, and everyone that trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled themselves to him. Then he confessed the sins of the fathers, and then the sins of the remnant, but without a word of recrimination. The blame was personal and was faithfully acknowledged. Yet such was his grief that he could not rise above it, and even the people "wept sore." It was a Bochim indeed, but tears are not power; and so matters might have remained had not one man, Shechaniah, after a confession of the trespass, risen in the vigour of faith in God, and declared that "there was hope in Israel concerning this." Surely! So he urged Ezra to "arise . . . and do"—to lay hold of God, to give effect to his prayers and to expect divine help. He did so, and great was the reforma-

3. "We are in great distress."

So said the people in Nehemiah 9. 37. The previous chapter ended with a scene of great gladness, consequent on the celebration of such a Feast of Tabernacles as had not been enjoyed since the triumphant days of Joshua. But here the little remnant had similar joy. During the seven days of the Feast the book of the law of God had been read to them; and on the day following they assembled with fasting and sackcloth, separating themselves from strangers, and confessing their sins and the iniquities of their fathers—blessed effect of proving "the joy of the Lord," and the sanctifying power of His word.

The confession was voiced by some of the Levites beginning, however, with one of the richest outbursts of worship to be found in all the Old Testament, then rehearsing, in great detail, the failures and sins of the people from Egypt onward, but owning, at the same time, the exceeding mercy of God in bearing with them in all their wayward-ness and folly.

Then at the close, resting on the fact that they had to do with a merciful and covenant-keeping God, they say: "Let not all the trouble seem little before Thee that hath come upon us . . . since the times of the kings of Assyria unto this day."

Why those times? Because it was under those kings that part of the nation was carried away. The trouble began then. The ten tribes were primarily at fault, but no stone is hurled at them in this confession. All were involved in a common shame, and therefore a common ground of humiliation before God was taken unreservedly. Is there no lesson in this for us in the sad divisions of the church to-day—nothing for the hearts and consciences of the family of God, and the saints and members of Christ? "Behold, we are servants this day . . . and the land yieldeth increase to kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins . . .
and we are in great distress.' Well that the servitude should be felt. They were out of Babylon and in the land, but they were no more worthy of trust than were the fathers and brethren whose sins they had just confessed, so that if Gentile kings could tax the land and have 'dominion over their bodies and their cattle at pleasure,' the lesson of submission and humiliation would tend to check the pride which lay at the root of all their national degradation.

And so a verse in our New Testament may serve as a key for our own profit, as we ponder the moral of our three confession chapters: "If we are unfaithful He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2. 13). That were impossible! But, if He abides faithful, so is He also "faithful and just to forgive" when His failing people, whether personally or otherwise, confess their sins to Him.

And how loudly to-day sounds the call for such confession.

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

Psalm 137.

Psalm 137. This Psalm, the only one which refers in direct terms to the captivity, was probably written during that period, for the two last verses regard the destruction of Babylon as still future. Some translators, on the other hand, render "O daughter of Babylon, the desolated," as if to the writer it were past, but this hardly accords with the context. The decision of this point in no way affects the instruction, which is plainly to lead the people of God, however distressful their circumstances, to value the place which God has chosen as their centre, whence worship flows to Him and blessing to them, as we are taught in the end of Psalm 135 and elsewhere (cf. Dan. 6. 9). The Christian finds all this as well as a perfect revelation of God Himself in Christ glorified. In verses 1-4 the captive rehearses the sorrow of his separation from Jehovah's land and city. He could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, where his sins had brought him. Then in burning words he declares his preference for Jerusalem above anything this Babylon world could supply: "If I remember thee not, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." He then desires that Jehovah would remember in judgment the malice of Edom and the cruelty of Babylon. As Edom maintaining a "perpetual hatred" (Ezek. 35. 5) had sought the utter destruction of the beloved city, let it be remembered against her, and so according to Jeremiah 49. 10 she will be dealt with, and let the mighty destroyer herself receive "the requital wherewith thou hast required us" (ver. 8, lit.). In reference to the last verse it is well to bear in mind, that while the execution of judgment is a necessary vindication of the righteous government of God, the manner of doing it may, in the hands of the instrument. He uses, be very far from His minds. This is well illustrated in the history of Jehu, who obtained a special mercy for what he did (2 Kings 10, 30), but when the prophet pronounces sentence on the way he did it (Hosea 1. 4) another side of the matter is presented, nor need we be surprised that the newly anointed monarch, writer of those diplomatic letters, standing between the two ghastly heaps of princes' heads, at the gate of Jezreel, was displeasing to the God of Israel. Similarly though it is written that the judgment of Babylon, the great centre of idolatry "quieted My spirit" (Zech. 6. 8), yet the merciless slaughter of infants in the way described formed no part of the divine plan. Nevertheless another point of view requires equal emphasis; there are cases in which the extinction of an entire race becomes necessary to stay the perpetuation of certain characters of evil. We see illustrations of this in the cases of the deluge and the cities of the plain. In these the agencies of destruction were moved by God Himself: later in the cases of Amalek and the nations of Canaan, the execution of judgment was committed to the people of God, and it should be particularly noticed how their failure in thoroughness was followed by disastrous consequences on the people themselves.
Every Bible student has probably noticed the similarity between the beginning of the Bible and the end of it. We have Paradise, the tree of life, and God with men; showing that, all the history of sin notwithstanding, God carries out His plan through Christ. The serpent who came in in the first book is cast out in the last, while the woman's Seed promised in Genesis is seen triumphant in the Revelation, with heaven and earth in sweetest accord acclaiming His victory.

A few suggestions are offered as to the Tree of Life. It is mentioned in some five or six places in the Word.

In Genesis 2. it is found at the heart of things in the midst of the garden of Eden. Adjacent to it was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now while the latter was forbidden to Adam, the former was not. It seems certain that two actual and special trees stood there, to which God in wisdom attached certain moral lessons. That of the knowledge of good and evil represented Adam's responsibility to his Maker, while that of Life represented the privilege that he might enjoy as long as he remained unfallen. The forbidden tree was by no means a privation or a denial to Adam of pleasure or taste; for the Lord God had set in the garden every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Upon it hung fruit truly; but the restriction imposed as to its consumption was purely to remind God's wonderful creature that he held all in trust under his Maker. Beneath man was everything in this lower creation. Above him, God. The one simple security for his tenure of the position, obedience. And obedience, not to a complicated code of laws, but to one simple command. Obedience would have maintained him in the knowledge of good and good alone. Disobedience would leave him with the knowledge of the good he had once enjoyed, but with the added knowledge of the evil he had acquired, which would overpower and condemn him. It was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But the tree of life was there, unfenced by any such law. It was available for the man's advantage. Whatever we may learn of its teaching, the tree itself stood there for his good. It represented what was really life in its fullness for Adam in the condition in which he had been created. We venture to think that few people realize the greatness of the intercourse which was brought within the reach of man who was made in the image of God. Far from the idea of the original Adam being a man in a very undeveloped state of evolution, his mind was capable of the widest intimacy with his Maker Himself. There was no perverted will, there was no debasing lust, there was no degrading conception of idolatrous worship, there was no distraction such as we feel in a world that puts ten thousand interests in the place of the living God. The wisdom of God surrounded him with an infinite variety of objects in which he might discover the glories of his best Friend; there was illimitable fullness in which his soul might bathe from day to day; while his heart was made capable of uttering its praise at every fresh communication or discovery. Sciences that men are struggling over now with minds be-drugged by sin, and which they misuse to praise their own powers of observation, were all open to him with stainless purity, and without the painful effort man now puts forth. Every growth, every hue, every colour, every form, every sound, every force in nature, had its spiritual lesson to convey to him; and all affording themes for adoration Godward. The Bible intimates that the Lord God Himself sought to commune with Adam in the
cool of the day. Probably all that Adam touched during the daylight would have afforded reason for wondering inquiry in the evening, and the delightful business of the Creator would have been to explain cause and effect, and to instruct him how to proceed in his responsible position as head of all. We may almost imagine Proverbs 3. 13-26 to have been Solomon's summary of Adam's position; showing at any rate what the tree of life suggested to him. It was all the wisdom of God, made available for the creature, according to the capacity with which he was created. If we put it more in New Testament language, the tree of life in Eden may set forth what Christ was as the Revealer of God in creation; and the fruits of the tree in that position, all the glories of Christ so far as the first creation could be the expression of them. But Adam would think within the compass of the thoughts proper to his creation; and to him all would be a knowledge—not exactly of Christ, but simply of the Creator, the beneficent God.

All this privilege was lost through Adam's sin and fall. Neither now was he fitted to commune with God, for his sense of shame and guilt prevented any desire for such intercourse; nor was it possible for God to resume intercourse with the creature who had apostatized from Him, with that awful sin question opened but unsettled. A dreadful gulf had been created, man had become a pervert from good; feeling utterly wretched, yet having a taste for the evil that ruined him, that led him and his posterity deeper and deeper into the mire, and that placed an impassable barrier, between God and man. Of this the end of Genesis 3. is the picture. The tree of life, the fullness of life for man in his innocence, was cut off from him, and he from it, by the sword of flame which turned every way.

Passing from this material representation of the goodness of God in Eden, and from the consideration of what might have been enjoyed by Adam had he remained sinless, we come to a later period in man's history, to an experience which confirms and corroborates the former one, and to an event more momentous still in its issues for God and for eternity. For Christ Himself came. He was not a mere pictorial representation of some unseen reality, nor was He sent to a Paradise on earth. He was life itself, and life adapted to the conditions in which He found men. The tree was bearing another manner of fruit now according to its season. The goodness of God brought privileges to men that were unknown before, though they had been foretold by the prophets. "Jesus of Nazareth was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." Proposals were made to Israel, and to man, all guilty and helpless as they were, to avail themselves of the grace and goodness of God. He would forgive their iniquities and heal their diseases, He would satisfy their poor with bread, comfort those that mourned, and bring deliverance to the captives. He would bring them the truth about God, long misunderstood by, and misrepresented to, their hearts. He would discourse to them, not now about creation glories alone, and the privileges of intercourse with the Creator, not now about God's demands in law, but of a Shepherd Who sought lost sheep, of a Father Who welcomed repentant prodigals. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. No flaming sword now turned every way to keep men from Him; rather the sweetest of invitations called men to Him. He had to expostulate with the Jews, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." God's compassions and mercies fructified in Christ for man's good, and once more possibilities of blessing and immense privileges were put within man's reach.
Alas! what are we? What is man proved to be? A hopeless wreck, an utter failure, rotten to the core, not only forgetful of good but hostile to it; so that the greatest good that ever came from God into a world of sinners was met only by scornful hatred, and the carnal mind was seen in its true colours at last, enmity to God. The very grace which brought the one only Son to the vineyard, sent by the Father, encountered the almost incredible, the most malignant, proposition: "This is the heir, come let us kill him"; as the Lord says, "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." The compassions that brought Him to men's side for their blessing gave range for the spite that spat in His face, crowned Him with thorns, and nailed both hands and feet to a cross of wood.

The Tree of Life is not on earth now. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh," says the Apostle Paul, "yet now henceforth know we Him no more." He has been removed from the reach of the natural, earthly man, and has been transplanted on high. He is to be found alone in the Paradise of God. God is not defeated; nay, far from it, His grace is triumphant. For Christ has been exalted as Man out of death into boundless glory. Happy as might have been Eden, the blessedness connected with Christ risen in the new scene which is opened out by reason of His death and resurrection is greater still. Paul was caught up into Paradise, and the communications of God's wisdom there, and of Christ's fullness, were simply unrenderable, incommunicable, in any language under the sun. Joy unspeakable, unsearchable riches, love surpassing knowledge, glory excelling, communications unutterable,—such is the vista now open to faith and Christian affection. However much we know, we know only in part; but one day we shall know as even we are known. Illimitable blessing will fill heaven and earth, with Christ as the centre and fullness of it all, the Tree of Life with privileges new and eternal, setting out all the resources of God in grace for our enjoyment for eternity. Who that knows these things does not exult in the victory that God has gained?

The Epistle to the Ephesians shows how that God, working in the very world whose condition was so alienated from His life that men must be regarded as dead in trespasses and sins, has begun at the bottom in the death in which He found them and has quickened saints together with Christ. He has imparted life and character of a new order, derived from and consonant with Christ, has associated them with Him risen and glorified, and set them in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Even now the privilege is accorded us in the Christian company, of entering into, enjoying, and expressing the all-varied wisdom of God; but in coming ages God will fulfil to the outermost bound His purpose of displaying the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. I have little doubt it was intended that the Ephesian saints should be fitted by the instruction in their epistle to enter by the Spirit into that heavenly Paradise, and to taste now the fruits of the Tree of Life. There was at least no reserve on God's part; Christ in glory as the Centre and Life of the new scene was set before the eyes of their heart, and God intimated His wish to initiate them into, even as He had opened out to them objectively, the knowledge of the mystery of His will, that He would gather together all things in one in Christ.

But the Ephesians were, and we are, still in the world actually, where hostile spirit-powers will spare no pains to divert us from Christ. Ten thousand wiles do they employ to distract us from our calling, and to alienate our affection from the Source and Centre of blessing. A tendency to teach some other doctrine is found at Ephesus in 1 Timothy 1. 3.
Departure from the faith is foretold in chapter 4. I. Defection had already set in, in 2 Timothy 1. 15, of a most widespread character in Asia where Ephesus was; the wonderful vessel Paul who had told them of Christ is seen forsaken, save by one or two.

But Christ, the Son of Man, dealing with His faithless church on the ground of its responsibility, lays bare the secret of the whole departure in His address to this very church of Ephesus in Revelation 2. 1-7. "I have against thee," He says, "that thou hast left thy first love" (New Trans.). They had given up the sense of His love, He was no more to them personally what He had been in their first days; He was no longer their one absorbing Theme, their Object, the known, trusted, and beloved Lover to their hearts; and He missed their warm response, their sweet affection, their loving confidence, their complete absorption with Himself.

It is in this connection that He says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Our present object is not to consider the path of the overcomer, though that path may be very simply summed up in this, that we make everything of Christ; again let us say it,—that we make everything of Christ.

But it is to learn if possible what may be meant by this eating of the Tree of Life. What thought is conveyed to us now by this figure, the Tree of Life? May I suggest that it represents to our spirits the infinite privilege accorded to the saints in the knowledge of Christ, in Whom is seen the fullness of Life according to God's purpose? Not seen now within the limitations of created and material things, but in His new acquired Manhood glories; ever revealing on the one hand all the wisdom, and glory, and love of God, and on the other ever defining for us our place in the fair scene of blessing, and conducting our hearts into all the fullness of that Life which has been designed for us from eternity. If a material creation so vast as this was required to express the creatorial glories of God, how infinite must be the delights in Christ, Who expresses every glory of God! And further, how infinite must be the capacities of that life which is formed for the enjoyment of all God's glory for ever! Of this life Christ is the living expression. Eternally will He conduct our hearts into the apprehension of the blessed God, and discourse with us of the infinite wisdom that has created such a scene for His own delight and glory, as well as for the delectation and blessing of the favoured subjects of His grace. In this sense I suppose we shall eat the fruits of the Tree of Life through that golden age which we call Eternity. But the beginning of the feast will be during the millennial reign of Christ, when overcomers will taste the sweetness of reward.

One element remains to be examined. It is probable that Ezekiel 47. 12 refers to the same thing as Revelation 22. 2. In both passages we learn that not only does the Tree yield meat, but the leaves are to be used for medicine. In the Revelation it distinctly applies this feature of the Tree of Life to the nations, i.e. such as are spared to enter the millennial blessing on earth. We shall not need medicine in heaven, beloved saints of God. Neither will there be there crippled or diseased bodies, nor broken and sorrowing hearts again. Ours to eat the fruit, ever varied, never palling, of all that Christ is, in its season. But how comforting, as we look around to-day and see the open sores, as Livingstone called them, and the fevered condition of the nations on earth, to know that the Tree of Life will afford in its season healing for them. They will not learn war any more; and even to earth's utmost bound the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will spread as the waters cover the sea. Earth will unite with heaven in that thousand years of His glorious reign in glad acclaim of the benefit derived from being under Christ, Israel and the Gentiles sitting down under His shadow with great delight.
The Vail. (Read Exodus 26. 31-35.)

HITHERTO we have had no indication that there were to be two compartments in the tabernacle, respectively named the holy place and the most holy. The hanging of the vail divided the one from the other. The materials out of which it was to be made were identical with those used in the construction of the inner curtains of the tabernacle, thus bringing out the same truth, that the vail, as the curtains, was typical of Christ Himself in His varied glories.

* * * *

But there is one difference to be observed, viz. in the order in which the materials are named. In the curtains the fine-twined linen is named first and the blue second; in the vail the blue comes first and the fine-twined linen fourth. Whence this difference?

The curtains typified Christ as seen in His life in this world, hence the fine-twined linen comes first as illustrating the practical righteousness in every detail of His life in which He walked to the glory of God.

The vail typifies Christ, as the fruit of His death in resurrection, as the way of approach to God, hence blue, illustrating His heavenly character, is prominent. How wonderfully accurate is Scripture, and how it teaches us how full the mind of the Spirit of God is of the glories of Christ.

* * * *

In verse 32 we observe the vail was to be suspended on four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold, by means of hooks of gold—the pillars standing upon four sockets of silver.

Notice the close juxtaposition of the gold and shittim wood, again typifying the deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus, whilst they were to be pillars, and not boards. Doubtless the merely materially-minded would see in this provision but an architectural necessity, whilst the spiritually-minded would see the distinction between the boards as illustrating believers and the pillars as typical of Christ Himself.

* * * *

The vail was to be hung on golden hooks, thus bringing out that man's approach to God is rendered suitable to the display of God's righteousness. The pillars stood on sockets of silver, thus showing that Christ could not have taken this place as the way of entrance except on the ground of His death. It was His death that secured redemption for the sinner, and the display of righteousness for God.

There is this vital difference between Christ and His people. The latter need redemption as sinners, hence the boards "standing up" on sockets of silver, whereas Christ must die for His people, if He is to be the way of entrance for the believer into the presence of God. He did not die as a necessity in relation to His own condition. Far be the thought. Death had no claim over Him. He was sinless absolutely.

But He must die, if believers were to have access into God's presence, hence the four pillars stood upon four sockets of silver.

* * * *

Then follow instructions as to the placing of the furniture of the tabernacle. In the holiest of all was alone the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony, as we have seen in a previous article typical of Christ Himself, God and man—one Person—who wrought atonement by His blood, bringing the believer near to God, giving him entrance into God's presence.

In the holy place were the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick—both typical, the former of Christ's
supporting and sustaining His people, 
the latter, of the Holy Spirit, who alone 
is the source of light and truth.

Be it observed up to now the golden 
altar of incense is not mentioned. We 
must wait till Aaron and his son are 
consecrated as priests before we get 
that article mentioned in chapter 30. 
1-10. The reason for this is very 
interesting and significant.

The articles already brought before 
us, that is the ark and mercy-seat com-
bined, the table of shewbread and the 
golden candlestick are all connected 
typically with the thought of God 
coming out in blessing to man; whereas 
golden altar, as we shall hope to see 
detail in a future article, is con-
ected with man's approach to God. In 
short the three first-named articles have 
to do with Christ as the Apostle of our 
profession (confession, N.T.); whilst the 
last-named with Christ as the High 
Priest—the Apostle bringing God to 
men; the Priest bringing men to God.

As another has said, the Epistle to the 
Hebrews brings before us Christ as our 
Apostle and High Priest—the Apostle 
to bring out the calling 
of God at its 
height; the High Priest to maintain the 
believer at the height of his calling.

But one last remark must be made, 
and that of a most important nature. 
If the vail speaks of Christ as the way of 
approach to God, it must be pointed out 
that only Aaron, as High Priest, could 
go in, and that only once a year and 
then not "without blood." We are 
told distinctly, "the Holy Ghost thus 
signifying that the way into the holiest 
of all was not made manifest, while as 
the first tabernacle was yet standing " (Heb. 9. 8).

However wonderfully the shadows 
could point forward to the glories of the 
Person and work of the coming Christ, 
they could never foreshadow these in 
all their fullness.

When we leave the Old Testament and 
come to the New we find consequent on 
the finished work of redemption the 
vail was rent by God from top to bottom, 
from His side to ours, and that now 
God is in the light, He has come forth, 
been declared in all His nature, and all 
believers can have boldness to enter 
into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

"The vail is rent, our souls draw near 
Unto a throne of grace."

Whilst further, the Old Testament 
adumbrated the wondrous truth of the 
believer's access to God, the New Testa-
ment brings out the wondrous further 
truth that the believer finds himself in 
the presence of the Father—enjoys the 
position of a son, in association with 
Christ in resurrection life, before the 
Father's face.

In truth, we cannot now separate 
between God and the Father, and 
worship may thus flow out in unhindered 
fullness to Him who is the Spring and Source of all blessedness—our God and 
Father, known through grace in relation-
ship through the Spirit's power. Wond-
rous truth!

The Mighty Love of Jesus.

Down from the throne eternal He came to earth below, 
Down from the throne eternal He came to bear my woe; 
He came to scorn and hatred, He came to shame and loss, 
He came to be the Victim, to die upon the cross; 
To die alone in darkness, with none His grief to share, 
And though He looked for comfort, no comforters were there. 
Alone amid the darkness He gave Himself for me. 
Oh, the mighty love of Jesus, it could not greater be! 
'Tis love I cannot measure; 'tis love that has no end; 
'Tis love that doth completely all earthly things transcend. 
Eternal, uncreated, unfathomed, full and free, 
Such is the love of Jesus, wherewith He loveth me. (A. S.)
Two Infallible Proofs.

TO-MORROW Christ must die. To-morrow was the day of days when the Son of God would establish His right to His great name. He was to add to the galaxy of illustrious titles that were His one more lustrous than all. A name simple enough, yet one that would be at once the most costly to the Creator and the most priceless to the creature. For by to-morrow’s black shame he would pay for Eternity’s bright name, one that was to become the sweetest note on mortal tongue. His Name... JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.

To-morrow He must die. Aye, far more than that. To-morrow He must be dowered in His death with the sins of countless generations, so that He might link up legions of sinners to the brightness of His Father’s glory.

But to-night was His own. He would spend it with His own. “For it was a night much to be remembered.”

See Him then in the guest chamber. That upper room contained persons of destinies and distinction more diverse than could be imagined. There was the Saviour who next day should suffer of His own free will; bound homeward and heavenward. Men were there, unlearned and ignorant, who should be missionaries, then martyrs, and seal their testimonies with their lives. There were men who doubted and men who loved; there were self-seekers who were to become soul-winners.

And the night? It was the night of the feast. For Him the night of the farewell. Many things He was to tell them that would afterwards become His richest revelations to “His own.” Many too were held back; for, “Ye cannot bear them now.”

But around the table of that fateful feast the Lord Jesus laid upon His followers two injunctions: the last codicil, as it were, of that new will and testament which was to be signed, sealed and delivered in His own most precious blood.

These two new commandments were simple, yet unutterably profound. They went to the heart of things, as indeed they dealt of the heart; and in the new era ushered in by His triumphant death they were to be the two hall-marks that should distinguish and denote His followers. They were to be the two watchwords with which His redeemed should go forth, conquering and to conquer; the two tokens that should convince and convert wherever they were exhibited. And to-day, after two thousand years, these commands come to us as fresh, as vivid, as impossible, as when that night they fell from the lips of the soon-to-die Saviour. As impossible, I mean, to the natural man as they must have seemed that evening to the dazed disciples.

What then were these new signs which were to be preached everywhere with signs following? For the dying wishes of those we love have a sacred and binding significance to us their executors. Hear then His gracious parting words.

1. “A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples.”

This is the golden key to Christian conduct. It is able to unlock the hardest hearts. For how love beats down all barriers, dissolves all differences, rights all wrongs. Truly He shows Himself as the great Physician, when out of the treasure of His heart this mighty alchemist prescribes love in the heart of all His own. Yet how visionary! How vain of attainment! For were not these words spoken as the sequel to an unseemly contest in that sacred upper room, who should be the greatest. “Love one another!” How impossible. Yet for a time it became so possible, indeed so usual, that the very comment
of persecutors of the early Christians was, "How these Christians love each other."

So with the same human hearts, the same loving Lord and Master, the same supreme Holy Guest waiting to endue us with power from on high, this love for others to-day is not only possible but imperative if we are to realize a tithe of His plans and purposes for our lives.

For an embittered heart means a dimmed vision, a powerless ministry. There is a divine order for such disease. "First be reconciled . . . then come and offer thy gift," thy heart, thy talents. This is a pre-requisite for service. Thus the strife that would have embittered will embalm, and in place of driving us to despair will reveal to us the solace of His side. But first we shall have to count all things but dross. That will not be easy. We shall be near to dying daily, that will not be fashionable, yet we shall be in good company. "For all the while, did we only see, we walk in the Lord's own company."

It is quite certainly God's will then that we should love even our enemies, it is not effeminate but Divine to do so. But how to love them? His immortal word, as always, supplies the answer: "Love your enemies, pray for those that despitefully use you." So simple, so sure, so profound! For prayer, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. It blesses him who prays as well as him he prays for.

And a true disciple will not pray long for his enemies before he will long to pray with them. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be, and laying up prayer for an enemy means that soon the heart will be with him too. This is not theory but fact, not fancy but sober truth—it is a way to whose efficacy one can humbly testify.

2. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED. This untroubled heart is not optional but imperative—not a human choice but a king's command.

Indeed it is no new thing that a king should forbid a troubled heart, for such is bound to betray itself in a troubled face. This, under pain of death, was expressly forbidden by the ancient monarchs of the East. So that Nehemiah appearing in his sovereign's service, of a sad countenance, upon its being noticed by his lord was sore afraid. For with his fellow-servants he had not been aforetime sad in the king's presence. Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high, render to our Divine Deliverer a service less perfect? Shall we be heavy when our hearts should burn? His was the face marred more than any man, when He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. It was that we might live rejoicing day by day.

Truly the untroubled heart is a benison that belongs to you who read. It is yours. Your heritage by right and reason, of His agony in the garden, of His broken body, His bowed head, His streaming side. Perhaps you do not possess it. It is yours for the asking if you are His.

How then is this untroubled heart to be come at? Look at it this way. The shocks from the roughness of the road that shake and jar one's very being, in a cart, may pass unnoticed in a carriage. Where is the difference but in the springs interposed between the wheels and the body. For the function of these springs is to absorb all shocks; they are designed for that purpose. Precisely so, I believe, the Holy Spirit is designated to make a similar provision for the soul. Through His gracious office and operation these majestic words may become true for each true believer: "Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care, not a blast of hurry, touch the spirit there."

If the Comforter is allowed His rightful ministry—if He has His way—we walk on air, we are borne on eagles' wings, we are stayed upon Jehovah.
It is the church’s shame, it is the Saviour’s sorrow that many of us are proceeding to the marriage of the Lamb in carts, when the King, His Father, has provided carriages; and king’s sons being out of place in carts, we excite the pity of some, the jeers of others. Brethren, these things need not be; they should not be, or we shame His precious Name. Truly when He says, “Let not your HEART be troubled,” He means it. For observe, our lives must and will be troubled (many are the afflictions of the righteous). Even as the road must of necessity be rough, being travelled by so great a traffic of humanity, many of whom have no regard for God. Yet the jolts, the ruts, the shocks that trouble our lives, need never reach our hearts. They need never reach the realm of the soul’s repose in God.

The feast was over, the prelude to the passion and the cross. The little gathering broke up. After a last pathetic hymn they went out into the cold of the night, over to Olivet. There the agony was begun, the prelude to the cross that brought these gifts for you. “UNTO YOU THEREFORE WHICH BELIEVE IS THE PRECIOUSNESS.”

“Pray Ye”—“Go Ye.”

(And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16. 15).

“How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” (Rom. 10. 14).

From his hut of leaves and rushes,
See, a dusky native goes,
Seeks among the trees and bushes
Where the mighty Congo flows,
Finds a tree which suits his fancy,
Cuts a log, and homeward goes.
(ISA. 44. 14.)

Now with chisel and with mallet
Fashions he the piece of wood,
Then, from out a dirty wallet,
Takes his “Bwanga”* strong and good,
Smears it on the ugly fetish,
Which has now become his god.
(ISA. 44. 17.)

And a more degraded creature
’Twould indeed be hard to find;
Sin is stamped on every feature
Of his body and his mind;
As his fetish, so his heart is,
Filthy, wretched, naked, blind.
(Ps. 115. 8.)

But at last he hears the story
Of the wondrous grace of God,
Of the One who left the glory,
And this world of darkness trod;
How He died for guilty sinners,
To redeem them by His blood.
(John 3. 16.)

* “Bwanga”: Fetish medicine, without which fetishes are of no use. Each man thinks his own particular medicine the strongest and best.

Now behold the native turning
From his idols and his sin;
His enlightened heart is burning
With a strange new love within;
He who once was poor and wretched,
Now is happy, ransomed, clean.
(1 Thess. 1. 5-10.)

God, the source of every blessing,
Now receives the praise and laud,
And the Holy Spirit’s teaching
Guides his footsteps by the “Word”;
Christ, at God’s right hand exalted,
Is his Saviour and his Lord.

One to God has been converted,
Thousands still remain the same,—
Thoughts and actions all perverted,
Knowing not the Saviour’s name,
Serving Satan, not their Maker,
Living lives of sin and shame.

Is it justice, is it kindness,
Thus to leave them in their sin,
Mid the ignorance and blindness,
Not a ray of hope within?
None to tell them of the Saviour
Who has died their souls to win.

Lord, increase our love, we pray Thee,
Fields are ripe, and servants few.
Teach us gladly to obey Thee,
Give us willing hearts, and true,
Hat, responsive to Thy bidding,
We may seek Thy will to do.
The word *Theosophy* is compounded of two Greek words, *Theos*, God, and *sophia*, wisdom; and is intended to describe a teaching which professes to bring the soul into touch with God.

It is a very pertinent inquiry as to who is the promulgator of this system. God presents His truth through clear and holy channels, through vessels meet for His use. Who would drink water out of a filthy cup? We cannot dissociate a system from its founder, and so to inquire into the character of the founder of this society is reasonable and just. We will deal with facts. If Theosophy is of God we cannot afford to be without it, if it is not of God it is of the devil, and the widest berth we can give it the better.

Bible teaching at once would lead us to suspect a system of religion begun and headed by a woman. Seventh Day Adventism was begun by Mrs. White, a neurotic woman, subject to cataleptic seizures; Christian Science by Mrs. Eddy, a woman likewise subject to cataleptic seizures and a spiritualistic medium to boot. Theosophy was begun by a woman—Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky, a spiritualistic medium born at Ekaterinoslow, South Russia, in 1831.

The "Modern English Biography" (F. Boase) tells us that she married General Blavatsky, an aged man nearer seventy than sixty years old, when only seventeen years old, but that she deserted him three months after marriage. As the Russian law does not allow divorce, she led a Bohemian life, marrying again when forty-nine years old a mere boy of sixteen, who went mad the day after marriage. She kept a gambling hell in Tiflis in 1863.

Between October, 1848, and May, 1857, Madame Blavatsky professed to visit Thibet and to learn the secret of the *Mahatmas*, said by her to be reincarnated beings, evolved through many generations to a high spiritual state, and who, she affirms, were able to precipitate messages from their inaccessible Thibetan homes to their affinities in New York, London, etc.

Their importance in this system may be gauged by the fact that Mrs. Besant, the present high priestess of Theosophy, admits:

"If there are no *Mahatmas* the Theosophical Society is an absurdity" (Lucifer, Dec. 15th, 1890).

In 1871 Madame Blavatsky set up a spiritualistic society in Cairo. There she got into trouble for tricking the public and fleecing them of their money by deception. Note this is fourteen years after she professed to come from Thibet with the Mahatmas's religion. Why, we may ask, did she not bring out Theosophy at once? The fact is it was not the subject of revelation but of laborious growth. She is stated to have practised spiritualism from 1863 to 1875.

She founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875. Col. Olcott, connected with the American Army, was associated with the Society in its inception, and in time became its President, but was eventually driven out of the Society. On the death of Madame Blavatsky Wm. Q. Judge, of New York, claimed the leadership of the Society. It split into two, if not three separate societies, each one contending that the original afflatus of its founder had descended upon it exclusively.

In 1884 the Psychical Research Society sent a gentleman named Hodgson to India to inquire into Theosophy. He published a report accusing Madame Blavatsky of trickery.

Mr. Coleman affirms that he found in Madame Blavatsky's great book on Theosophy, "*Isis Unveiled,*" no less than two thousand plagiarisms culled from over one hundred volumes.
Experts have declared that the letters Madame Blavatsky affirmed she received from the two Mahatmas she introduced into her system, and those of Madame Blavatsky herself, were in the same handwriting, and trickery was discovered in the cabinets in which these supposed Mahatmas’s letters were deposited.

In 1887 Madame Blavatsky came to London, and in 1891 died and was cremated at Woking.

In appearance she was masculine and repulsive, of violent temper, and would express herself in language that would defile our pages to repeat. She incessantly smoked cigarettes, and was found guilty of trickery and lying.

Mrs. Besant, ex-infidel and ex-socialist, was her greatest convert. Attired in flowing white robes of Theosophic design, an eloquent speaker, Mrs. Besant draws crowds in the largest halls in London.

The Society has hundreds of branches throughout the world, its London Temple alone costing £50,000.

The "Encyclopædia Britannica" (11th edition) tells us that Theosophy was founded in order—

1. To establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity.
2. To promote the study of comparative religion and philosophy.
3. To make a systematic investigation into the mystic potentialities of life and matter, or what is usually termed "occultism."

The Theosophist’s theory of universal brotherhood is based upon a mystical conception of "the One Life"—an idea derived from and common to various forms of Eastern thought, Vedic and Buddhist.

They have selected from various sources—Vedic, Buddhist, Greek, and Cabalistic—certain extracts for the purpose of exposition and illustration.

Theosophy is an attempt to popularize Buddhism in Western lands, and behind this it is Satanic, enthralling and enslaving its dupes.

One word will explain it. Mrs. Besant, in a Daily Chronicle review (April 9th, 1894), states:

"I confined myself to the Hindu scriptures, and in all cases I stated that I regarded these scriptures and the Hindu religion as the origin of all the scriptures and all the religions. This was the position learned from Madame Blavatsky, and which I have held since I joined the Theosophical Society."

Arthur Lille writes:

"Theosophy proclaims that at death the individual becomes practically two individuals, one of which takes off all the good qualities to the 'rosy slumber' of Devachan or Paradise. The second with all its bad qualities remains on the earth plane, attends seances, deceives spiritualists, and is by and by annihilated. By the first, perfection, even with an atrocious murder, is obtained at the second of death, a perfection greater than that of the Angel Gabriel, for the smallest blemish will be removed. By the second, Paul will be 1,200,000 years obtaining perfection."

And that perfection is—ANNIHILATION.

The Theosophist is at least candid when it says:

"We do not at all deny the charge of Atheism, the word being used in the ordinary theistic sense" (September, 1882).

How far the Bible is derived from the Hindu religion may be seen when it is stated that Theosophy denies the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; scouts the idea of the precious atoning work of Christ; refuses salvation by grace, and makes it a matter of attainment and works; that in Christian lands it propagates heathenism, allowing its teachers to
uphold the use of Hindu idols; whilst in heathen lands it comes out boldly in its true colours and ridicules Christianity. Verily there is no truce between God and Satan.

Theosophy takes the opportunity given by the widespread expectation of the Lord's personal return by the Christian community to proclaim "The Coming One," and institutes a Society, "The Order of the Star in the East," to enroll members to wait for him. Their "Coming One" is a young theosophic Hindu and a Mahatma, by name Krisnamurti, the Lord Maitreza, in whose body they claim the Buddha, their Christ, will be reincarnated.

Meanwhile the father of Krisnamurti has instituted law proceedings against Mrs. Besant, in order to obtain possession of his own son, who was a minor and has won his suit. But Scripture warns us:

"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24. 24).

I have before me a book entitled "Theosophy," by Rudolf Steiner, translated with the permission of the author from the third German edition. An extract or two from it will suffice to complete this brief article. This book is a standard work on the subject. It has 212 pages, and contains the name of God twice and death a few times, a phenomenon that cannot well be ignored. The names—Lord Jesus Christ—are never once mentioned either singly or collectively; the Holy Spirit is never mentioned, nor is SIN once alluded to. It is a pitiable system that cannot grapple with the question of sin and all that it means.

Theosophy professes to have discovered seven parts in the earthly man. For sheer twaddle commend me to Mr. Steiner's list.

"The expressions used in theosophical literature are as follows:

1. Physical Body (Sthula Sharira).
2. Ether or life-body (Zinga Sharira).
4. Intellectual-soul (Lower Manas, Kama Manas).
5. Spirit-filled consciousness—soul (Higher Manas).
6. Life-spirit (Spiritual-body, Budhi).
7. Spirit-man (Atma)."

Then again he tells us:

"One has to distinguish between three lower and three higher regions of the soul world. These are linked by a fourth, so that there results the following division of the soul world:

1. Region of Burning Desires.
2. " Flowing Excitability.
5. " Soul Light.
7. " Soul Life."

Upon what evidence or proof is this house of cards, this juggling with words, this Satanic delusion, based? Hear the naïveté of our author:

"It might be said, in objection to what has been stated before, that it is pure spinning of thoughts, and such external proof might be demanded as one is accustomed to in ordinary natural science. The reply to this is that the re-embodiment of the spiritual human being is, naturally a process which does not belong to the region of external physical facts, but is one that takes place entirely in the spiritual region. And to this region no other of our ORDINARY powers of intelligence has entrance save that of THINKING."

In other words, to learn Theosophy the poor dupe will have to resign himself to THINKING THOUGHTS presented to him, however fantastic and without any proof, and once the victim surrenders his individuality and will, and submits to be plastic clay in the
hands of an unknown potter, it is only
to be sport in the hands of demoniacal
spiritualism with an Eastern colour.

Certain words familiar in Spiritualism
are used, such as "spirit land," human
"aura," etc.

Steiner tells us colour tones enable
the theosophist to compare the "aura" or astral body—a sort of spook or ghost.
He says:—

"The colour effects which the
'spiritual eye' can perceive raying
out round the physical man and
enveloping him like a cloud (some­
what egg-shaped) are called the
HUMAN aura. The size of this aura
differs in different people. But one
can form an idea of it by picturing
that the WHOLE man is in the
average twice as long and four times
as broad as the physical man."

(Page 169.)

With unconscious humour he gravely
tells us:—

"One can notice that as intelli­
gence increases the green tones be­
come more and more abundant."

(Page 170.)

With this we quite agree. The full
blown theosophist must be decidedly
green to believe all this nonsense. We
are told that knowledge shows itself
in yellow tones, so that the highly
informed man must look as if he
had a bad attack of jaundice. Sensual

thoughts express themselves in red
tones, unselfish love in "glorious rose­
pink." An inventor who applies his
thoughts to the satisfaction of his
sensual passions shows "dark blue-red
shades," whilst the inventor who ap­
plies his thoughts to the service of an
interest outside of himself shows "light
reddish blue colour tones." The differ­
ce appears to us to be between
tweedle-de and tweedle-dum. "Blue
is the sign of piety."

Much more of this childish folly
could be enumerated, but we forbear.

The reading of the book leaves one
utterly unconvinced and with the firm
conviction that Theosophy is but a snare
of the devil. How any sensible person
can be gulled by such nonsense can only
be explained by the crafty way in which
souls may be engulfed in Satan's toils.
Mrs. Besant, who found it impossible
to believe the Bible, now swallows
wholesale and without difficulty this lie
of the devil.

We believe the great safeguard of
the Christian to-day is the study, per­
sistent and prayerful, of the Word
of God. To bring Theosophy to the test
of the Scriptures is like flinging straw
soaked with petroleum into the fire—
it is soon destroyed.

May God use this brief article of
warning against this subtlety of Satan,
and to deliver many who are already
ensnared.

Confidence.

Let Thy perfect peace, Eternal
Father, garrison my soul,
Where the tempests from infernal
Regions round about me roll.

Mid the tumult do Thou cover
From misfortune head and heart.

Hitherto Thy mercy tender
Has preserved me night and day—
Take it not, Divine Defender,
From Thy feeble child away.

Let me live, but not to grieve Thee,
Not that I may sin pursue,
But to love Thee, to believe Thee,
To delight Thy will to do. 

(J. B.—d.)
A Bright Old Age.

NEW and startling activities of the Spirit of God were breaking out on every hand. A dumb man, suddenly recovering speech, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and burst forth in lofty prophetic song. A mere babe, while yet in helpless infancy, was likewise filled, and became the most remarkable man of his times. A man in Jerusalem, too, had a singular experience. The Holy Ghost came upon him, made an astounding communication to him, and guided his steps to the temple at the very moment when the Saviour of men made His first appearance there.

All these wonderful activities of the Holy Ghost were in view of the coming of that blessed Saviour, and the most marvellous of them all was in direct connection with His birth. Mary, His mother, was "found with child of the Holy Ghost."

The first person to be the subject of these memorable activities of the Spirit of God was a woman, an aged woman, a woman whose life, from one point of view, had been a failure. She had lived piously and in the fear of God; her life and conduct were irreproachable, but she had no child. This, to a Jewish woman, meant a spoiled, useless life, a failure. And now Elisabeth was "well stricken in years." Her best days were past, her bright hopes had faded away, and she was nearing the end of her earthly sojourn. We can picture her pious and peaceful life, with nothing to distinguish it from hundreds of other such lives: no overflowing joy, no special power in testimony, nothing to lift her life to a level above that of others around her.

And then, in her old age, she is filled with the Holy Ghost and everything is changed. Her son, born under such circumstances, becomes the greatest servant of God that had ever lived, and her husband, a man of undoubted piety but of weak faith, is likewise filled with the Holy Ghost; his faith becomes radiant in its energy and strength, and his hitherto limited vision transformed into one of glorious grandeur.

What a bright old age was Elisabeth’s! What a difference the filling of the Holy Ghost made to her and to those around her!

I wonder if some one is reading these lines in whose heart a chord is touched as she thinks of that aged woman’s bright experience. Perhaps the tears rise unbidden to your eyes while you pause in your reading and think.

Your thoughts go back to girlhood’s days. You remember the day when as a sinner you knelt at your Saviour’s feet and received His pardon and His benediction. What a weight was lifted from your soul! What rejoicings of heart took the place of your former misery and fear! And in the exuberance of your joy rosy visions began to present themselves to your gaze. You saw yourself walking along life’s highway hand in hand with your Lord and Saviour; happy days full of love and praise and glad service to His name lay before you. You had but one life to live and you would lay it in its entirety at the feet of Him who had loved you well enough to suffer and die in your stead.

And now, with the "silver threads among the gold," the wrinkles deepening upon your oft weary brow, trials and disappointments having left their mark upon you, what a reverie is yours! You think of what might have been. You call to remembrance your "song in the night," and you confess your life to have been, to a large extent, a failure.

But is there not even yet a possibility of those bright visions of early days being fulfilled? May not the sunset of your years be glorious with a heavenly radiance hitherto unrealized? Yes, my sister, you may, like aged Elisabeth, be filled with the Holy Ghost.
My brother, the same experience may be yours. Though, like Zacharias, you may be "well stricken in years," like him you may be filled with the Holy Ghost.

How often do we read in the Acts of the Apostles of men and women thus filled! On the day of Pentecost all who composed the little assembly gathered in that upper room were filled. The experience was repeated in chap. 4. 31. Peter, once so fearful, yet full of self-confidence, was now "filled with the Holy Ghost" (4. 8). Stephen, arrested, surrounded by enemies, and soon to lay down his life, was "full of the Holy Ghost" (7. 55). Not that this was the consequence of his being called to a place of special testimony and suffering. It was what had marked him previously (6. 5). Barnabas was similarly characterized as "full of the Holy Ghost" (11. 24). In the case of Paul too, we read that he was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (13. 9). It was that he might be thus filled, for the service of the Lord, that he had been converted (9. 17).

Let no one think, however, that it was only choice servants of God like Peter and Paul, Stephen and Barnabas, that were filled with the Holy Ghost. We have seen how the Jewish believers were filled, and filled again, at Jerusalem. Acts 13. 52 gives us a picture of Gentile disciples, men and women unknown to fame, similarly filled. Indeed the exhortation is addressed to all Christians: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5. 18).

Now what does all this mean? What is this being filled with the Holy Ghost?

To begin with, it does not mean being born of the Spirit. This, the sovereign act of the Holy Ghost, by means of the Word, whereby men are born again, is the initial step in God's dealings with His saints and must never be confounded with the filling.

Nor is this the same as the sealing, or indwelling (Rom. 8. 9; 1 Thess. 4. 8; 2 Tim. 1. 13) of the Spirit. As soon as a sinner believes the gospel he receives, with the forgiveness of his sins, the Holy Ghost to indwell him. He is thus sealed, or branded, as belonging to the Lord (Acts 10. 44; 2 Cor. 1. 22; Gal. 4. 6; Eph. 1. 13).

But to be filled with the Spirit is something further. It is not, like the sealing, or indwelling, a distinctively Christian privilege. We read of one who, long before the days of Christianity, was filled with the Spirit of God (Exod. 31. 3). Bezaleel was thus filled, that with God-given wisdom and understanding he might construct the Tabernacle, that wonderful building which was so eloquent, in all its parts, of CHRIST.

It is always in view of exalting HIM that men and women are filled with the Holy Ghost. We have already remarked this in the first two chapters of Luke. His remarkable activities with Elisabeth, with Zacharias, with John, with Mary, and with Simeon were all in view of bringing Christ into the world.

The effect of being filled with the Holy Ghost is never to occupy one with one's own blessing or experience, it never ministers to the glorification of self in any form. The Holy Ghost, when He fills a saint of God, takes possession of him or her for Christ. He fills the gaze with His glories, the heart with His love, the lips with His praise. Christ fills the life of the one who is filled with the Spirit. If he speaks, it is not to call attention to his own experience, but to magnify Christ. Peter, when thus filled, proclaimed the exaltation of the Stone, set at nought of the builders. Stephen's gaze was held enraptured by the sight of JESUS. Barnabas' exhortation was that they should cleave to the Lord.

Do you ask what you must do that this supreme favour may be conferred on you; that you may be filled with the Holy Ghost? Note that Elisabeth's case shows us that a blameless life is not sufficient. She and her husband Zacharias walked blamelessly for many a long year before they were filled. The
one prime necessity is to be emptied of all that would hinder; to have Christ alone as the object of the heart; to give yourself unreservedly into the hands of the Lord, beseeching Him to bring your will into entire conformity with His own. David's prayer in Psalm 139. 23 will help you in this. Under the holy searchlight of God's presence you may discover things cherished in your heart, permitted in your life, or winked at in your surroundings that are hindrances. These, by the almighty help of God, must be judged and ended.

We need, also, to learn anew what the Cross means, and perhaps to discover fresh depths in its significance. There we are entitled to view not only our sins but ourselves as having come under the unsparing judgment of God, and being ended in His reckoning. In this, we have to reckon with God's reckoning, and rejoice that it is not we, but Christ, who lives. Christ is the only One who can please God, and if we are to please Him it can only be by Christ being formed in us. And this is the work of the Spirit of God. It is for this that He fills the saints, not only those who, like John, have life with all its opportunities before them, but also those who, like Elisabeth and Zacharias, are in the eventide of their days.

If the various activities of the Holy Ghost in view of Christ's coming, long centuries ago, were by way of preparation for His advent, may it not well be the case that a similar thing may take place in view of His second coming? May we not say that it IS taking place? Men and women are being taken possession of by the Holy Ghost, on behalf of Christ, and are thus being prepared for His coming. For it is not only the Bride who cries, in eager expectation, "Come." The Spirit also says "Come" (Rev. 22. 17), and it is His gracious activity in the hearts of His people that causes the Bride to do the same.

We are on the threshold of His advent. But there is yet time to retrieve the failures of the past, and to end the time of our sojourning here in "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

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**A Motto.**

**Say Little! Serve All! Pass On!**

_SAY LITTLE:_ winds the peaceful sea disturb,

And forests rend.

Give answer soft: venomed invective curb,

And discord end.

With grace, like sweet upon the bitter sprent,

Let the unpalatable truth be blent.

_SERVE ALL:_ the Master's plaudit to obtain,

Who Son Divine

A Slave became, and shall a Slave remain—

This mind be thine.

From this example let not empty pride

Thy pure appreciative soul divide.

_PASS ON:_ A pilgrim on thy heavenward way,

Nor seek a name

Where others headlong rush into the fray

For worldly fame:

Await thy Lord's "well done" in quietness,

And not by words but actions love express.

_(J. B--d.)_
"Carest Thou Not?"

When the disciples launched forth upon the sea of Galilee on that evening of which three of the Gospels tell, they needed but little faith to put their Master into the helmsman's seat and commit the steering of the ship to Him, for the wind was fair and the sea was calm. But when the storm uprose and the shore lights were lost in the darkness and they found that He had fallen asleep in the place that they had assigned to Him it seemed to them that they had jeopardized their safety. The good ship might have had some chance of outriding the gale if the helm had been in the strong and capable hands of one of the sons of Zebedee, or if wide-awake Simon had had control, but what hope could there be for it in such a sea while the helmsman slept? As the tempest grew in violence their terror increased, until, when it seemed that the mighty billows would break them utterly, they awake Him with that cry, made bitter by unbelief, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" And in that cry their Master's power over the storm and His love to them were alike arraigned.

What shame must have been theirs in answer to their cry He rose up from His sleep and calmed the elements with a word! How outrageous must their doubts of Him have seemed when they beheld the waves obey Him as a dog obeys its master! Ah, why had they no faith? They might have stretched themselves beside Him and known the wonder of unbroken peace in the tempest, and made that night most memorable by their confidence in Him. They might have shared His peace with Him, for it was not indifference that marked that one recorded sleep of His, but peace, wonderful, beautiful, unruffled peace in the wildest storm that ever beat upon that sea. And they were not one whit more safe when that great calm spread itself upon the waters than they were when the great billows thundered upon them, for whether in peace or in calm they were in His care even though He slept. Had they but realized this they might have honoured Him and saved themselves much worry, for if His hand was on the helm all was well.

Let us beware lest we fail in our confidence in the Lord as those fearful men failed. We may have spoken of safety in Him in fair weather, but now we are surely sailing upon stormy waters and are being tested and may yet be more hardly tested as to where our trust is placed. Let us hold firmly to the fact that He cannot fail. Have we committed ourselves to His keeping? He is most worthy of our trust. Can we say as said Paul of old, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"? Can we pass through the present trial no matter how severe it may become, knowing that He could remove it, but does not do so, seems indeed to be asleep in regard to it, and yet be quiet and restful about it all? It is written, "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because He trusted in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26. 3). Do we know His love and His wisdom so well that we can stay our minds upon Him and put the helm of our tiny craft into His hands and leave it there? Do we ask sometimes, "Carest Thou not?" Let the Scriptures give the answer, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5. 7).

Let us not lose sight of the end, the eternal home of love that is assured to us by the immutable word of God. Our anchor, both sure and steadfast, is already cast within that harbour of rest.

"And though there intervene
Rough seas and stormy skies,
Though by no mortal vision seen,
Its glory fills one's eyes.

"There shall all clouds depart,
The storms of life shall cease;
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace."
The Endurance of Job and the End of the Lord.

Scripture Note on Job 27. 6.

(M. W. WESSEXT)

"MY righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go."

This passage, as usually quoted, is taken to mean that Job was determined to appeal to God for standing before Him on the ground of his own righteousness, as contrasted with that righteousness of God which we know to be revealed in the gospel (Rom. 3.).

This meaning is, on the face of it, unlikely, for the righteousness of God in the gospel sense was not revealed until the gospel came (Rom. 1.). The testing which Satan was allowed to bring on Job was not to discover whether he had soul-salvation and a righteous footing before God, but whether or no Job feared God because of the prosperity and the material advantages which Satan alleged to be quite sufficient to induce piety in a man.

Job's Friends.

The men who heard of the calamities which befell Job seem to have taken the ground that the ways and providences of God were always to be interpreted by the worthiness or unworthiness of men. They evidently had in their minds certain standard instances of men who were pious, and whose circumstances showed every mark of the favour of God; and of others who, being wicked, were overwhelmed by public judgments. With a comparatively superficial knowledge of the wisdom of the Almighty, or of the reasons for His discipline, they deduce for themselves, and then bring before Job in an aggravating way, their conclusions, that he richly deserved all that he was suffering.

Their Suggestions.

Without going into details, these "miserable comforters," as Job calls them, endeavour to hit upon some possible sin in his own past life which might account for his miseries under God's displeasure. Or, suggested one, his children must have been very wicked to be cut off so suddenly. Or, perhaps the stubbornness with which he resists these insinuations might be occasioned by pride which had to be broken. Or, there might be some secret sin nursed at the moment which made the consolations of God so small. Or, there might be some motive in his heart, some secret counsel, which the all-seeing Creator had to thwart, and for which he had to judge him. Past, present, and future are all ransacked by them to try and fix on the poor sufferer some adequate reason for such unique sufferings and calamities.

Job's Replies.

To all these, Job answers that neither in the past nor the present was there the smallest known departure from his duty; and as to the future, he had not the slightest intention to move from the orbit appointed for him by God's will. At his wife's suggestion he might have cursed God and died, and so ended his misery, which she felt to be insupportable. But he felt it was a poor thing to give God a bad name; for although he knew Him but dimly, he knew Him too well to do that. All the past when recalled could be considered with a good conscience in the fear of God; in the present, although he was so crossed and burdened and suffering, he was sure God would explain every­thing satisfactorily if only he knew where to find Him; as to the future, far from being diverted from piety by any calamities undergone, or by any lust of sin or gain—he was determined that even if God slew him, yet he would trust in Him.

His Point of View.

While feeling in the keenest way every pang that Satan had been (as we know) allowed to inflict upon him, and while refuting with all his heart and
energy the insinuations of his "friends," Job powerfully clears the character of God from the injustice which he knew their suggestions involved in His ways, i.e. of condemning him for sins he had not committed.

At the same time it was perfectly inexplicable to him that he, who had daily feared God, should be so abandoned to anguish. Any challenge as to the rectitude of his conduct he was prepared to meet; and if the miseries were not a judgment for misconduct, it seemed as though the Creator had become cruel to him for nothing, and that he was set as a target for the arrows of the Almighty from mere caprice.

His Lessons.

Poor Job. He little knew the tenderness of the heart that was leading him to sound the depths of his own mind. He was to learn himself in his own insignificance, in the smallness of his outlook, in the poverty of his conceptions of God. He was to learn the moral nothingness of his being, and the depravity and loathsome of it, in that he could impudently arraign the Almighty at its tribunal, and pronounce Him cruel and unjust in those providences which befell Job, simply because he could not see the reason why. In short he was to learn through deep sorrow that all unconsciously he had been making JOB the centre for himself; and that the worst immorality is to judge of GOD by what Job thought He ought to be and do. For in effect this was to make himself better, greater, more just than God—as Elihu points out (chap. 30).

The Text in Question.

But now as to chapter 27. He evidently passes censure on God for the apparent cruelty that made his life so bitter. But as long as he lives (ver. 3) he is determined that he will not yield to sin. Whatever the three friends allege, he will not admit a false charge (ver. 5), and in spite of their harsh judgment is determined to pursue the integrity of all his former life to the day of his death. It is in this context that he says, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go." That is, that nothing could induce him to turn from what he knew to be right. He therefore adds, "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." He was for maintaining a good conscience all his days, like Paul later (Acts 23. 1, 2 Cor. 1. 12, 1 Tim. 1. 19).

It may be urged that Saul of Tarsus discovered that his good conscience did not preserve him from error, and that his righteousness which was of the law was found to be but dung in the presence of the glory of Christ. This is true. But while he learned to value Christ as displacing all that man is even at his best, this did not induce him to give up the cultivation of a good conscience. In fact for the maintenance of a good conscience in the future it was necessary that life for him should be "not I, but Christ."

The End of the Lord.

Could it have been otherwise with Job? Once his lesson was learnt, that he was a part of a vast scheme of order and government which depended upon God, and which therefore had God for its centre and circumference, and not Job, would he not henceforth have new thoughts of the majesty and unerring goodness of God; goodness which knew how to bring order out of chaos, and good out of evil? Would he not also have learnt to distrust himself, and the reasonings and conclusions of his own mind, as well as those of his friends' minds, and have discovered the wisdom of waiting on God till the bright light that was in the cloud could be seen?

He would by no means surrender his integrity, he would by no means let go his righteousness. But, as Elihu puts it, his "righteousness," or his "uprightness" (see chap. 33. 23, 26) would now be to bow under God's hand, to trust in the searchings of His discipline, to learn the lesson God would teach; in short, to look away from himself to God, and to live on that new principle before Him, centred in Jehovah and no longer in self.
The Secret of the Stairs.

"O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice" (Song of Songs 2. 14).

DOUBTLESS the returning remnant of Israel, the earthly bride, is primarily addressed in the above passage, but the secondary interpretation, bearing on the heavenly bride, the assembly, in which we have our part, is of paramount interest to us. In spite of all her obvious shortcomings, the bride is seen in the blameless character of the dove. Then as to safety, she is in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. To be holy and without blame before Him (Eph. 1. 4; 5. 27), and to be for ever safe in Him! What unmeasured grace is this!

As to approach, she is not in the secret places of the stairs as represented in the authorized version, but in the secret of the stairs. Stairs are for access to a higher place, and so the bride is made well aware of the way and privilege of access: "Through whom we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2. 18). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near" (Heb. 10. 19-22).

The literal meaning of the Greek word translated "boldness" is "freedom of speech." How wonderful that the believer should have perfect liberty of speech in the presence of One before whom, in the former dispensation, all fell down speechless!

But pursuing the lesson in the Song of Songs, the order of approach should be noted. The freedom of speech is not to be exercised until we draw near. The instruction to the bride was, "Let me see thy countenance," then, "Let me hear thy voice." A father does not like to hear his child making requests or communications outside the door. He wishes the child to be close to him when relating his confidences.

If we were enjoying this intimacy with Christ there would be little complaint as to the formality and powerlessness of meetings and of private devotion, for all lifeless formality would be banished as we realized the Lord's delight in us and responded to it, and we should know the significance of the following words of the Apostle John, so incomprehensible to the average reader: "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things which are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3. 22).

Following on this blessed experience, the bride is immediately cautioned to beware of the little foxes which spoil the vines. After the Lord was baptized by John in Jordan and had the manifestation of God's good pleasure in Him, He was immediately subjected to Satan's wiles in the wilderness. Similarly, after seasons of great spiritual refreshment, the Christian will assuredly be tested, and therefore he must guard against the depredations of the little foxes which will ultimately rob him of his joy in the Lord, and of the fruit that He looks for, His own pleasure in us.

In Time of Trouble.

First: He brought me here. It is by His will I am in this strait place; in that will I rest.

Second: He will keep me in His love, and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child.

Third: He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He wants me to learn, and working in me the grace He intends for me.

Fourth: In His good time He can bring me out again, how and when He knows. (Murray.)
But repentance found no place in his terror-stricken soul. Having parted with God, he was, as far as he was concerned, done with Him for ever. He thought not that the breach could be, nor did he desire that it should be, repaired. Peace, creature contentment, and thanksgiving had formerly dwelt in his heart, but now unrest, fear, and dissatisfaction found their home there. His knowledge had been greatly increased. He now knew good and evil, but the good had drifted away from him, and the evil made a home for itself in his very flesh and bones. To him the thought of God had become intolerable, and alas! it is the same with respect to all his guilty race. His posterity will have nothing to do with their Creator; to them He is a hard master, a cruel tyrant, a merciless judge, a compassionless taskmaster. He is gone from their hearts, they would efface Him from their memories, they would also strangle the voice of conscience; they will struggle with poverty, battle with disease, stand to the death against those who would deprive them of their rights, but God—no, they cannot have Him, and their determination is to keep Him at a distance.

It was so at the beginning, it was so in all the dispensations that are past, and it is so to-day. Men quarrel with one another, and become friendly again; nations go to war with each other, and kill with the sword, showing no mercy, but in a little they are allies, lauding the prowess of one another to the heavens; but with God man refuses to have peace, he will have no truce, no armistice, no suspension of hostilities, no hearkening.
to terms. He is daily a recipient of mercy, but like a mad dog he will snarl at his benefactor, and bite at the hand that strews his pathway with infinite mercies.

Man is this in every country in this world. In certain climatic conditions he may be found slow, sullen, stupid, indolent; in others active, lively, witty, hilarious; he may be found dour and treacherous, or candid and trustworthy; cantankerous or amiable, religious or irreligious; but with relation to God he is the same the world over, and the greater the spiritual light to which he is exposed, the greater the enmity of his godless heart.

How is it that God allows Himself to be thus continually insulted by His weak and erring creature? How is it that He seems content to be, from a human standpoint, continually worsted in a strife with His rebellious subjects? His terrible threatenings are, like His overtures of mercy, equally despised. His commands have been trampled underfoot, His servants murdered, His very existence denied, and in the silence of His mysterious existence His longsuffering refuses to let loose the thunderbolts of His wrath. How can we account for this?

The answer is, He is greater in every way than His creature. His movements cannot be accelerated by the impotent operations of His implacable foes. How could the febrile activities of the mere creature disturb the serenity of that sphere of inapproachable light in which the Godhead dwells? A man's wickedness may hurt, and his righteousness may benefit his neighbour; but how could God be either hurt or benefited by the wickedness or righteousness of a clod of dust? (Job 35. 5-8). But He will make even the wickedness of the creature, whether he be man or devil, serve to the end He has in view in all His dealings with the sons of men. This brings me to say a little regarding His counsels.

His Counsels.

There is nothing unreasonable in the revelation which has been given to us of God. That human reason never could have touched the outskirts of that revelation is very manifest, for it has not done so until this present day; and not even so, but when met by that revelation it invariably rejects it, and that not because of the incongruity of its principles, but because of man's innate aversion to everything that is of God.

What more reasonable to suppose than that the Creator of the universe had a definite end in view in connection with that creation before He began such a tremendous work? And what greater object could He have in view than the filling of that creation with the knowledge of Himself? And in this knowledge of God lies the supreme happiness of the creature (Jer. 9. 23, 24).

But in connection with this revelation of Divine counsel it is man that comes before us as the great object of God. Eternal Wisdom, by which the universe was formed, declares that her delights were with the sons of men (Prov. 8. 31); and with the race of man, even in his fallen condition, God seems to have occupied Himself, and that to the wonderment of all who felt themselves under His mighty hand; and what was still more marvellous, He Himself eventually is seen, come of a woman, in flesh and blood, a Man among men. What greater evidence could we have that man occupied the central place in the thoughts and counsels of God?

And could we imagine for one moment that the various positions, relationships, and places of blessing for His favoured creatures would be different when His work would be completed than it was in His counsel before He began His operations? Surely not: what He has designed, and determined to do, that He shall surely do; and what will subsist at the close of all labour will just be what He determined to do at the beginning, as far as blessing is
concerned, for His counsels are counsels of love. But a few words as to His ways.

His Ways.

His ways in connection with the fulfillment of His counsels are just as little understood as are those counsels themselves. How few who read the histories of the heavens and the earth, as they are given in the first two chapters of Genesis, or the generations of Adam, as they are given in chapter five, or the details of His subsequent dealings with the human race, understand that this is the way of infinite wisdom by which the wondrous counsels of God are carried into accomplishment, and that no other way could have been taken. We can now see that it was never the intention of God to maintain in innocence the man He formed out of the dust of the ground. Adam was to maintain himself in the position in which he was set, and he was to do that by obedience to His Maker.

From a human standpoint the overthrow of the man made in the image of God appeared to be a triumph of the devil, but it just cleared the way for the announcement of the Man of God's counsel who would bruise the serpent's head. The devil was not to be crushed by an arbitrary act of divine power, but by a work that would bring to light the righteousness, power, and wisdom of the Creator.

And it was by the Seed of the woman his power was to be broken. The weak creature that was seduced by his subtle wiles was to be the medium through whom He who would effect deliverance for the fallen creature should enter the arena of conflict. And thus the utter defeat and humiliation of the dread foe was to be accomplished.

Not only this, but it was necessary to bring to light the incorrigible evil of the human transgressor in his fallen condition. We learn but little of his ways outside the Garden, but in the history of those that sprang out of his loins we have a perfect exhibition of the terrible nature of the evil that was bred in him by his first departure from God. And it was part of the ways of God to bring this evil to light, before He judged it in the cross. In that judgment the probation of that order of man was ended; and in the resurrection of Him who bore that judgment a new order of man is brought to light, and we learn that all the activities of God in grace, from the fall of Adam, had this Man in view, the Head and Centre of the new order, which alone could subsist in blessing with God; for all in that new order, from beginning to end, derive from Him, the last Adam, the risen, living, and victorious Head.

The ways and dealings of God with man have proven that no trust could be placed in the old order: no good ever came forth from him, for there was no good in him in his fallen state; and it was as fallen he became head of the race that for four thousand years had been placed on trial. The only good that was found in any individual soul came from the sovereign operation of God in him, and was of the nature and character of new creation: there is no good in the flesh (Rom. 7. 19).

Now redemption having been accomplished by the blood of Jesus, and His resurrection from the dead having taken place, righteousness, life, and salvation are found in Him for every human being under heaven, and faith in Him secures those blessings to the believer.

His Acts.

A few words regarding His acts. We are told in Psalm 103: 7: 'He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.' Israel saw His acts, and they were very wonderful. He had hurled plague after plague upon their wicked oppressor, and at last had compelled their release by the destruction of the firstborn. He had divided the sea before them, when Pharaoh with his mighty army was driving hard upon their rear; in the wilderness He
had rained bread from heaven to meet their hunger, He had brought water out of the flinty rock to quench their thirst; He had divided the Jordan, so that they went across on dry land; He had made their enemies to fly before their face. And when they saw these things they believed His word and sang His praise. But no lasting effect was produced. They soon forgot His works, and Himself also. In Psalm 106. we have an account of the insignificant effect produced upon them by the acts of the Lord on their behalf. No lasting effect was produced upon them.

And why was this? One reason, I do not doubt, was because they were unable to view such acts in connection with the ways of the Lord. To them they were but isolated acts of divine power on their behalf to meet the untoward circumstances that occasionally rose up against them. They could always sing the praises of the Lord when such acts were revealed for their deliverance from the efforts of the enemy to crush them, but when the occasion was passed their rebellion always broke out afresh. Therefore the Lord speaks of them as "a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways" (Ps. 95. 9-11).

The acts of God, had they known it, fell in simply with His ways in the carrying out of His purposes. Moses knew this. He got to know it in the measure in which he appreciated it, for in this way every favour is got from God. He pleaded earnestly that he might know those ways of Jehovah, when Israel had made themselves obnoxious to wrath through the golden calf. He says: "If indeed I have found grace in Thy eyes, make me now to know Thy way" (ways, R.V., Ex. 32. 13). Man's way of life and blessing, which was the law, had utterly failed, and now Moses wants to know God's ways, how was He to work for His own glory and the fulfilment of His purposes of blessing? This God made known to Moses.

In the way in which God travels toward the effectuation of His counsels He Himself comes to light, and becomes known to his creature, not only in His attributes, but also in His very nature, and "God is Love."

Surely we may well sing with all our hearts: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of nations" (Rev. 15. 3, R.V.). May we know His counsels better, and may we be assured that they are all counsels of love; may we also learn that those ways, that are so just and true, are necessary to the fulfilment of those counsels of love; and may we see the wisdom, power, and love of God coming to light in them; and may we also be able to take account of those acts of His, which are both great and marvellous, not as isolated acts of divine power manifested but to meet the exigences of the moment, but as part of those ways that were so necessary to the accomplishment of all that He had purposed before the foundation of the world.

The Blessing of the Lord.

Numbers 6. 22-27.

1. "Bless thee" Divine enrichment
2. "Keep thee" Divine preservation
3. "Make His face to shine upon thee" Divine enlightenment
4. "Be gracious unto thee" Divine tenderness
5. "Lift up His countenance upon thee" Divine favour
6. "Give thee peace" Divine quietness
7. "Put My name upon thee" Divine seal

Proverbs 10. 22.
Psalm 121. 7.
Psalm 34. 5.
Exodus 33. 19.
Psalm 44. 3.
Psalm 4. 8.
Deuteronomy 28. 10.
"In Christ Jesus."

(2. Timothy.)

In the second letter to Timothy "the difficult times" that should be present in the last days are spoken of once, but of that which is ours "in Christ Jesus" seven times.

This is surely significant, and it would be healthful if we asked ourselves sincerely in the presence of God, Are we correspondingly in the joy and power of that which is in Christ Jesus, or, Are the difficult times so filling our minds that the other is well-nigh excluded? If the latter, we need to be reminded of the word which exhorts us to be wise as to that which is good, and simple as to evil (Rom. 16. 19). Beware, brethren, of dishonouring God by being more occupied with the difficulties than the resources, for that is the way of certain defeat.

A sober recognition of the present difficulties is surely necessary. The all-wise Spirit of God has foretold them in the Word so that we might be forewarned and not be taken by surprise. He also made known that which would forewarn those who are of the faith of God's elect, so that as the deadly forces of deceit and violence push their great assault upon the faith in these days we should remain unmoved.

Lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, men with a form of piety but denying the power of it, men corrupted in mind and worthless as regards the faith, men of passion having no love for what is good, and lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God are in opposition to the truth. All this is pointed out beforehand; but the treasured up resources for certain victory are also disclosed to us. Upon these we may freely draw. Those who are separated to the Lord, following righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call upon Him out of a pure heart, are abundantly provided for, so that they may be more than conquerors. Indeed, the great campaign against the faith only serves to intensify the value of our resources, and to throw into greater relief the triumph of the overcomer. Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith. The crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will render to me in that day; but not only to me, but also to all who love His appearing." These words announce a great victory truly.

The three words, used seven times in our epistle, tell us where the perfect provision for complete triumph is found, —"IN CHRIST JESUS!" And as we briefly look at the verses we shall see what these rich resources are. Do the forces of death urge their frontal attack? We have (1) life in Christ Jesus (1. 1). Are false insinuations made as to the final issue? God's own (2) purpose and grace were given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time (1. 9). What spirit must mark us?—(3) Faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (1. 13). And in what does our strength lie?—(4) Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus (2. 1). It must always be remembered that (5) salvation is in Christ Jesus (2. 10); and if our sufferings abound, we must also remember that all who will (6) live piously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (3. 12). Finally, the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through (7) faith which is in Christ Jesus (3. 15); for every scripture is divinely inspired.

There was one servant of the Lord who toiled to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, and he was himself well acquainted with what is in Him. There is abundant room and need for other servants of this sort to-day. Life is ours in Christ Jesus, also purpose, grace, faith, love and salvation; and it is always open to us to live piously in Christ Jesus. The more we possess these things in power, the greater will be our present triumph of faith. Our resources are infinitely beyond the difficulties.
The Man, Christ Jesus.

PSALM 16. portrays Christ in His wonderful life here on earth among men. The Holy Ghost in it details for us in rich fullness the beauties and graces of the "The Man, Christ Jesus." It is not occupied with our blessing, though that is involved in what is presented. It rather would engage our hearts with Him who is the Blesser. We have come to Him and tasted the blessing which He bestows—(if you have not yet come, come to Him now)—and thus we are free to have our minds taken up with the Blesser Himself, who is immeasurably greater than the blessing He has brought us.

In this wonderful scripture we get the whole course of Christ's pathway depicted for us in few words, chosen by the Spirit of God to bring before the saints of God in that day, and in our day, and in a future day, also, that One in whom God finds all His delight.

It is called "a golden Psalm'—Michtam—of David. It is pure gold, gold beaten out that our souls may see it and delight in it.

It opens with the Lord Jesus Christ in His earthly journey crying out of that place of dependence which He took for God's glory, and for our blessing, "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust."

His Trust.

His trust is reposed in God. It is that which is general to all His path. You will remember it is quoted, in the spirit of it, in Hebrews 2.: "I will put my trust in Him." What a blessed example for us amid all the confusion that there is among the nations of men, of the church of God, and the sorrow in our homes, and amid all the failure that we know in ourselves! How blessed to realize that in this spirit of confidence we can turn to God, and know that He will not fail the least of His own! He never failed Christ, and Christ knew He would never fail Him. He has never failed us, and we may know that He will never fail us. He delights in the trust of men: "Oh, how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!" says Psalm 31. 9. That was where Adam failed. He trusted the devil's lie instead of the heart of God who had made him. God, in grace, works for and delights in the recovery of the heart of His creature. In the Lord Jesus Christ there was no failure, no deflection, no turning aside at any time from this absolute confidence.

Then we find in the next verse how the Lord Jesus speaks in accordance with His perfect self-emptying.

His Subjection

is prominent: "Thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to Thee." In His holy manhood here our Lord was in the only position suitable to man, and thus He speaks of Jehovah as His Lord. Truly God eternally, He became Man in time for the glory of God (and for our present and everlasting good). And in Manhood He put Himself under Jehovah's command in the place of learning obedience.

In verse 3 we see the Lord associating Himself with the people of God.

His Lowliness

Thus presented to view. It is said that verses 2 and 3 should be read like this: "As to the Lord, Thou hast said, Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to Thee. As to the saints that are in the earth, the excellent, in them is all my delight." Perfect towards God in subjection, He is perfect among men in lowliness. We contemplate with adoring heart the Lord of glory companying with the lowly on
earth. This was seen particularly at His baptism. The godly ones of Israel then were going down to the waters of Jordan where John the Baptist was baptizing. And the Lord came that He might be baptized with them.

John shrinks from baptizing Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee." He was conscious of the glory of the Son of God, but the Lord Jesus said to him, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He was taking His place with the godly in their first right step, as they turned Godward in confession of their sins. He who had no sins to confess, yet openly linked Himself with God's people, He identified Himself with those saints, despised and rejected as they were by the religious leaders of the day.

Then in the fourth verse His Separation is depicted: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips." Are we not brought here to the hour of His temptation? The devil tempted Adam and Eve, and succeeded. He comes to see if the Son of God will take another name into His lips, and we know how thwarted and baffled and defeated the enemy was - "All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Christ would not take it from those hands. In perfect dependence He would wait on God. In absolute subjection to His will He would tread the path of rejection until God should glorify Him before all the nations of men. What a pathway; He was the separate Man, who refused to turn aside: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another." Beloved friends, if we turn aside from following God, if we take up another name into our lips, if we are deflected by the enemy's subtlety or force, our sorrows shall be multiplied.

Do we not see this written large and plain in the calamities of the world to-day? What a turning aside from God there has been! God-forgetfulness and God-renunciation has marked the twentieth century. Men have been lovers of money—lovers of self—"lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," and the outcome has been multiplied sorrows on every hand. Wars and pestilences, famines, shame and suffering abound. Sighs and groans are heard the wide world over, "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord God."

May He who never turned aside keep us near Himself in this hour of trial and temptation!

His Satisfaction
in His portion is declared in verse 5: "The Lord is the portion of My inheritance." That is future. "And of my cup." That is present. "Thou maintainest my lot." He rejoiced in that which was His true portion. Whether for the future or the present Jehovah was His portion and was enough.

And all that was His was maintained for Him by a hand of Almighty power.

Men might and did refuse Him His rights. His claims were disallowed and He had nothing of that to which men of the earth look for satisfaction. But there was no sense of want with Him. Jehovah was His portion. Having Him, He had all.

How far can we say that? Are we seeking to fill our hands with earth's baubles. They are fleeting, and can never meet the longing of the human heart. But if in truth we can say, "Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my lot," we have learned the secret of content and we shall be "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house."

Moreover, we can never lose our inheritance, it is reserved in heaven for us as we are preserved on earth in view of it.
Passing to the next verse, we find our Lord saying, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

His Happiness

is disclosed here. His joy was to do the will of God and to succour the needy children of men. He found His pleasure in the accomplishment of the pleasure of His Father, and that pleasure was the blessing of men. He rejoiced to say, "He that sent Me is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." In His service He had "meat to eat" that others knew not of—His meat was to do the will of God and to finish His work. "Pleasant places" were His when faith claimed His blessing and when souls responded to His gracious ministry, and when

"Each wayside wanderer urged his claim, And none was e'er denied."

His Worship.

"I will bless the Lord, who has given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons." These words seem to bring before us the guidance and responsive worship which were true during the whole pathway of Christ! The Psalms give to us, not the external circumstances so much as the Gospels do, but rather the inner experiences of our Lord.

We think of Him as the Man of Sorrows, and rightly, as to His external circumstances, but inwardly He is the Man of Joy, delighting in Jehovah, and in the accomplishment of Jehovah's will.

In the eleventh of Matthew you find that which was doubtless delightsome to God. When everything was breaking down, and the cities where His mighty works had been done had rejected Him, and John the Baptist, His forerunner, seems to have doubted Him—"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." He was delighting in God's will being done, whatever it might cost Him. Were not His steps, the "steps of a good man, ordered of Jehovah"? Did not Jehovah delight in His way?

It is for us to accept His example, and to sweeten every trial as He did. I suppose we all have bitter cups, for each "heart knoweth its own bitterness," but what will make them sweet? Take them in subjection to the Father's will, drop into them these three drops—"EVEN SO, FATHER." Ah, all that God passes His own through to-day is, as was the case with Israel of old, "to do thee good at thy latter end." It has been said that every bottle that comes out of God's dispensary has that label on it: "To do thee good at thy latter end." He may bring us down, so that He may lift us up. He may make us hungry, so that we may have a good appetite, and then He will feed us, but it is all to do us good. Take courage, dear fellow believers, if cast down and weary. Put in these three drops, then, constantly. You will need them every day of your life. It is not earth's circumstances which will determine the result of all that God has wrought for us. He makes all things work together for our spiritual good, and not for that which would please the flesh, or that in which we would delight naturally, but for our true present and eternal good.

In the eighth verse we read, "I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

His Devotedness

shines forth in these words. How clearly! How brightly! Nothing would cause Him to give up His mission to do all the will of God. Even death with its terrors would not stay His path.
If in our meditation upon this wonderful scripture we have passed through in thought the scenes of His humiliation, His baptism, His temptation, and His pathway, do we not reach Gethsemane here? "I have set the Lord always before me." "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." That cup was filled with the judgment which was our due, and it meant the forsaking of God. In His piety, in His fear of God, He cries, "If it be possible." In that cup was the judgment of God against your sin and mine? It could not pass from Him, or it must have passed to us. He sets the Lord always before Him, and says, "Thy will be done," and, taking that cup, He carries it to Golgotha, and drains it to God's glory, and for your blessing and mine.

His Hopefulness now comes before our gaze. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope." Death is in view. He must go down to death. He had that baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straitened until it was accomplished. He was pent up, and unable to tell out all the fullness of the grace of God. Here you find Him expectant, confiding in God. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol—in that state separate from the body—neither wilt thou suffer Thy holy one to see corruption." That blessed body, in which He had done the will of God, should not see corruption. He was confident in His expectancy of resurrection. He might go, He must go down into death, but beyond its gloom was the gladness of the resurrection morning.

Then in the last verse His Glory comes to light. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy: at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." The glory where we know Him to-day has welcomed Him. He has passed through the floods. He glorified God there. He has reached the other shore—the path of life led through death, but led up to the glory of God. He has glorified God on the earth and is now glorified in God on high.

And through His grace we are now lovingly associated with Him by the Holy Ghost, and are to share with Him His joys in the presence of God and the pleasures for evermore beyond this world of sin and sorrow and suffering where He shall be the Firstborn amongst many brethren.

What a pathway we have considered! There is but the one pathway. There was but One who could tread it. God's Man—the Man of Sorrows. We have seen Him as The Trustful Man, The Subject Man, The Separate Man, The Satisfied Man, The Happy Man, The Worshipping Man, The Devoted Man, The Hopeful Man, The Glorified Man, "THE MAN, CHRIST JESUS.''

To Him be praise and glory for ever and ever.

If the eye of God passed, as the dove of Noah, over this earth, swept by the deluge of sin, nowhere, till Jesus was seen in it, could His eye have rested in complacency and peace; there on Him it could. Heaven, as to the expression of its satisfaction, whatever its counsels, was closed till Jesus (the second and perfect Man, the Holy One, He who offered Himself to God, coming to do His will) was on earth. The moment He presented Himself in public service, heaven opened, the Holy Ghost descended to dwell in this His one resting-place here, and the Father's voice, impossible now to be withheld, declares from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Was this object (too great, too excellent, for the silence of heaven and the Father's love) to lose its excellence and its savour in the midst of a world of sin? Far otherwise. It was there its excellency was proved. (Synopsis, Vol. I, p. 170.)
Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. XIV.

The Hanging of the Door of the Tent. (Read Exodus 26. 36, 37.)

Following on the hanging of the vail, which divided the tent of the tabernacle into two parts, the holy place being the outer and larger portion, the holiest of all being the inner and smaller portion, we have the instructions for the placing of the furniture.

The holiest of all contained the ark, and upon it the mercy-seat, bringing before us that which can never be too much emphasized, that which is the basis of everything in Christianity, viz. the person of Christ. God and man, one person, mystery profound—and His blessed atoning death, meeting God in all His righteous claims and glorifying Him so that His seat becomes a mercy-seat.

Two pieces of furniture had to be placed in the outer or holy place, viz. the table of shew bread and the candlestick; again most affecting symbolisms, telling us of the risen Lord's support of His people and the office of the Holy Spirit in giving light and intelligence.

Be it noted that the golden altar of incense is not mentioned up to now, for everything is a question so far of God's approach to man in the ground of the death of the Lord Jesus; whereas the golden altar is connected with man's approach to God in worship, and it is necessary to have the priest to make use of the altar, and that comes out later in its own place. How marvelously accurate and deeply instructive is Scripture. How it fills one's heart with praise and worship thus to see at once God in all His majesty and glory declaring Himself in all His own blessedness in the wonderful person of His Son, and at the same time putting His fingerprints, as it were, on every page of Scripture, declaring His authorship of it all.

Now we come to the hanging of the door of the tent. It was to be made of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen, wrought with needlework, suspended on five pillars of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, and set up on five sockets of brass, and hanging from hooks of gold.

Bearing in mind what we have put forth in previous issues of Scripture Truth on these subjects, few words will suffice.

This door formed the entrance into the tent. In one word, symbolically it is the presentation of Christ. He alone is the entrance into blessing of any kind. In another connection He could say, "I am the Door," and again, "I am the Way." How touching is this presentation of Christ—blue, His heavenly character; purple, His glory as Son of Man, He comes to bless universally; scarlet, His glory as the Messiah of Israel; and fine-twined linen wrought with needlework, typifying that wondrous life which in all its details, down to the very smallest, was ever and altogether for the glory of God.

This curtain was upheld by five pillars, the number five representing man's dependence upon God, and suspended by hooks of gold, representing divine righteousness.

The pillars were of shittim wood covered with gold, again presenting to us in figure that astounding mystery of God and man, one Person, our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But the person of Christ, glorious and wonderful, surpassing words as His glory is, is not sufficient to give entrance to men who are beset with infirmities, as the priests were, and as the believers to-day are. For infirmities proclaim the fact of sin, for it is the product of sin, and sin must be met.
How restful to the troubled heart to see that these beautiful pillars were set up on five sockets of brass—brass, a figure of the death of Christ as having met the judgment of God on the sinner's behalf.

And note how this blessed truth is further emphasized by the absence of cherubims on the curtain. Cherubims were wrought in the vail (see ver. 31), but no cherubims appear on the outer curtain. Cherubims were God's messengers of judgment. A cherub with the flaming sword kept the way to the tree of life.

The absence of cherubims on this outer curtain is intended to convey the thought of righteous grace, judgment having all been met. Thus in the person of Christ we get this thought fully brought out. He is the way of approach for the worshipper. The absence then of the cherubims is significant. The teaching involved in this is consoling and encouraging. It gives boldness.

Thus at every point of the tabernacle God would encourage the one who desires to approach Him.

May we be truly affected by this wonderful presentation of Christ.

Science and the Gospel.

ASTRONOMY may indeed reveal something of the grandeur and magnificence of God's creation; but it can tell us nothing of His love and compassion for sinners. It is the gospel that does that. It may trace the course of the Milky Way, but it cannot show to perishing souls the way of eternal life. It is the gospel that does that. It may tell men how far the earth is from the sun; but it cannot tell the believing sinner how far God puts his transgressions from him. It is the gospel that does that. It may calculate the orbits of comets and the magnitudes of the heavenly bodies; but it cannot explore or reveal the unsearchable riches of Christ, or tell us aught of the rising of the Bright and Morning Star. It is the gospel of God concerning His Son that does that.

Modern chemistry may give us better soap, but it has discovered no means of cleansing the heart from sin. It is the blood of Jesus that does that. It may have transformed the art of tanning leather, and supplied many new dye-stuffs for our textile fabrics; but it cannot furnish no oil of joy for mourning, and no garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But the redemption that is in Christ Jesus can. It may produce illuminating devices for dispelling the darkness of nature, and high explosives for destroying life and removing mountains; but it cannot give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, or blow up the barrier that sin has placed between man and a thrice-holy God. But the grace of God that now shines from the face of Christ exalted can. It may even fill men's bodies with drugs and medicines; but it cannot fill their hearts with joy and peace. But the old old story of Jesus and His love can.

Geology may make known to us something of the riches which God has stored in the mine; but it cannot help us to know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, or the fullness of Him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. But the Holy Ghost will reveal these to all who believe the gospel. It may impart some measure of information concerning the formation of the earth's crust during ages past; but it can tell nothing of God's eternal purposes which are to be fulfilled in the ages to come. But we learn these in the Sacred Scriptures of Truth, God's Word to us. It can show us, in the fossiliferous rocks, the graves of once-living creatures, over which death has established its awful power; but it can tell us nothing about the resurrection from the dead, and the restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. But these very things our eyes shall see with gladness if we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

Psalms 138–139.

PSALM 138. We come now to a series of eight Psalms ascribed to David, beginning and ending with praise, and thus leading to the final Hallelujah Psalms, which close the book. In the first of our present study, the circumstances agree with many occasions in the history of David, who writes for any godly Israelite, in the enjoyment of recent deliverance from a time of trial (ver. 3). This deliverance was in fulfilment of promise, for he records how God has magnified His Word in accordance with all His name (this rendering, taken from Mr. Grant) seems to give the best sense of an expression which has puzzled many. The consciousness of this favour leads to thanksgiving with the whole heart, and that in the presence of the idol worship of his enemies, and he looks towards the place of Jehovah’s dwelling, mindful of the loving-kindness and truth he has experienced, which had strengthened him or made him courageous with strength in his soul.

Another result of this manifested favour is seen in the praise of the kings of the earth! as they enter intelligently into the ways of Jehovah with His people (ver. 6), viewing in them the accomplishment of His Word (Ps. 67). Other troubles may arise (ver. 7), but the faith which has been so triumphantly answered anticipates further victories: “Thou wilt perfect that which concerns me,” for the soul who has tasted grace knows itself the subject of a mercy which lasts for ever. God will never forsake the work of His own hands. There is an immense fullness in this last verse when read in the light of the New Testament revelation. The Christian does not regard himself as perfected until he reaches conformity to Christ in glory, for this is his calling (Phil. 3. 12, 13), and the God who in such transcendent grace calls us to so glorious a destiny is He whose mercy attends us through all our pathway till we reach it.

PSALM 139. Every one must admit that God knows all things, but a moment comes in the history of our souls when we become conscious that He knows us, and not merely as we know one another, but through and through. Hagar was doubtless instructed in the knowledge of Jehovah; but Beer-lahai-roi was witness of a moment when she has to say, “Thou God seest me.” It is of this consciousness that the Psalmist speaks in the first six verses. The following section, also of six verses, describes the natural effort to escape from the searchings of omniscience, only to find that God is not only omniscient, but omnipresent. This experience, of which every converted soul knows more or less, is told in language so striking that there is little wonder Aben Ezra called this “the crown of all the Psalms.”

The title ascribes it to David, and its experimental depth is peculiarly suitable to the king who fell so low and repented so deeply. What a meaning would verse 3 have to him: “My walking and my lying down Thou hast spread out, so as to sift them thoroughly.” Where grace is not known, like Peter in the boat, we seek to place distance between ourselves and the inshining of God’s perfect holiness, to which we are painfully conscious we do not correspond: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go?” Heaven above, Sheol beneath, sea or land, darkness or light hide nothing from the all-pervading Spirit of Jehovah.

In the following six verses the answer to the last line of the preceding Psalm is given; God does not forsake the work of His own hands. If He has so marvelously wrought, has He no other purpose than the destruction of the creature He has been at such pains to produce? This cannot be, so in verse 14 there is the first turning to God: “I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made”: and he thinks of that period of his unconscious existence when, curiously wrought (some say the word is used for embroidery), in the lower parts of the earth, an expression to be understood figuratively of secrecy and darkness, God marked the growth of the embryo, each member of which was being fashioned to fulfil its proper function according to divine plan.

At this point, the knowledge of the wonderful character and variety of the
divine thoughts are borne in upon the soul by the Spirit of God, and he exclaims, "How precious (literally "how weighty," of Rom. 11. 33) are Thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is their sum!" (an unusual plural, says Perowne, denoting the extent of the enumeration required to add them up), but if sought in detail, the sand of the sea would not suffice to measure their multitude. Such is the estimate of David, the beloved of the Old Testament history, in striking correspondence with the thought of the beloved disciple of the New Testament, who, if he began to write, would fill the world with books telling the deeds of his Master.

Verses 19–22 seem to us a step to a lower level, but we must remember that in the day to which the Psalm looks forward the enemies of God’s people will be manifested as opposing the establishment of the kingdom under the rule of Messiah; hence it is necessary, for the carrying out of the divine plan for earthly blessing, that they should be removed by judgment, and the faithful are instructed to exclaim in righteous energy, "With perfect hatred do I hate them. Oh! that Thou wouldest slay the wicked." But the Psalmist has other thoughts for himself; he has found in God a merciful Creator and he desires to be led more deeply into the knowledge of Him, for this is "the way everlasting" (Hebrew "olam"), the true path of life. With this in view every wicked way or way of pain, which would entail distance from God, once desired, must be discerned and refused. The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ and His sacrificial work is a further step in the way everlasting.

"We Know."

"Change and decay in all around I see." We shrink from changes as a rule, especially if we have passed out of the hopeful days of youth. Yet if changes come that are not of our own seeking we need not fear them at all. The greatest change that we can know in this mortal life is the end of it, the dissolution of this earthly house of our tabernacle. But suppose this great change comes, whether gradually, by the loosening of the cords and the pulling up of the stakes by disease or old age, or suddenly, as by a hurricane out of the blue that gives neither warning nor reprieve. What then? We know that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1). A familiar text, but how comforting is the knowledge of which it speaks. It is one of those great and decisive texts that leave no room for question or doubt. It tells us of mortality being swallowed up of life, of a body a home and surroundings that await us as incorruptible and abiding as God Himself, who is the Author of them. We shall certainly rejoice in, and earnestly desire this greatest and last of all changes for us if the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus has cast its most blessed attraction upon us.

But if we need not fear the greatest change of all, need we fear the lesser changes as we

"Nightly pitch our moving tent.
A day’s march nearer home”?

Certainly not. They are not the result of some irresponsible or hostile force that wages war against our ultimate good, but they are for our training and chastening here and yield present and eternal fruit. They come from the hand of Him whose faithful love will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear and who turns all things to our good.

The vicissitudes of life are "our present light affliction which is but for a moment," and they are not without purpose or void of blessing, but "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This is not theology, cold and pulseless, but the sure word of God to be taken up by us in triumphant faith. It is not human fortitude, much less insensibility to suffering, that takes up such language and gives this serenity of soul. No, it is the divine life in the Christian, strengthened and made glad by the glory of the grace that shines in the face of Jesus, stretching out beyond the changing things of time to those eternal things which God has set before us—

"But who that glorious blaze
Of living light shall tell
Where all His brightness God displays,
And the Lamb’s glories dwell?"
Revelation and Response.

HOW utterly desolate would our lives in the world be had not God been pleased to reveal Himself! That He has done so is a truth with which happily we are familiar. We know, too, that it is in His beloved Son that the revelation has been made. None but the Son could possibly reveal the Father in any but a partial way; but HE, who ever dwelt in His bosom, was competent to declare all that was there. Nothing has been kept back. Without reserve, God has made Himself known in that blessed One who is the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His being.

Whether we comprehend or appreciate this revelation is another matter. Whatever the attitude that men assume, the full revelation of God has been made, His glory has been set forth, His love has been made known, His name has been declared; all that He is has been expressed, and all this, through and in His Son.

And if God has thus declared Himself, surely it is that man might be supremely happy in the knowledge of Himself, and that there might be, from man, a response that should fill His heart with eternal delight.

But how little real response there is from our souls! How lacking in fervour is our desire to grow in the knowledge of God! How mean the tribute of praise which we bring Him!

Nevertheless, God has so wrought that there should be a response from man, in every respect as great and wonderful as the revelation that He has made of Himself!

How can this possibly be? In this way: just as it is in Christ that God has come out, and as it is by Him that all God's counsels are brought to pass, so it is in Him as the glorified Man at His right hand that there is a sufficient and adequate response.

Two or three passages of Scripture may be referred to in confirmation of this, though the principle is to be found in many parts of the New Testament.

Turn first to 2 Corinthians I. 20. (I quote from the Revised Version, which makes the meaning of the passage clearer than the Authorised Version does.) "How many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us."

Mark the force of the Apostle's Spirit-inspired teaching. As to the promises of God, it is in Christ that they are made effectual. This applies to every one of them, how many soever there be. None of them find any real fulfilment save in connection with Christ. In Him alone is the "Yea," the establishment of all that was promised.

But a further truth is brought out, namely, that as necessary consequence of the "Yea" being in Him, the "Amen" must also be through Him. That is, that the response to all the goodness of God expressed in promise can only be through the same One in whom those promises find their fulfilment. First, on the part of God, the "Yea" is in Him. Second, on the part of man, the great "Amen" for which God looks, as the response to all His love, is through Him. No creature, no person of inferior worth than He, could possibly utter an Amen that should be adequate to fill God's heart with supreme delight and bring glory to His Name.

But now a marvellous fact comes to light. In this "Amen" Christ has His associates. None could be associated with Him in connection with the "Yea." The "Yea" is in Him, and in Him alone. But the "Amen" is not through Him alone: it is also "unto the glory of God through us."

How wonderful that we should be thus linked with Christ as Man in glory, in the utterance of the great Amen! Surely the "Amen" which reaches the ear of God through Christ is every
Scripture Truth.

whit as great as the "Yea" that He has caused to reach our ears!

The same principle may be found in Hebrews 2. 12. First in order we have the revelation of God: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." None but Christ could do that.

This is followed by, "I will sing praise unto Thee." This answers to the "Amen," a song of praise for the delight of the Father's ear, as infinite and as wonderful as the declaration of the Father's name. But in connection with this response, Christ's associates are seen again. It is, "In the midst of the assembly will I sing praises unto Thee." He links up His "brethren" (of whom He is not ashamed, for they are all of one with Himself) in His response as Man to the declaration which He alone could make.

So we are bidden to "consider the Apostle and High Priest" (Heb. 3. 1). As the divine, God-sent Apostle, the Son has spoken, and His utterance has perfectly revealed the heart of God. As High Priest He approaches God in accordance with that great revelation, and in this character has a priestly company linked with Him, we have our part, even as the sons of Aaron shared with their father his priestly office.

But it is not to emphasize our share in the matter that this paper is written. Its object is rather to bring before the Christian reader, what cannot fail to be real comfort to the heart in these days of lukewarmness, namely, that God's revelation has met with an adequate and infinite response, on the part of man, in Christ. He is the "faithful and true Witness" who has given a right representation of God in the world (for He was God). But He is also the Amen (Rev. 3. 14).

The Grace of the Head.

WHEN the spirit is depressed by some fresh evidence of the failure of man in divine things and his inability to hold fast and manifest the truth, there is nothing that so much cheers and fortifies the soul as the prayerful consideration of our resources in Christ, remembering that they are just as available for us in the time of our breakdown as in the brightest day in the church's history.

These resources, according to all the power and perfection of the One in whom they are revealed to us, are unfolded in Paul's great Ephesian letter. I refer to chap. 4. vers. 7-16. In these few words Christ is presented to us in the greatness of His victory over all opposing forces, He has led captivity captive and taken us by a mighty deliverance out of the hand of the defeated foe. He who in blessed grace once knew all the humiliation of apparent defeat, in the lowest place, has ascended far above all heavens and will in God's own time fill all things with His glory, but now (cf. chaps. 2. 13 and 3. 10) the power of the throne where the ascended Son of Man is seated is active to minister to His body, the assembly, according to the greatness of His love.

To each member He is supplying grace to fulfill its part in the wonderful structure, in which each member thus working contributes to the building up of the whole body in the divine nature. Moreover the same power is supplying help by means of gifts for the work of ministry, so that there should be a definite progress in the saints according to the calling of God (chaps. 1. 4, 5 and 4. 13) to a unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God; for it is only as each heart is knit to Him that true unity can be attained. Other bonds of union are abundantly seen, but are wanting in the divine centre (cf. 1 Chron. 12. 38). In the passage we are considering, as all the fullness that is in the Son of God is presented to us, there will be a corresponding action of the Spirit in us to bring us into accord with that
which is objectively revealed, and growth will follow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This measure Paul says, "I am not yet in possession of, but one thing... I press towards the goal, for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus."

We learn from this how the hope of the calling affected the Apostle, and he prays in chap. 1. that the power of which he was himself conscious might be also known by the saints as working in them. Thus the call of God, the ministry of the gifts from our glorified Head, as well as the purifying energy of the "hope in Him," all work together to produce growth unto Him in all things. If this does not follow, it is most serious to remember the consequences on the other side, that we run the risk of being caught by the enemy in one of the many snares so strikingly described in ver. 14: "In craftiness after the wiles of error" (R. V.), or "In unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error" (Darby). The meaning of this is both plain and solemn, that failing real spiritual growth we are exposed to a temptation from an evil power, for whose craft and cunning (I will not say wisdom—Ezek. 28. 12, 17) we are no match.

The contrast to this terrible downgrade is found in the following verses, and has been already referred to: "Holding the truth in love may grow up to Him in all things which is the Head." Not without reason does the Spirit use the expression, "holding the truth in love," for it may, as we learn from Romans 1., be held in unrighteousness and used to oppose the work of the Spirit. The scribes were perfectly right in saying, "Who is able to forgive sins but One, even God?" but they used the truth to reject Him who was both God and the truth.

Oftentimes God has been pleased to work in the church by means of some long-neglected truth; this work of grace will always be opposed by those who have been leaders, whose influence and reputation is endangered by the introduction of what seems a novelty. It is the maintenance of truth combined with the exercise of love which will keep us straight and enable us to make progress in a balanced way, so that holiness and love, truth and unity will all be promoted and a growing likeness to the Lord result. It is for this very purpose that "the body," is left here, that there should be, where Christ is not, the perpetuation of Himself in His members. This is the administration of the mystery referred to in chap. 3. 9, by which the principalities and powers in heavenly places learn the manifold wisdom of God. Thus also is the purpose of Satan to exclude Christ from this world defeated and a true testimony on earth rendered, while the body itself is edified in love.

May we so avail ourselves of the unchanging resources that are treasured up in our living Head, that we may more worthily occupy the place that sovereign grace has given us in His body, for the pleasure of heaven and the blessing of the assembly on earth!

"Father."

IT is Thyself and Thy beloved Son,
In, and with whom, we have been brought to Thee,
Through that great deed upon Golgotha done,
That fills our beating hearts with ecstasy.

Things for our glory Thou hast long prepared,
And e'en the world must learn how we are blest;
But when the heavens those secrets have declared,
Thy bosom, Father, is our home and rest.  

(J. B—d.)
Helps and Hints.

Who brought the children to Jesus, when and why?

We have no wish to depreciate time-honoured and much-loved hymns, but we think that it should be pointed out as being both interesting and instructive that the Bible nowhere says that "Mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus." Had it done so that foolish and heartless argument, that it is solely the parents' work to bring the children to the Saviour and others ought to let it alone, might seem to have some backing. It may have been the mothers who did it, it is natural to suppose that it was, but the silence of Scripture on the point is significant, and we may be sure that there is wisdom in it, and, indeed, as we read the three accounts given of this most charming incident in our Lord's life, we feel that special care has been taken to avoid saying who it was whose faith and activities were in such blessed accord with the mind of the Master.

It is of deepest importance also to notice the period of the Lord's life at which the incident occurred. It was almost at the close of His public ministry. He had laboured and preached among the wise and the prudent; throughout all the cities and villages of the land He had set forth the truth before those whom we should have assumed were most competent to understand and believe it; but apparently He had spent His strength for naught and in vain. The leaders of the people, and their grown-up followers, who in their worldly wisdom kept an eye upon present advantage, had closed their ears to the charmissions of grace; the kingdom of God was nothing to them, they were too shrewd to pass the narrow gate. The Lord knew how determinedly and deliberately they had chosen to abide in the kingdom of darkness, and turning from them in their blind self-will He yearned to embrace those who would accept without question or suspicion the advances of His love, and rest without fear in the declaration of His grace. The disciples, who ought to have understood His deep longings, were completely out of touch with His thoughts, but there were some who seemed to understand, who seemed to have caught something of that wholly divine spirit that was in Him, who, at all events, were convinced that it would please Him to have the children near Him, and so they brought them, braving the criticism and hostility of the men who thought they knew, and so were instrumental in giving the Lord the great joy of folding to His heart the babes and sucklings—FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD—a joy which the officious and self-important disciples would have robbed Him of.

The more the incident is considered the greater its importance will be seen to be. It has been recorded three times for us by the Holy Ghost that its salutary lesson might be truly learnt. In the ways of those disciples we see mirrored the natural thoughts of our hearts. The great and the wealthy appealed to them. To convince a Pharisee or to convert a scribe would have been an achievement well worthy of labour in their estimation, but the poor weak children! of what use could such be in pushing forward the Master's work? Ah, but "'of such is the kingdom of God," AND OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES HATH GOD PERFECTED PRAISE.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. We suppose that the man of position or influence or ability in the world would be an acquisition to God's kingdom, but "'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things
which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence.’ It is the same lesson that the incident of the rich young ruler, also three times told, and linked in each case with the blessing of the children, was to teach the disciples. ‘It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘How then can any be saved?’ they ask, for, in the reckoning of most wealth is of all things most to be desired. God has a way for them. If they enter the kingdom it must be by becoming as little children, for ‘verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. 18. 3).

These days in which it is our privilege to labour for the Master are much as those were when the children were brought to Him. We are at the end of a dispensation, and the wise of the day care less than ever for the gospel of God, and it is not always easy to gain the ears of those who have grown up and become enamoured of the world. Yet still the Lord’s heart yearns after those who will listen and believe, and the children will, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Children are not great, and labour amongst them will not make those who pursue it great or famous in the world’s kingdoms. But the Lord loves them and receives them and folds them to His bosom. Happy are those who are near enough to Him to realize His heart’s desire, as those did whose names are not told us when He was on earth, and who are instrumental in bringing it to pass, and so of enriching God’s kingdom with material upon which He can impress the revelation of Himself in Christ.

We have been interested in noticing that young believers in the freshness of their love to the Saviour invariably turn to work amongst children as a way of serving Him, and it is our conviction that this arises entirely from the unspoiled instincts of the new nature. In their simplicity they realize that of such is the kingdom of heaven, and that the Lord’s heart is yearning now as it did then to gather these lambs in His arms and bless them. Happy indeed are all those who, in spite of the indifference or hostility of those who have lost their simplicity, continue to labour in faith and love in this sphere of true Christian activity, for their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

It is open to all who have heart enough and faith enough for it, and it is labour that calls for both heart and faith. The mothers and fathers, the elder sisters and brothers, may labour in their own home circle, and reach out also to the multitudes of children for whom few seem to care. and have the deep sense in doing so that their activities are in blessed accord with the mind of the Master.

For the truth of the Deity of our Lord we have many witnesses, and the Spirit of God, by whom the Holy Scriptures were indited, has used the pen of very different servants of God to insist on this sacred fact.

Truth is much more than the letter, it is the spirit. It is that treasure hidden in the inner compartments of the vehicle. Let us, therefore, not take up too much time admiring the beautiful and wonder-
The Assembly in Building.

CHRIST, the Son of the living God, is the One who builds His assembly, which is God's house, and He builds with living stones upon the Rock foundation—Himself (Matt. 16., 1 Peter 2.). Let us consider how the work proceeds by the unseen power of the Builder, despite the opposition of the enemy; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. *IT GROWETH TO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD.*

It is said to be "fitly framed together" (Eph. 2. 21), thus indicating that each stone of the building is in exact proportion and fitted together in its place. Christ, the Builder, is accomplishing this work which thus grows into the heavenly Jerusalem; a city which has no temple within, nothing to hide God from the inmates therein, but becomes itself the temple for the earth (see Revelation 21.).

This may be illustrated by the building of the temple of old (1 Kings 5. 17-18). The stones were prepared in the quarry before they were put into their places in Jerusalem. Now is the time for getting and preparing the stones. Christ is the Architect and Master-Builder; He quarries the stones; that is, digs men out of nature's quarry by the gospel; He tools, chisels, faces and bevels them and fits them into their places. Cunning in engraving also, He takes the precious stones and engraves characters in them, hard as they are. Then when the assembly is completed and He comes to rear the temple, the heavenly Jerusalem, the living stones fall each into its place without noise or observation. Wonderfully blessed to be of that temple!

What though many a hard line has been drawn upon the heart, many a rough lump knocked off by that skilled Workman! He knows what He is about! The graving tool does its work in the human heart, every line being drawn by Himself. It is only intended to reach the flesh so that the Spirit may form Christ there, for that which is of Himself alone goes to form the holy temple of the Lord. Blessed Workman! Good to be in His hands, whether just rough hewn from the quarry, or for the last finishing touch! Blessed be God, we shall regret nothing, but rejoice when we see how necessary all was to fit us in our place in that glorious building. Faith even now thus rejoices.

But the house of God is upon earth until that time. 1 Corinthians 3. indicates that the saints of God are the temple of God—God's building now. And in this building, which is proceeding now, men have their part.

God has His Journeymen Builders.

Man has made so many bad attempts to build that God might have set him aside entirely. Yet He still deigns to use men for His work under Himself, although we find a marked contrast between the work of the human builders and the perfection which marks His own work, against which the gates of hades shall not prevail.

Paul says, "We are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3. 9-17). That is, we are God's journeymen, His underworkers. There are three kinds of workmen who labour in this building: (1) The good workman who does good work, building in gold, silver, and precious stones: these are the indestructible truths of God—divine righteousness, redemption and the glories of Christ—such a workman will get his reward, for He builds as having the mind of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost. (2) There is the converted man, who is a bad workman, who builds wood, hay and stubble: these set forth what is corruptible—carnal work not of the Spirit. Such a workman will suffer loss, for his work shall be destroyed though he shall be saved. (3) There are men who defile or destroy the temple of God (ver 17). [These are they who have come into the profession of Christianity who know nothing of the power and wisdom of...
Christ crucified, who are the servants of the enemy and who defile the temple of God. Such builders have brought in all the Christ-dishonouring and faith-destroying doctrines that have overspread Christendom. They have defiled the temple of God by introducing practices that have no warrant in the Holy Scriptures, but have their origin in paganism, in which we should include prayers for and communication with the dead. The result of their work, seen perhaps in its worst character in the Church of Rome, has also spread throughout the whole profession with its almost countless sects, the true idea of the assembly of God is entirely falsified, for that assembly is holy as the sanctuary of God and one in the unity of the Spirit.

We see the assembly in its essential character (1 Tim. 3. 15), as the house of God . . . the assembly of the living God. Here again we come into touch with the living God. Christ, the Son of the living God, said, "I will build My assembly; this is the house where God dwells, the assembly of the living God!" It is awe-inspiring for man to be brought into the presence of God; as Jacob said, "This is a dreadful place! It is the gate of heaven!" Yet for the believer who knows what God's nature is it is a place of worship and of praise; with the Psalmist he says, I desire "to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." To him the holiness of God creates no repulsion, he has been fitted for it by His grace, so that now, without fear, he can be occupied with Himself and with His praise.

Another truth comes out in Hebrews 3. 6: where

Christ is Son over God's House.

All rule and authority in the house is in the hands of the Son. Believers have not to make rules that the house may be conducted in a proper way. God could not trust us to build of ourselves; will He trust us to rule? Impossible! True there cannot be blessing without ruling; but who is to rule? The Son. The Son-Builder is the Son-Ruler also in God's house. What have we to say to the rules of the house? All that we have to do is to see that we understand and obey them. We must take heed to Paul's word to Timothy and learn "how to behave ourselves in the house of God"; which is more than to know how to behave ourselves in the world. God dwells in His house.

Tract Distribution.

A CASE which occurred recently in the province of Jujuy has interested me deeply, and I think others in reading it may be stirred up to a more earnest spirit of evangelization. A friend handed a four-page leaflet with gospel texts, etc., to a stranger in the train, who received it carelessly and put it into his pocket. The latter shortly after alighted, and, saddling a mule, rode away some sixty miles to his home up in the hills. At night, turning out his pockets, he found the tract and laughingly threw it to a friend, who glanced at it and passed it on to a companion, who read it quietly and then remarked, "This is a strange paper, with new things in it, but if they are true we ought to look into them."

All three then read the paper together and God's Spirit began to work, convicting them of sin, with the result that together they saddled their horses and rode down to the railway to find an "Evangelista." They eventually succeeded in their quest, and spent a whole day with a friend of mine who labours in those parts. All accepted the gospel, and a month later returned with others for further instruction, with such good effect that to-day some twenty-four happy Christians gather for worship and mutual help. Worldly Christians oppose and ignorant ones despise the work of distributing tracts, but certainly they have been one of the most potent instruments for the spread of truth or error.  

(H. St. John.)
What follows Forgiveness?

(Read Luke 5. 18-35.)

If I were to ask you if you have got as far in your soul's history as this paralytic got when the Lord said to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," what would your answer be? Would you say, "Thank God, I have heard Him speaking to me, not with audible voice, but in the sacred page of His Word assuring me that all my sins are forgiven." If you can say that, my message is for you.

Now if we are to be here for the glory of God, we need something further than the forgiveness of our sins; something, not only to hold us up and be a wall of defence round about us from the assaults of the enemy, but some power other than ourselves to help us in the aggressive, to help us to gain ground from the enemy, and to make headway in the Christian life.

You say, "I have realized something of my own inability and insufficiency for this." Thank God if you have. But I must not take for granted even that every one present has the assurance that all his sins are forgiven, so for a moment I will ask you to rest your eye on those gracious words of the Saviour in verse 20, "Thy sins are forgiven." The Saviour's assurance of forgiveness was a very personal one. It is not only that forgiveness is preached to every man in the Saviour's name, but there is the assurance of personal forgiveness to each one who believes. Then besides its being such a personal forgiveness it is a present and a perfect forgiveness, for it does not say, "Thy sins up till this moment," or "Thy sins for as long as thou dost show thy gratitude by an amended life," but "Thy sins, in one complete whole, as to every question of judgment against them, are forgiven thee."

As we stand by the bank of a river, perhaps by the side of some country stream, and see the water roll past, it is only a little bit of the river that we see. We can only take note of the water that is actually before us, and while our eyes behold it, it is gone, and other water takes its place. It is in constant motion. But suppose it were possible for us to go up in an aeroplane high enough for us to see that river in its entirety, and yet not so high that it should be indistinct. We can see the little stream as it rises in its mountain source, and as it widens out, until it rolls into the great ocean. We see that river in the entirety of its course. Now we look at our sins as we see them day by day, just as when we stand by the bank of the river and see a little of it at a time, but God looks at them from a very different point of view. He sees our sins from our earliest moments of responsibility to our last moments on earth as one great whole, and says to us, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Thank God that the Christian life has the assurance of forgiveness not for its goal, but as its starting-point. What sweetness those words contain. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE" (I John 2. 12).

Now along with this there was another great blessing given to the palsied man. Palsy is a type of utter helplessness. The man had to be carried by four others into the Saviour's presence. The Saviour not only gave him the assurance of forgiveness, but put a wonderful new power into him, so that now with his hands he could take up the bed on which he lay, and bearing it on his shoulders he could walk. There was thus a new power for work and for walk, such as he had never experienced before. The result was not only that he glorified God, but the people looking on, and understanding perhaps very little of what had taken place, were amazed, and they glorified God. The man gets the blessing, and God gets the glory.
I remember well a series of gospel meetings, where God had graciously blessed many. Some kind Christian friends invited the young converts—mostly very young—to tea. After tea I thought I would ask some of these young friends a few questions to see how far they had got. I started talking to a young fellow that sat on my left. I said, "Why do you think God has forgiven you your sins?"

"I suppose," said he, "it is that I might go to heaven, and be happy for ever."

"Well," I replied, "of course that is included, but do you think there is nothing further in it than that?" The next one to him had no answer to the question, and we had to go nearly all round the room before we came to a young lady whose answer was: "Not only that we might go to heaven and be happy, but that we might be happy all the days of our life here." That was a decided advance on the first answer, but she was rather taken aback when I did not seem quite satisfied. I put the question next to a lad of some seventeen years of age. He said, "I think God has saved us that He might get the glory of it." A good answer! God has saved us that He might get the glory of it, not only through eternal days, but here and now, in this life. I do not see that God would have got the glory in the case of this man to the same extent if he had only been forgiven, and dismissed with the assurance of it, and carried back to his home by those four kind friends of his. The glorifying God was the result of his carrying his bed, and walking off to his own home. Thank God, when He forgives us our sins He does not only do that, but He gives us, in the person of His Holy Spirit, a new and wonderful power to be the power in us for work and for walk, and that God might get the glory. Our part is to seek by His grace to avail ourselves of that power which He has put at our disposal, and which lies in the fact of our having God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us.

Sometimes Christians talk like this, "I know I have got the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, but for all that I feel such a weak and wretched creature. I start in the morning asking God to keep me from temptation, and to help me to be faithful in my daily life and to witness for Him in deed if not in word, and then when the night comes I have to confess that it has been another day of miserable failure."

Yet the Holy Spirit dwells in one like that, just as much as in the brightest Christian that breathes.

"Yes," some one says, "I know that, but it seems to me that I want more of the Holy Spirit." It is just the other way about. It is not that you want more of the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit wants more of you!

Suppose I go to spend a few nights under the hospitable roof of a friend of mine. He shows me my bedroom. He shows me the dining-room, and the drawing-room, and perhaps says, "I hope you will make yourself at home." He means of course that I should make myself at home in that part of the house to which he has introduced me. He does not mean that I am free to go into every room and corner. He introduces me to a certain part of the house, and he expects me to confine myself to that part. I think some of us treat the Holy Spirit like that, as if He were a guest to be confined to a certain department in our lives, the Sunday department, the meetings department, the intercourse-with-other-Christians department. But He wants us to hand to Him, as it were, the bunch of keys which will give Him access to every room and corner in the whole establishment of our being. He wants not only to dwell within us, but to be the motive power of our thoughts and actions and words. It is one thing to know that we by God's grace possess the Holy Spirit living in us, but it is another thing for Him to possess us.

It has been said, very truly, that there are three kinds of possessed people in the world. There are demon-possessed people, there were when the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, and there
are to-day. In heathen lands there are many people possessed with demons. Those who have read that remarkable book "Pastor Hsi," will recall how people in China are possessed by demons. And in these enlightened lands you have demon possession in connection with Spiritism, this is the true solution of the apparent mysterious intercourse with the dead. Demon power is a very real thing. Then there are the self-possessed people. They are such proper folks, so calm and collected. You would not find them being carried away on any wave of enthusiasm; self is their first and last thought, their own interests and reputations, or it may be their experiences and works and so forth; such a person is not pleasing to God. Then, thank God, there are Holy Ghost-possessed people, men and women who have been taken up by the blessed Spirit of God on behalf of Christ, not to make them feel they are wonderful saints, not to encourage them in the idea that theirs is a particularly lofty experience; but to fill their soul’s vision with Christ and to fill their hearts with His love. We always find in the New Testament that when people were taken possession of by the Holy Ghost it was to bear testimony for Christ, and not about themselves. We read of Peter in Acts 4. being "filled with the Holy Ghost." He spoke of CHRIST, by whose great name alone given under heaven we must be saved. We find Stephen filled with the Holy Ghost looking up into heaven and seeing JESUS. We find Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost, and exhorted the disciples that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto THE LORD. Then let us remember, if we desire to get on in spiritual things, that God has put His Holy Spirit within us in power for this very reason. That is a comforting text in Romans 14: "God is able to make him stand," but we need something more than to be able to stand. We need to be moved along and kept.

Now I ask you to notice something else in Luke 5: the incident of Levi’s call to follow the Lord. That, perhaps, is to indicate what we are to do with the new power, to use it in order to follow the Lord Jesus, not even to follow our own consciences, but HIM. True, it may involve us in trouble. We read, in another passage, that once when the disciples followed Him, as He was, they found themselves in the midst of a raging tempest. Of course, they had the joy and safeguard of His company in the midst of the storm, but it was none the less their discipleship to Himself that involved them in this storm. If there is anybody that wants a recipe for a smooth and easy pathway, free from trials and troubles save those to which all flesh is heir, here it is: Do not follow the Lord Jesus Christ too closely. Follow Him like Peter did on one occasion, afar off. Do not get too near to Him. Do not follow Him when there is a shadow around His name, the shadow of reproach and rejection. You will find it easy enough then—I do not say "happy enough." The happiest Christian is the one who in spite of trials follows the closest to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite abnormal when a Christian does not have persecution. Christianity in this country is a hybrid kind of thing, but the normal thing for a Christian is to be reproached and persecuted. And the more by God’s grace we are disciples of Christ, the more we shall find the devil will raise a storm against us to try and swamp us if he can, but in the midst of it all we shall have the company and support of the Lord. Let us not then be afraid to follow Him.

There is another thing. There is first forgiveness and then following, and then what we have in verse 29: the feasting. Levi made a great feast, and I daresay that you have found the Christian life to be no melancholy thing, but a perpetual feast. It has been a time of joy and blessing to you. But let me put another question to you: What is it that makes the Christian life a time of feasting and joy? I could estimate your spiritual stature more or less by your answer. I will tell you what I mean. Suppose my little girl at home
was invited out to supper. When she comes home I say to her, "Did you have a nice time?" "Oh yes," she says, "they had jellies, and ice cream, and nice cakes with sweet things on the top," and she tells me all about the things that were on the table. But I say to some older person, "Did you have a nice time?" "Oh yes," he says, "Mr. A. was there, and Mrs. B."

It is the company at the table that makes it a good time to the one who is older. Now it is delightful for those who are quite young in the family of God to feast on all the wonderful things on the table, the rich dainties, the luxuries of grace that God has given with such an unstinted hand. But as they get on a bit, while never ceasing to appreciate all the good things that God has given—they will find more and more that what makes it a time of feasting to them is not so much the gifts but the companionship of the Giver.

John Gilmour, a servant of Christ, perhaps as much used in the conversion of sinners as any man in the north of England, used to go about with his pockets filled with gospel books. He was going round a little village one day with his books, when he came across a typical old Irishman. He was selling tin things, lids, kettles, saucepans and the like, when our friend Gilmour saw him. He said to himself, "It is no good speaking to him. He is an Irishman, so probably a Roman Catholic."

Still, he thought, "I will not pass the old man." So he said, "Good morning, how is business today?" "Oh," said the Irishman, "I cannot complain, sir." "Well now," said the visitor, "what a grand thing it is to be saved!" The old Irishman replied, "I know something better than that." "Oh," said the evangelist, "something better than being saved! I should like to know what it is." The old Irishman, tipping his hat back on his head said, "The companionship of the Man that saved me, sir." It was a wonderful reply. He had learned the secret of the feasting, the companionship of the One who had saved him. That was what made his life a joyous one.

There is one more thing to end the story. In verse 35 the Lord speaks of the days when the Bridegroom should be taken away from the disciples, and then they should fast in those days. The fasting goes with the feasting. What is the fasting? It does not merely mean abstinence from food. Fasting is abstinence from things that may be perfectly right and proper in themselves, in order that we may be whole-hearted for Christ.

It is something like this. I hear young Christians say, "There is no harm in this, or that; no harm in going to this place, or in reading this book; no harm in that companionship." What does such language imply? Suppose that I have been to dinner at a friend's house. On my way home I call at another house. While there the good lady brings me a dish of dry, hard crusts of bread, and says to me, "Would you like a few of these crusts?"

"No thank you," I say.

"Oh," she says, "there is no harm in them; they won't hurt you."

I reply, "I do not decline on that ground. I do not suppose they would do me any harm. I do not suggest that you have poisoned them, but the fact is that I have just come from a good dinner, and I am so satisfied that I really do not want the crusts."

Now if we are really satisfied with the good dinner, the feasting with the Lord Jesus Christ (and keeping company with Him is a very real and practical thing), when the world comes along with its dish of old crusts, and says, "There is no harm in this, that, or the other thing," you will say, "I do not insinuate that there is harm in these things. They may be perfectly right and lawful in themselves, but the fact is, I have been feasting in company with the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has given me something better and sweeter than anything that the world can give." So without difficulty you will say, "No, thank you." There is the fasting as far as the world is concerned, which goes hand in hand with the feasting with the Lord Jesus Christ.
"Let him boast."

(1 Cor. 1. 31, N.T.)

In what does this scripture ask us to boast? Certainly not in the state of the world! Its present condition has caused large numbers to abandon their former boastings as to its progress. Nor do the inspired words above quoted encourage us to boast in the assemblies, for the Spirit has pictured their down-grade state for us in Revelation 2. and 3. just as it is seen to-day. Much less are we exhorted to glory in ourselves, either naturally or spiritually. After showing that God's way is to choose the despised of this world and set them in Christ, who is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, the context tells us that He has thus acted so that no flesh should boast in His presence, but according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

God has made Him everything to us, therefore our boasting is to be in Him. This citation is from Jeremiah, who, when he spake of the sad state of Israel and its leaders, said, "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" (9. 23, 24).

Worldliness and worldly wisdom were dangers to the saints at Corinth; therefore our boasting is to be in Him. The way of the Lord is perfect, and this is the way that He has taken to make Christ everything to us. It is the right way and the best way, because it is His way; and surely the Lord is justified in taking His own way,—the way that pleases Him. It may be that many neither understand nor appreciate this faultless way of divine grace, for we should surely see and hear more boasting in the Lord if they did. Nevertheless, God graciously saves and sets the soul free by the truth, so that our blessed Lord might be gloried in. Christ who was crucified is God's power and God's wisdom, and He takes up those who are little thought of to make Christ their wisdom and glory. Our prosperity and peace and joy are therefore to be found in this way: and since it is the way of the Lord, they can be found in none other. Therefore let him that boasts, boast in the Lord.

"Yea, boast in Him, our living Lord, Whose glory fills our sight; In Him whom men once crucified, We'd find our great delight."

It was the grace and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ which had brought about the marvellous change in the apostle himself,—bringing a proud self-righteous overbearing man to turn from self and the things of self to glory in the Lord,—to count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. In me he said, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell. He, however, learned that all good and all excellency was in Him whom the world had rejected. He was now his sole commanding object. His heart had found in Christ that which made him to be "always rejoicing." "Mercy was shown to me," he wrote to Timothy, "that in me, the first,
Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on Him to eternal life.' Christ had saved him, the chief of sinners, and his glad heart gloried in Him who had shown such grace to him; and he says, "Now to the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, HONOUR AND GLORY TO THE AGES OF AGES. AMEN" (1 Tim. 1. 17, N.T.). Zealous of the law he had been a persecutor of Christ; saved by grace he now boasted in Him.

And the same grace took others up for the same end—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and any of us who belong to Christ. The writer of the first gospel knew this well, for when he set out to write the history of the King he mentioned in the genealogy of chapter 1. four women who could but be "debtors to grace alone" as placed in such regal associations. And Matthew himself had great reason to glory in the Lord—in the King of Israel; for, as a farmer of taxes for the Romans, he would be considered a lawless person by the leaders of the nation of Israel, and beneath their notice. Yet the true Head of the nation graciously called Levi. Such is the way of divine grace. With nothing to boast of in himself and considered disloyal, he is used to give us the loyal and beautiful gospel of Israel's King.

Mark, too, must have specially entered into the theme which the Spirit inspired him to write of, on the same principle of grace. His is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Servant. In the Acts Mark is distinguished as the one who turned back from the path of service, and left Paul and Barnabas. Afterwards, "Paul thought it not well to take with them him who had abandoned them, going back from Paphphylia, and had not gone with them to the work" (Acts 15. 38). When taken up again by God for the service of giving us the gospel of the perfect Workman, how his heart would glory in Him whose faithful service was such a contrast to his own. The Spirit used him to unfold this in a most striking manner.

Luke is another blessed example. With what God-given elegance and beauty does his pen trace for us the Man of all perfection here upon the earth,—the Man amongst men! And why should Luke be thus honoured of God for this wonderful service? He was a gentile,—the only gentile used by the Spirit to write in the holy pages of the inspired volume. The gentiles were called dogs, and heathen; and it is out of this mass of human imperfection, so despised by the Jews, that grace takes hold on one to show the perfection of Jesus as Man. And his Gospel specially illustrates the teaching of "the apostle to the gentiles." Well might Luke rejoice in the grace that had taken him up, and glory in the perfect Man of whom he said, He was filled with wisdom and God's grace was upon Him.

And lastly John. What a vessel of divine grace was he! His brother James and himself were called the sons of thunder. They were characterized by a strong sense of God's judgment against sin and rebellion. They could not brook even an apparent slight against divine authority. John forbad another, who cast out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus, because he did not keep the company of the disciples, and he received the Lord's correction forthwith. Both James and John were also rebuked for desiring the Lord to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans who did not receive Him. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," He said to them. But divine grace had its way, and John was moulded and mellowed, and brought to rest on the bosom of Jesus, the Son of the Father's love. Then with a depth of delight and glory which is unparalleled, he penned the gospel of the Word who was God.

Grace brought them all to glory in the Lord,—to boast in Him! They had nothing in themselves to boast in, and the heart needs something, or rather some one—a worthy object; therefore He is the One provided for this purpose. He that glorieth in men is not wise; and he that boasteth in himself is a fool.
It is because there is so much of this that the very word boast sounds a little out of place at first; but it is that which the Spirit of Truth has used for our edification, and we do well to seize hold of the forcefulness and healthfulness of it as so used—"Let him that boasts, boast in the Lord." We have good reason to do so. We were far from God once, but now in Christ Jesus we are become nigh. The judgment due to our sins would have sunk us to eternal depths of woe, but Christ bore our sins and their judgment away on the cross, and has secured an eternal redemption and an eternal inheritance in glory for us. We were under the authority of darkness even when ignorant of it, but our Lord Jesus Christ went into death to overthrow his power and deliver us, and we are now translated into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, who is the image of the invisible God. Strangers once to the rich promises of grace, we are now fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Corner-stone. We were once darkness, but now light in the Lord—in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour—in Him who is now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, who is Lord over all. Yes, we have indeed good cause to boast in Him.

Rejoice! O my soul, in thy gracious and glorious Redeemer! Art thou asked, What wisdom hast thou for the service of God?—Where is it found? Answer by pointing to Him who is the wisdom of God! Do they inquire of thee as to the righteousness which is thine for His holy Presence? Point again to Him who ever lives before His face! And should any one question the holiness and sanctification which thou rejoicest in, turn the questioner again to thy Lord and Saviour! Yea, and still point to Him should a question ever be raised as to the full and eternal redemption which is thine through grace divine! Delight thyself, O thou soul of mine, in the unmeasured wealth of heavenly favour which is declared to be ours, in the blessed words of the Spirit of Truth: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification (or holiness), and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let Him boast in the Lord.''

What Does It Matter?

From a Missionary in Belgian Congo.

When travelling on the river some time ago, I went fishing, and managed to hook a large tiger-fish, which, after a brave fight for liberty, broke away with my hooks. I was greatly disappointed, and for several days thought of what I might have done to land that fish, and of how I would act if I could have the opportunity over again. But that opportunity was gone for ever, and I consoled myself with the thought: "It was only a fish lost; what does it matter?"

A few days ago a man came to me for medicine—an English-speaking native from the West Coast. He came a second time, and as he sat in the pharmacy something seemed to say to me, "Speak to that man about his soul." But I was very busy, and put it off, intending to do it next day. Next day, however, I was sent for and found the man unconscious. How I longed for one more opportunity to speak to him, but it never came; he died that same evening. God had given me two good opportunities and I had missed them, they were gone for ever.

And now as I look back with regret and weigh things over, I cannot say, "What does it matter?" for I know it matters a great deal. Another opportunity lost! But what if that soul be lost? That is what matters. I would gladly lose a thousand fishes to get that opportunity back, but it cannot be. And I bow my head with shame and ask God that when He gives me the next, I may not miss it, for it will never come again.
The Glories of the Head.

In a time of world-wide disorder, such as the present, when all are affected by this terrible conflict of the nations, it is restful to the soul to be well assured that there is a throne in heaven, whose power is able not only to curb these "mighty breakers of the sea" (Ps. 93.), but in God's own time to bring in the Heir of all things and give Him His rightful place as Head over a reconciled universe. This glorious consummation is a far deeper matter than the subjection of all things by supreme power, that also will come to pass. All hostile forces opposing themselves to the divine decree will be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel; all His enemies must be put under His feet (1 Cor. 15. 25). But the crushing of enemies is not the way in which the authority of the Head will be demonstrated. The Headship of the Heir of all things implies the communication of blessing to all that is subordinated to Him in that character.

The full glory of this is unfolded in the first chapter of the Ephesian epistle, in which it is declared to be the purpose of God for the dispensation of the fullness of times, a remarkable title to attach to the coming kingdom, implying that all the previous dispensions, which have been set up under the responsibility of the line of Adam, and in which utter failure has supervened, will find their proper fulfilment under a new Head, competent to bring every blessing previously proposed but never realized, into full fruition.

This true meaning of Headship is confirmed by the use of the word in the O.T. (see Psalm 18. 43); in this passage, David having subdued all his enemies and having been delivered from the strivings of his own people becomes head of the nations, and that this is not for their destruction is evident from the words following: "A people whom I have not known shall serve me." We may compare with this the use of the word in Isaiah 7. 8, 9. If we apply these considerations to the Headship of Christ, it will be seen that though the glory of the Son of Man in Psalm 8 comes very near it, yet what is there stated is the putting of all things under His feet; and as we have already seen according to i Corinthians 15., this includes the hostile power of death; to this evil, the result of sin, headship does not apply.

Now let us read Ephesians 1. 22. In this verse "all things" are twice mentioned, the first is cited from Psalm 8. and is universal in its bearing, but the second only refers to the "all things" over which He is Head and which in the next verse He is said to fill. This scene of glory and blessing constitutes the inheritance of verses 11, 14, 18, and I do not doubt it is His filling all things, which imparts to them that wealth of glory, the Apostle prays we may know.

We thus discover more fully the greatness of the purpose of the blessed God to recover for Himself an inheritance which had been lost to Him by sin, and that He effects this by bringing the whole scene under the reconciling virtue of the work of Christ and placing Him Head over all things, literally "reheading all things in Christ." This triumphant consummation is said to be the mystery or secret of His will, because the church now being gathered out from Jew and Gentile will be united to the Head over it all as His body and His bride, a counsel of blessing hid in God and unrevealed in previous ages. This is stated in verse 11, "In whom we have obtained an inheritance," and in verse 22, "Head over all things to the church." What a victory of power and grace is this! And an abounding towards us of wisdom and intelligence displayed in making the very disaster introduced into the creation by the fall
of angels and men, the occasion of putting forth a power which makes death yield to God His chiefest glory. Let the words of verse 19 be considered on our knees, "the surpassing greatness of His power—according to the working of the might of His strength," and all this acting now towards us that we might be victorious over all the forces the enemy can bring against us (chap. 6. vers. 10-12). The coming ages will witness the result, when God will exhibit the exceeding riches of His grace in displaying the saints in the glory of His Son.

It may be well to add here that the glories of Christ described in the closing verses of Ephesians 1. must be understood in the light of purpose; actually "we see not yet all things put under Him," but He is in His place, and the power has come down to unite us to Him where He is, hence the prayer that we may know the power.

Many questions arise out of what has been before us, two only will be dealt with now. In what way will Christ fill all things? And what is the meaning of the church being His fullness? We have seen that all things having been reconciled they are then placed under Him as Head, so that in every family of the blessed, or every circle of blessing, however many they may be, Christ will be the centre to all, there will be a witness to the efficacy of His work, each being fitted with a blessing exactly appropriate to the place it is called to occupy in God’s wonderful mosaic. What a manifestation of His workmanship will this be! To the whole as well as to each part, we may apply the closing words of Psalm 22. "It shall be told of the Lord . . . unto a people that shall be born that HE hath done this." He is thus glorified in the work of His own hands and all things are filled with the witness of it.

Finally we may briefly consider the meaning of the term fullness as applied to the church, which is His body. The word "pleroma" occurs in three other places in this epistle (chaps. 1. 10, 3. 19, 4. 13), and twice in the Epistle to the Colossians (chaps. 1. 19, 2. 9). From these we may learn the difficulty of making one explanation suit every case; and just as in nature the body is the completion of the head, but also is for the expression of its will and purpose, so in the higher sphere the body is for the exhibition of what Christ is, and besides this "forms the complement of the Head." "The Head is not isolated, left, so to speak, incomplete as such, without its body. It is the body which completes it in that glory, as a natural body completes the head." (Synopsis). For this meaning of the word see Mark 2. 21. The present state of God’s assembly tends to hinder the conception of its future destiny and glory, but it is revealed to us in the Scriptures we have referred to that we might delight our souls in the present assurance of the future accomplishment of all that God has purposed which will manifest the glory of the Son, Heir of all things yet truly Son of Man. For as the corruption of the inheritance came by man, so will all the surpassing glory of its recovery be by MAN.

"My bark is wafted to the strand
By breath divine,
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.
One who has known in storms to sail
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite,
I shall not fall;
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light;
He tempers all.
Safe to the land! Safe to the land!
The end is this:
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss."
Lessons from the Tabernacle. No. XV.

The Brazen Altar. (Read Exodus 27. 1–8.)

(A. J. Pollock).

It is interesting to note that God begins at the centre and works out to the circumference—He begins at the highest point and works down to the lowest. We, because of our absolute need, naturally begin at the circumference and work towards the centre. Thank God, from the centre to the circumference it is all Christ.

At the lowest point where the empty hand of need is extended to receive relief it is Christ and Christ alone that can meet our need. At the highest point where God can tell out the fullest purpose of His heart, and outline for us the wonderful fulfilment of that purpose, it is Christ and Christ alone that fills the scene of glory.

This is illustrated by our Lessons from the Tabernacle. We have seen how God begins with the ark, proceeds to the table of shewbread and the candlestick, then comes on to the curtains and boards, dividing the tabernacle into two parts, then arranges for the furniture to be put into its ordered place. This is all given us in Exodus 25. and 26.

Now in Exodus 27. for the first time we are outside the tabernacle proper, and the first thing that is taken up is the brazen altar.

It is remarkable that just as inside the tabernacle the golden altar of incense is not spoken of till the priests are consecrated, so the brazen laver outside the tabernacle proper is not mentioned till that point is reached. The reason for this is very evident. Both had to do with man’s approach to God in worship, and this cannot take place without the priest.

The brazen altar figures forth how God can approach man, which up to now has been the line of teaching. Inside gold was the predominant precious metal used. Outside we find it to be brass.

Gold is the symbol of God’s righteousness in the presence of God’s holiness; brass is the symbol of God’s righteousness in the presence of man’s need.

Passing the gate of the court of the tabernacle the first thing that would meet the eye would be the brazen altar. It was made of shittim wood overlaid with brass—type of the Lord Jesus, who met in His death all the claims of God’s righteousness in respect of sin and man’s need.

It was five cubits long and five cubits broad—five being the number of man’s need and God’s grace towards him. This was all met in the death of Christ. The type speaks of grace reaching us through righteousness, a most important matter.

Horns of shittim wood overlaid with brass symbolize Christ being actually held in judgment—affecting thought, whilst the brazen pans to receive the ashes, the brazen shovels, the brazen basons, the brazen flesh-hooks, and the brazen firepans—all spoke of the reality of Christ’s death in meeting God’s righteous claims in regard to man’s need.

A grate of network of brass was arranged for in the midst of the altar. How touchingly this teaches us that there was no escape for Christ when He took the sinner’s death, either wholly or in part, from the judgment of God. He must exhaust the wrath of God against sin. To the full He met God’s claims, blessed be His name.

Finally staves were provided for the altar—reminding us of the wilderness and its journeyings.

Blest as we are in Christ, we are still down here, strangers and pilgrims journeying home.
As the children of Israel journeyed to the promised land they were accompanied by these sacred symbols, and were thus reminded on what footing they stood with God.

So it is with us in this dispensation, only that instead of the dim light of the types foreshadowing the Christ that was to come, now we have the glorious light of Christ, His Person, His humanity, His atoning work, and all flowing therefrom, lighting up for us the wonderful types that were furnished by the Spirit of God on the Old Testament page.

How glorious is that light. It cannot shine with more resplendent splendour than it does. God is told out all His wondrous blessedness by Christ. How happy that we know something of this.

Bless the Lord! or Lest we forget.

"And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou fillest not, and wells digged, which thou diggested not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantest not when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12).

The blessings of the Lord are great, What pen their wealth can tell? They're like the Giver,—infinite! Fresh springing as a well: While in their bounty we rejoice, How needful is the word:— When filled with blessings rich and choice, Do not forget the Lord!

The rich inheritance of saints, The goodly promised land, Which no corruption ever taints, Is given with liberal hand: 'Tis ours its riches to enjoy, The fruits it doth afford; But let His praise our lips employ, Lest we forget the Lord!

The brooks, the springs, the fountains pure, The flocks upon the hill, The corn, the vine, the olive sure, Our hearts with gladness fill: The milk and honey, oil and wine, The food abundant stored, Are freely given by grace divine,— Then let us bless the Lord!

Soon, soon did Israel Him forsake Who gave the pleasant land; Without the Lord, they sought to take His blessings in their hand: They heeded not the warning word; They brake the sacred cord; Their bulwark gone, fierce flashed the sword, For they forgot the Lord!

In Christ our blessings are secure Through His redeeming blood; At God's right hand His seat is sure, And our eternal good: But while God's purpose fills the mind, And fills our heavenly board, Let us bless Him,—the Blesser kind, And ne'er forget the Lord!

The Lord is greater than His gifts; His love than choicest wine Is far more sweet; the heart it lifts To praise in songs divine: His grace a lowly life has shown; His love the cross declared; His glory shines upon the throne,— We bless, we bless the Lord!
The Night of Man's Transgression dispelled by the Sun of Righteousness.

(Ps. 130. 3–6).

That the great mass of mankind is in perpetual moral darkness is not only the testimony of Holy Scripture, but is also borne witness to by the ceaseless quest of light, in which men in every degree of life are engaged. Fruitless of course it is, for the money is spent "on that which is not bread and the labour on that which satisfies not." Still the money must be spent and the labour continued, for the mind of the fallen mortal knows no quiescence. Instead of turning in faith to the testimony of God, necromancers and soothsayers who chirp and mutter are consulted. What kind of insanity is it that sends the living to the dead for light? What daybreak could there be for such? (Isa. 8. 19, 20.) Like a blind man lost in a dense forest, their feverish activities but bring them back to the point of departure; the darkness remains for them as dense as ever.

It is not that there is no light; there is, and that in abundance. There always has been enough light for the salvation of the creature, for God at no time and in no place has left Himself without witness (Acts 14. 17, Rom. 1. 19, 20). But man prefers the sparks of his own kindling (Isa. 49. 11); for these, because they are the result of his own discoveries, minister to his miserable pride of heart; whereas the light given by his Maker brings into evidence his own utter moral depravity, humiliating him as nothing else can, and hence it is the object of his most deadly hatred.

But the light is present, and has always been present since sin entered through Adam, who by transgression fell not only under darkness and death, but under the power of our fell destroyer, who rules in the darkness and by means of the darkness over the whole human race.

Just as through the natural primal darkness light shone at the command of God, so no sooner did the moral darkness fall upon an innocent creation than a gleam of light from God broke through the gloom with life-giving power upon the vision of our first parents. The grace that covered their naked bodies with coats of skins was light far in advance upon all that they had previously known of their Creator. The same God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness (Gen. 1. 3) had now not commanded but wrought, so that a still greater light was shining in the midst of the darkness into which those two devil-defeated creatures had fallen.

And that light was life-giving, and designed for their recovery to God, and for their deliverance from the service of sin, upon which the man had freely entered. It was not all that the creature was to learn regarding his Creator, but it was a foreshadowing of that mighty work through which the very heart and nature of God have been brought into evidence.

But though the light was there the darkness was not dispelled by it. It still held stubbornly to the foothold it had gained, ready to do battle with the light for the domination of the world that was yet in the loins of Adam. And such was the foothold it possessed that we find under its baneful influence the first man born into the world, and later on, with few exceptions, we see the whole human race subject to its domination. The number of those in the light becomes comparatively less, until only one man with his house escapes the judgment that falls upon the ungodly world.
It was a black and dark night that set in through the transgression of the head of the race. A night of self-will and rebellion against God on the part of man, a night of violence and corruption, of lawlessness, of envy, of oppression, of murder and unutterable wickedness. We are told that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.

Because of its wickedness that world was destroyed utterly, but the darkness and its works reappear in Ham, one of the eight who experienced the signal mercy of God by means of the ark when righteousness compelled the Creator to destroy the work of His hands.

In the world before the flood Adam sought by robbery to equal his Creator, and Cain, the free-thinking rebel and despiser of the testimony of grace, persecutes and murders God's faithful witness, becomes a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, but makes the land of his vagabondism as pleasant as possible with the resources at his disposal.

In the new earth after the flood government is committed to Noah, who failing to govern his own appetite becomes the laughing stock of Ham, upon whose race falls the curse so righteously merited. Through the transgression of Adam the curse of God comes upon the ground, it comes upon Cain for the murder of his brother, and upon the race of Ham for the way in which he mocked at the downfall of his father. How true it is that the curse of God is in the house of the wicked, and His blessing in the habitation of the just!

Idolatry marks the descendants of Noah (Josh. 24. 2). The whole world becomes immersed in idol worship, which is nothing else than the worship of demons (1 Cor. 10. 20). When they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Men have always been wise enough to look after their own interests, and to know what is best for themselves, if we can believe them; but professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and next to quadrupeds, and then to creeping things (Rom. 1.). Along with this the Spirit of God lays bare before us the social condition of the race, and on a more loathsome picture it is impossible to gaze.

In the night of man's transgression he is but the plaything of the devil, who causes him, in the first place, to dishonour God, and in the second place, to dis honoured himself. And how readily men lend themselves to him as the instruments of his wicked and cruel will.

But the light shines in the midst of the darkness, and throughout the whole history of the wanderings of the human race God has His witnesses, men whose hearts have been less or more illuminated by the knowledge of God, men who have been born of the revelation given of Himself, sons of the coming day, and who wait for that day's breaking. We have Abel, Enoch, Noah, in the antediluvian world; and we have Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and a host of others too numerous to mention: all shining as luminaries in the firmament of the various dispensations up till the coming of the True Light, the advent of the Son of God into the world, in whom was centred all the light that ever had sent one kindly ray through the black night, or ever was yet to gladden the vision of the creature.

The light might be hated and persecuted, and hated and persecuted it was from the beginning, but in the power of God it was maintained, and by its gracious influence many a blind eye became illuminated, and the steps of many a weary wanderer were turned with genuine repentance and sorrow of
heart to the God he had for long enough despised.

That light was a perfect blending of grace and truth. There was no making little of the evil of man's ways, but whatever man might be God would be what He was, and 'God is love.' With Him there was just what man needed, and that was forgiveness. Who could do without it? "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Impossible for any man to stand before a God who marked iniquities, for 'all have sinned.' If God should take up the attitude of Judge He cannot fail to condemn the guilty; for in all that He does He is righteous, and guilty we all are by nature.

What then is to be done? We must escape the judgment, or be lost for ever, for if we come into judgment we cannot be justified. The judgment that would justify the criminal would be a very farcical proceeding. The cry of the soul that knows something of its own sinfulness and of the righteousness and holiness of God is voiced by the psalmist when he says: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143. 2). To come into judgment with God is to be lost for ever.

But is there any escape from the judgment to which all on account of their sins are liable? Yes, thank God, there is forgiveness with Him. He has drawn near to us in grace: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19). Not, as some suppose, reconciling Himself to the world: no, this never was needed; the enmity lay on the side of man, not on the side of God, who from the outset of man's departure opened a door for his return, and assured the poor wanderer that if he would only return a right royal welcome awaited him.

But the world rejected the reconciliation, hung the Mediator upon a gibbet, proving by this that it would have none of God, let Him come in whatever way He pleased. It preferred the darkness to the light, the service of sin to the service of God, Caesar to the Messiah, Barabbas to the Son of God, the effluvia of the abyss to the aroma of the highest heaven. What a choice!

But this did not alter the attitude of God to men, though it has altered His attitude toward the world as such. He is not now seeking to reconcile the world to Himself: it is now under judgment, and the day of its judgment is appointed (Acts 17. 31). But on the ground of the work of His Son on the cross, He is sending through Him and in His name forgiveness of sins to every human being in the world.

But this is not that there is anything in man to draw out this grace on the part of God. There was nothing good in man any more than there was in the fallen angels; yet He has set His love upon man, and passed them by. God is sovereign, and can act sovereignly. Man cannot act thus. He is always acted upon by things external to himself. Not so God: He set His love upon man when there was nothing lovable in man, but everything that was abhorrent to God's holy nature. Of course God must judge sin, but that is because of what God is in His own nature; for if He is love, He is also holy. But He sent His Son, who has died for us in order that He might be able to forgive us righteously, for He was determined to act in grace to man.

Now not only is there forgiveness with God, but that forgiveness is declared to men everywhere, and the man who believes has it (Acts 13. 38, 39). The believer is justified from all things, and does not come into judgment. He is the blessed man unto whom the Lord will under no circumstance reckon sin. He is also in entirely new relationship with God, though this I do not purpose going into at present.

We have perhaps thought too little
of this grace, and it may be because we have been enjoying it so little, and it may also have been because we have thought too little of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But we are told in Scripture that this forgiveness is "according to the riches of His grace," and that we have it through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1. 7). This should give us some idea of the magnificence of this blessing. That in the power of that same precious blood we are brought into wondrous and exalted relationship with God is blessedly true, but that does not alter our appreciation of the riches of the grace of forgiveness, but rather throws a glorious lustre upon it; that is, if we are in any measure under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Let the reader think of his life of sin before conversion, and of his daily failings since he was brought to know the Lord; and let him think of how those failings often drove him to despair; let him think also of the agony of the Son of God at the prospect of standing in the place of the guilty sinner; and let him if he can relegate forgiveness of sins to a secondary place among the blessings that are his in Christ. True it lies at the beginning of our relations with God; but when I contemplate the means taken and the only means that would do to obtain for me that forgiveness, without which I should have perished forever, I am prepared to believe that nothing the blessed God can give me will be withheld.

But now as forgiven and with the bright prospect of being with my Saviour in the glory into which He has entered, I look for the morning that will be ushered in by His second advent to this earth. The Sun of Righteousness will soon arise with healing on His wings, and a morning without a single cloud will be brought in to gladden the hearts of those who have been waiting for Him throughout this long dark night of sin.

A King shall reign in righteousness, and then transgression will cease, for if there be the least outbreak of the will of man it will be dealt with on the spot. The black and dark night will then have passed away, and with it the transgressions that characterized all its weary watches. The day will have come in, for the Sun of Righteousness will then be shining in a cloudless sky. That divine Ruler "shall judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain on the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish: and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the end of the earth" (Ps. 72).

May both reader and writer be able truly to say: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." Only one thing can excel the blessedness of that day, and that is the new heaven and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and for that also we wait.

"Blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory: Amen, and Amen."

Soon He will come again, and then, in all the fullness of redemption glory, we will unite in a loud harmonious song of praise and ascribe eternal glory to Him.

"HE IS WORTHY!"

"Sing His praise! He once was slain: Sing aloud! He comes again."
"Abide with us, for it is toward evening."

ABIDE with us, Thou Christ of God. Abide with us. For some of us, indeed, it is not yet evening; it is only morning—the morning of life, fair, bright, and full of promise. The possibilities seem boundless, and youth has boundless hope and faith in the future. All life is before us, and all the world, and yet we are foredoomed to failure if we have not Thee in our lives; we must make final shipwreck unless we have Thee to guide us. Come, then, into our lives while it is yet morning; before the dew has vanished, before the bloom is spent, before our lives are languid. Even now "'tis time for Thee, Lord Jesus. O come in!"

With others of us, fair morning has changed into bright, full noonday. The sun is hot, the sun of adversity. The battle is hard, the battle of life. The way already seems long, and we long for rest. Illusions, dreams and hopes are fading; hard stern realities take their place. For us now life is all too serious to manage in our own strength. The stress and toil of daily life would hide Thee from our gaze. The cares and trouble of this world would occupy the hearts designed for Thee. Come, Saviour Divine, into our dull clouded lives, and make them bright with Thine own immediate presence, and thus transform us. Come, we pray Thee, and abide with us.

And then, for some of us the world grows old. Life is passing, and with it the strength to face its battles. Our little day of life draws to a close. Our sun will soon be setting. Already shadows are stealing across the sky. O abide with us, and make our evening, the evening of our lives, bright and glistening with Thine own bright presence. Thus as the knees weaken, and the steps falter, as strength declines, and the hands begin to tremble, take Thou our hands, "so weak we are and helpless." Our way must grow darker and still darker if Thou be not with us. It is only light where Thou art. Without Thee, we are afraid of everything. With Thee, we fear no day, no foe, no trouble. Thou hast died for us; Thou dost live for us; now abide with us for ever. Tarry with us through the long night, and introduce us to the dawning of eternity.

And how abide with us? Come first into our hearts as Saviour; as the Lamb that was slain, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. If any of us have never really known Thee, have never felt the wonder of Thy Presence, O may such hear Thy gracious summons: "Behold, I stand . . . and knock." May there be no deaf ears to Thee, the heavenly Visitor, who "stands and knocks, yet will no entrance win, until the latch be lifted from within." Then here our hearts we open wide. O tarry not outside the door. Constrain us to make that first living contact with Thyself which shall transfer the burden of sin, of life, of service, from us to Thy feet. O come, abide with us.

"And He went in to tarry with them."

Submission.

We are, with all silence and quietness of spirit, to submit to God's ways, not to fret. Believing can ease us, disputing cannot.

It is easier to see what is inflicted on us, than to see who inflicteth it. Evil cometh, and we look no higher than the creature, as if the world created itself. So is this, when we dream that the creature moveth, and is not moved of God.

This is to be observed, that God ascendeth in all His course, and providence never goeth down the mount. When Joseph goes down to the pit, to the prison, God in His course of providence is going up; for Joseph's going down and his fall, is a higher step to God's exalting of Joseph. Judah's falling into captivity, is not God's falling, but His advancing of the work, to do them good in the latter end. Second causes move backward and miscarry, when omnipotence carrieth on the Lord's work.
"Comfort Ye My People."

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (Isa. 40:1).

GOD is not indifferent to the state of mind of His children. It is not His will that they should be harried and worried, and it is the responsibility and privilege of the servants of God to minister comfort to them, but where in these sad days can comfort be found?

It is not to be found in the daily newspapers. Mark that, O ye Christians who brood over them, and are elated or depressed according to their fluctuating reports. It is not to be found in the doings of valiant soldiers, or the sayings of astute statemen, or the proposals of visionary reformers, or in the hoped-for final triumph of democracy, for "ALL FLESH IS GRASS, AND ALL THE GOODLINESS THEREOF IS AS THE FLOWER OF THE FIELD. THE GRASS WITHERETH AND THE FLOWER FADETH" (vers. 6, 7).

This is the first part of that message that leads to lasting comfort, and if the servants of God are obedient to His commands and true to their commission they will lift up their voices and "cry" this solemn truth. They will not pipe to the people the devil's gospel of evolution, or indulge in that deceptive talk of the inherent goodness in man, or of the blessed goal of everlasting security from which, by the gospel is preached unto you." It gives us GOD as our object and resource, and reveals Him as the One in whom there is no possibility of failure. It gives us HEAVEN as our goal. So that it lifts our eyes upward and urges us onward. It gives us cheer and hope.

Longfellow in one of his famous poems starts his pilgrim upon an upward path, bravely clutching his banner "Excelsior," but gives him no destiny to crown his labours, and no power to sustain him in his upward goalless pilgrimage but his own enthusiasm. The word of the gospel gives us heaven as our hope and goal, and God as our resource and strength as we press on to it. It gives us a hope that maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us, and in these things there is comfort.

God is our present portion and resource; and hear what our chapter has to say of Him. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, THE LORD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, fanteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding" (ver. 28). What a contrast is revealed to us here between the greatness of God and man who at his best is only as the flower of the grass. And the word of the gospel invites us who hear to cease from man, to withdraw our hopes and and confidence from him, and to put our trust without fear or misgiving in this great and wonderful God who is from everlasting to everlasting, and who is not only unchanging in His years and almighty in His power but is also in-
finite in His pity. So we read of Him: He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.'

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." "But they that wait on the Lord shall renew [or change] their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles [rise triumphant over every difficulty and depression], they shall run and not be weary [be untiring in their errands of ministry and mercy for the Lord to others]; and they shall walk and not faint, tread steadily and with endurance the upward way to "the hope that is laid up for them in heaven, whereof ye have heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."

We commend Isaiah 40. to the careful attention of our readers; it is a chapter worth praying over and meditating upon. It has been given to us that it might ring its glad peal for our souls, and fill us with cheer and hope and comfort in dark days. It tells us not to rest in our circumstances, or in any arm of flesh, but in God Himself who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1. 3). (Editor).

God is Love.

SONS of the living and eternal Father, Heirs of a kingdom that cannot be moved, Sing we of love, but not the earthy, rather Love that more powerful than death has proved— Sons of immortal birth, Pilgrims awhile on earth, Passing to glory, Raise the voice sweet and strong, Fill the wide waste with song, Sing of love all day long Songs laudatory.

Found in a manger where the beasts were feeding, Seen in the sorrows of a pathway lone, Proved on a gibbet, wounded, bruised, and bleeding, Known, and yet never in its greatness known— Love that can never fade, Love that for sins has made Perfect purgation, God, in love manifest, Nature divine exprest, Love, the forever blest Pulse of creation.

Bid the vast universe to its remotion Joy in our joyance, and exalt the Lamb, Till like the noise of the prodigious ocean Rolls thro' the worlds the everlasting psalm.

Heaven of heavens above, Home of immortal love, Join in the singing, Centre supreme of light, Moon, stars, and clouds of night, Storms in your awful might, Praise to Him bringing.

Where He dishonoured was, there give Him glory, Where they derided Him publish His praise; Here in this world with its transgressions hoary Tell of His excellent and perfect ways. Far as the thought has reached Let His fair name be preached, Publish His story; Unto earth's limits broad, Wherever man has trod Give to the Son of God Honour and glory.

Experience.

This is the time for transferring many of the well-known scriptures from the Book to the experience of our souls, then comes the blessing of them. "My grace is sufficient for thee" is true enough, blessedly true, but it comes with peculiar rest and satisfaction if we can add "HE SAID UNTO ME, My grace is sufficient for thee." To see it in print in a book or admire it in a floral setting in a wall text is one thing, but for Him to say it to me puts another complexion on it. But by such means the Apostle had learnt to say MY GOD. (A. C.).
Truth and Love.

So far as the mere words go the Apostle Paul writes of the gospel and the church almost equally; that is, he attributed an equal importance to each. If he were the minister of the gospel so was he that of the church (Col. 1. 23–25). If he presented Christ as the theme of gospel, saying (in Rom. 1. 2) that it is “concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,” so he teaches that He is “made head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1. 23). To him the Lord Jesus fills, in varied glories and characters, each of these separate but closely connected spheres. Were there no gospel there could be no church; and there can be no correct apprehension of the church unless its due place be given to the gospel. This flows from the nature of God, while that is the purpose of His grace, and for the display of His “manifold wisdom” (Eph. 3. 10). The two are interdependent and essential to one another. Hence the equal insistence on them by that Apostle who was, after all, the only inspired servant of Christ who treated of the church as such.

Strange to say, the Apostle John never uses the word “gospel” or “church” anywhere, though he writes of churches—assemblies—of Christians frequently (Rev. 2. and 3.); nor does any inspired writer dwell more richly on the love of God as the spring and fountain-head of the gospel. The great subject, in the three epistles of John, is the exhibition of divine, eternal life in the children of God. “Fellowship with the Father and the Son” (wonderful thought truly) was the conscious privilege and enjoyment of the apostles, and John’s primary desire was that the children of God might have fellowship with them in that sacred privilege. There are two essential elements in this fellowship (subsequent, of course, on our being “born of God”) and these are

light and love. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” This fellowship were impossible otherwise.

And again: “He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness.” His assertion is utterly false, for love to his brother is as incumbent as is the profession to walk in the light. Such a one, whatever his assumption or knowledge of truth, “walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth.” Solemn statement!

Now, it is remarkable that if Paul should use the words gospel and church with almost equal frequency, so does John use, in these three epistles, the words truth and love.

Have regard to the fact that the subject is exceedingly practical; that it is rather in the nature of exhortation than doctrine or revelation; that it is a question of fellowship between the children of God, and that after the pattern of “fellowship with the Father and His Son,” as known in the happy experience of the apostles, and at once the line of truth will be seen and appreciated.

Truth and love balance each other in these inspired letters and should equally, and in similar measure, affect us, as saints, in our mutual fellowship.

Truth should not outweigh love, nor should love dispense with one particle of truth; for while truth, like salt, preserves, love, like heat, cements and knits together. Omit truth and corruption follows. Fail to love and the nature of God is no longer seen; for “he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.” “We love because He first loved us” (N.T.).

“What is truth?” said Pilate. Must we ask the same question? The Answer Himself stood, in lowly, gracious form before the Roman judge, silent, but how easily read, how perfectly intelligible to a willing heart!
The answer to our question is the same, it is Christ, the Son, manifested, heard, seen, contemplated, handled. And so the doctrine of Christ becomes the standard and touchstone here. It is the great test of true Christian fellowship. Not to bring this doctrine means no divine fellowship whatever.

But this is a qualification quite sufficient, if Paul indeed should add another in 1 Corinthians 5.; but woe to the Diotrephes who dares to refuse the bearers of "this doctrine"—the personal glory of Christ! Clearly something else than truth and love are at work where this is done, some human test, or "Shibboleth," that is unknown to Scripture, and therefore to be rejected.

"Beloved, if God so loved us we ought to love one another." May we obey and walk in the truth, but, by no means, fail in love.

A Letter as to the Truth and those who hold it.

The Elder to the beloved Gaius whom I love in the truth.

Beloved,

I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers. For I rejoiced exceedingly when the brethren came and bore testimony to thy holding fast the truth, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than these things that I hear of my children walking in the truth.

Beloved, thou doest faithfully in whatever thou mayest have wrought towards the brethren and the strangers (who have witnessed of thy love before the assembly), in setting forward whom on their journey worthy of God thou wilt do well; for FOR THE NAME have they gone forth, taking nothing of those of the nations. Therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.

I wrote something to the assembly; but Diotrephes, who loves to have the first place among them, receives us not. For this reason, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, babbling against us with wicked words; and not content with these, neither does he himself receive the brethren; and those who would he prevents, and casts them out of the assembly.

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He that does evil has not seen God.

Demetrius has witness borne to him by all, and by the truth itself; and we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

I had many things to write to thee, but I will not with ink and pen write to thee; but I hope soon to see thee, and will speak mouth to mouth.

Peace be to thee. The friends greet thee. Greet the friends by name.

John (3rd Letter) (N.T.)

Consolation.

"THE Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." He has brought death very near to you, and to you it has but one voice, and that is to walk with Him through the valley of sorrow to the morning of resurrection. He is the resurrection and the life. Your stricken heart can learn what it is to have the living One for your resource and compensation, in all His abounding tenderness and love. The time of sorrow is the time for you to learn and know the value of your never-failing FRIEND.
The Glorious Gospel.

"The glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

We have a gospel that is noble, praiseworthy, illustrious and blessed. What great things it did for Saul of Tarsus. He who was a raving fanatic, storming against the followers of Jesus, binding them and bringing them to prison and to death! Let him have continued this course thirty, forty years and then see what a monster he would have been with his cursings and blasphemies as he came to die. Did the glorious gospel make a changed man of this Saul? Yes it did, for Paul the aged, bold but gentle, joyfully suffered the afflictions of the gospel, and went to his death triumphantly and full of hope.

Did the gospel do great things for that infidel and libertine, John Newton, the slave driver of Africa? Yes it did, for he himself states that by the rich mercy of God he was preserved and pardoned and appointed to preach the gospel he had long laboured to destroy. What has the gospel done for us?

I cannot understand your cases as I do my own, and may not see the natural propensities of your hearts, but while I was in my youth kept from the flagrant outbreaking sins, I know that the seeds of all sins are in my heart, and without the gospel I have no doubt but that I would this day be a poor tottering, reeling, depraved outcast, or long since found my home in hell. And this noble, illustrious gospel has now been committed—not to the care of angels—but to my charge and keeping, and to yours.

Into our hands the Father of our crucified Saviour commits this gospel, and to be faithful to the trust:

1st: We must Believe the Gospel.

The Scripture reads, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and God's cry to the heart is, Believe! Do not make Me a liar. Faith is first, and Dr. Pierson performed a real service when he wrote his booklet, "Faith, the First Thing in the World," after Drummond had written his unsound work on, "Love, the Greatest Thing in the World."

We must believe what God has said about us as sinners. What sin is, the wages of sin and the judgment of sin; but we must also believe what God has written about the precious blood of His Lamb that was shed for sin. If we have doubts about our sins or the great atonement for sin, if we become despondent as we see our manifold transgressions, if we distrust the sufficiency of the blood, we shall be a faint-hearted, useless people. Let us see ourselves as bad as our neighbours think we are, and as bad as God says we are, but then let us remember the glorious gospel, how that Christ died for our sins that He might wash them all away, and finally present us faultless before the throne of His glory.

2nd: We must Love the Gospel.

It is true that we shall never love the gospel unless we believe it, but faith is not sufficient—that is the foundation, but love is the superstructure. True love is a gracious principle wrought in the soul, enticing it away from itself to God. To love is to be drawn away from self. Selfishness is simply self-love. I sometimes ask those whom I meet, "Do you love the Lord?" and they often reply, "Yes," then I ask, "Which do you love the most, the Lord or yourself?" and frequently the eyes drop and there is silence.

The trouble is not that we do not love, but we love the wrong person—ourselves—and then our Lord must be unloved.

Unless we love the glorious gospel, we shall only have a cold, unlovable gospel to present to others.

3rd: We must Defend the Gospel.

It was never more true than to-day that he who does not defend the faith will soon lose the faith, and for this reason I believe that blindness has come to numbers who in the past have known the truth. Many have not been willing to defend the faith and be despised and rejected therefore, but they have sought their own selfish interests and they have lost the faith.

We must also have a gospel to preach
before we can preach the gospel. He who defends the gospel is putting a foundation under the feet of those who preach the gospel, and this is of vital importance.

How shall we defend the gospel?

By reproving sin and heresy. There are some people who appear to think that it is almost blasphemy to rebuke a preacher or bear witness against the sins of the church, and so evil has flourished under the robe of Christianity, and wolves in sheep's clothing have grown fat. But that was not the position of Luther, and Knox, and Wyckliffe, and Bunyan, and Spurgeon. These men contended against evils among preachers and wickedness in the church, and would not hold their peace while they had breath. Spurgeon tells us of a printer who misread his copy and set up "An excellent spine was in him," instead of "An excellent spirit." Not a bad mistake, but where are the men with excellent spines in this soft day?

On a certain Sunday night three preachers in a great western city, preached (?) from the following subjects...

It is no easy matter to be a pilgrim at home and be governed by the Word of God. What narrow paths must be travelled, what brave and unpleasant words must be spoken, and what pleasing associations must be broken! The Scriptures tell us that if any man bring not the doctrine of Christ, "receive him not into your house nor bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," and that if a man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, we must not keep company with such a one, no not to eat.

The Federal Council; the Edinburgh Conference; the 1911 American Bible; the Panama Congress, and many other associations and enterprises, stand as monuments to a spirit of wicked tolerance and fellowship with evil unsound doctrines and men, and should cause every true defender of the faith to straighten his back, throw himself into the hands of his Lord and withstand the enemies of his God.

4th: We must Preach the Gospel.

But let us be sure that it is the gospel and not simply something that goes by that name. It was Lincoln who went one evening to an eating place with a friend and bought a mince pie, but with the first bite he turned away saying: "That is not mince pie, that is only the name of it."

The gospel—How that Christ died for our sins. Not simply the good news of love, but the truth as to sin and judgment, and then the wonderful grace of God through a Saviour crucified for sinners.

Why should we preach the gospel?

Because all have sinned. Because the wages of sin is death. Because it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment. Because the wicked shall be turned into hell, and because there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

How should we preach the gospel?

"So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." Remember the tears of McCheyne over his own sins and the sins of his people.

When should we preach the gospel?

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand."
"Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." We cannot tell but that this unseasonable hour may be the man's last chance.

Where should we preach the gospel?

But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be martyrs unto Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. A martyr's life may be more painful than a martyr's death, and yet if we are not living the martyr life, we ought to be. Judging the professing church by this Word alone, it is plain that she has sunken into awful apostasy. How she rejoices that she is not called to preach the gospel to the heathen, how gladly she enters into the selfish paths she wants to travel, without any thought of a call from God! "He who is not willing to preach the gospel anywhere, is fit to preach it nowhere."

5th: We must be Partakers of the Afflictions of the Gospel.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

The afflictions of the gospel wean us away from the world and purify us. But the hand of our God supports us in all of our afflictions, so that we may go through its waters and fires safely and with praise. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shalt the flame kindle upon thee."

Judson, in his terrible prison in Barmah, suffered indescribably for the gospel's sake, but the peace of God reigned in his heart; Livingstone in Africa, with the hot fevers upon his brow and dysentery preying upon his vitals, heard the persuasive voice of Stanley saying, "Livingstone, come home, come home! the Queen waits to receive you, and all Parliament will rise to honour you, as you walk up her royal aisles. Livingstone, come home!" But for the gospel's sake, he answered, "Stanley, it cannot be, it cannot be, my work is not done yet," and turning from the fading crowns of earth to stretch his hands for the enduring crown of heaven, he again plunged into the dark forests of Africa, to finish his work and—die. And Allen Gardiner, starving to death for the gospel's sake in Patagonia, could with his last breath write: "Yet a little while, and through grace we may join that blessed throng to sing the praises of Christ throughout eternity. I neither hunger nor thirst though five days without food! Marvellous loving-kindness to me a sinner!"

God grant that we may follow in their train, remembering that the glorious gospel of the blessed God is committed to our trust.

(From "The Gospel Message," Kansas City.)

To the foregoing we would add, that "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" not only saves sinners and changes persecutors into preachers (I Tim. 1), showing how the terrible question of their sins has been answered according to everlasting justice in the death of Christ, but it reveals the glory of God. It shows forth His triumph over death and the powers of darkness in THE RISEN MAN—CHRIST JESUS. It declares "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" tells us that He is "rich in mercy" and shows us "His great love wherewith He loved us." It not only assures our hearts of complete and everlasting justification from all things in the risen Saviour, but tells us that in that same Saviour, who has made atonement for sins, overthrown the dominion of Satan, conquered death, and who lives enthroned for evermore, every thought of God's love for our blessing and His glory has been infallibly secured. It gives to those who receive it the hope of glory, leads them to make their boast in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and gives them power to walk as the children of God, no longer under sin's dominion, but fulfilling the righteousness of the law as they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

(Ed.)
Answers to Correspondents.

"Twice Dead" (Jude 12).

RUDGWICK.—"Twice dead" does not refer to the second death of Revelation 20. It is descriptive of the state of those of whom Jude writes. They were apostates from the faith once delivered to the saints and consequently were not only dead by nature, as all are, but also because of their apostasy. And as by no other means could they have life than by the faith from which they had turned away their case was hopeless. To describe how completely and irrevocably they had cut themselves off from the source of life the writer uses amongst other vivid metaphors "trees... plucked up by the roots." Blackness and darkness was to be their doom. The short Epistle of Jude should not be overlooked in these days.

Are there Evangelists now?

BARBADOES.—Ephesians 4. 11 tells us that Christ, having ascended on high, gave gifts unto men, "' till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That means surely until the whole church is completed. And evangelists are amongst the gifts given for this purpose, so that we have no hesitation in saying that according to this word there are evangelists still in the world. It may be said that apostles and prophets are also in that list and that they have not continued. But in chapter 2. 20 we learn that their place is the foundation of the assembly so that they are not perpetuated except as their inspired words are preserved for us in the Scriptures.

"Do the work of an evangelist," was said to one who was not an evangelist by special gift, and the exhortation only emphasizes the importance of this service.

Old Testament Saints and the Church.

BOSCOMBE asks, when will the Old Testament saints be raised? Will they have part in the church, or what position will they enjoy?

Old Testament saints will be raised with all who are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15. 23). They await whatever position is to be theirs until then when the saints of this period will be raised in glory. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11. 40). Their position and portion will be an heavenly one, for their faith looked on to this, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. 11. 16). But they will not be part of the church, for it had no existence in Old Testament days. It commenced on the descent of the Holy Spirit of God from Christ glorified at Pentecost, and will be completed at the coming of the Lord for His saints (1 Thess. 4., Rev. 22. 17-20), when as the wife of the Lamb it shall be presented to Him in glory (Rev. 19. 7, 8). But while these Old Testament saints have no part in the church, they will have their part in the blessings and joyous festivities of the marriage day, for they will, doubtless, be those of whom John was bidden to write in verse 9: "And he said unto me, Write. Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Ephesians 3. 15 should read, "Of whom every family in heaven and earth is named." We believe that every testimony that God has given to men has formed a separate family, which will be in nearness to Him according to the fulness of the revelation, and the Old Testament saints will form one at least of these families.
Bitterness and Joy.

(“The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy” (Prov. 14. 10).)

“THe heart knoweth his own bitterness.” There is one heart that fits into that sentence; it is the heart that was broken by reproach; that was melted in the hot furnace of deepest affliction, and that experienced the unspeakable bitterness of Calvary’s woe. It is the heart of Jesus the beloved Son of the Father,

“How us to save from loss, Did taste the bitter cup of death Upon the cross.”

The Father knows and understands what it meant to His Son to bear sin’s judgment, and the Holy Spirit can gauge the infinite depths of suffering into which He went when He suffered, the Just One for us the unjust; but none other in the wide universe can share with Him the knowledge of the mystery of those awful hours, the bitterness of the cup that He drank then, or know the cost that redemption laid upon Him.

His sufferings were infinite, and only He whose goings forth were from eternity, and had become Man that He might be the Saviour of sinful men, could have endured them. It was His love that led Him to suffer, and His love like His sufferings passes all knowledge. The suffering is over now and the judgment is all exhausted for us for ever, for He has been raised up from the dead, but His love abides in all its unchanging strength, and it can only be measured by what it suffered.

“How deep the sorrow, none can tell What was for us endured, O love divine that broke the spell Which had our hearts allured. With heart and conscience now set free, It is our joy to think of Thee.”

“And a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” He has entered into a joy which also passes telling. It shone in all its attractiveness and incomparable glory beyond the gloom of suffering and death, and to reach it He endured the cross, despising the shame. He has entered it now, and in it He has companions, for He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Hebrews 1. 9). No stranger intermeddles with this joy, nor can understand it. It moves in a sacred enclosure that shall never be profaned by alien feet, but blessed fact, ye who love Him are no longer “strangers and foreigners” (Ephesians 2. 19). He has called you His friends (John 15. 15). You are His companions, through His exceeding grace, to know the secret of His gladness and to share His joy.

His joy is not in the unfallen angels, but in those whom He has ransomed from sin and hell at so great a cost, and who, sanctified in Himself, are now His assembly. So precious are they to Him that wherever two or three of them are gathered together there He is (Matt. 18. 20). They are God’s husbandry (1 Cor. 3.), the garden of His delights, and He desires that they should know His pleasure in them and share in His joy. “God... has called us to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 9).

There is a verse in the sixth chapter of Solomon’s Song that expresses it. “I come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice: I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Do we realize what we are to the Lord, especially when gathered together unto His name? Are we conscious that our adoration is fragrant to Him as sweetest spices, that our company is a joy to His heart, and that our love is sweet as honey to His taste? Surely if we did we should labour more diligently to be acceptable to Him; we should place ourselves in His hands that as He washed His disciples’ feet of old, so might He
wash ours, and remove from us all that would cause any sense of distance between our souls and Himself, that we might have part with Him (John 13. 8). It is our exceedingly great and precious privilege to be pleasurable to Him where He meets 'His own,' and here He sees of the travail of His soul even before we reach the glory and are like Him altogether.

But He would have us to rejoice also; we are called to have fellowship with Him, so He says to us, addressing us in most endearing terms, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." We sit under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste. We meditate upon His sorrow and death and learn the fullness of His love thereby; we eat His flesh and drink His blood, for His flesh is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed (John 6. 55). Thus we enter into the reality of a wholly divine fellowship, fellowship with the Father and the Son, and His joy remains in us and our joy is full (John 17. 11). May God awaken us by His Spirit to consider more the sorrows and joys of our Lord Jesus Christ and may we yield ourselves to His pleasure.

"Love to All the Saints."

The love of God told out in Christ upon the cross of Calvary has been shed abroad in the hearts of those who have believed the gospel, and it has produced what the law demanded but could not secure—love to Him who first loved them. God and His love are now known. "Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Such love Him and all those who are begotten of Him. They have not seen God, but they see their brethren in Christ, who, like themselves, partake of the divine nature. His word is not therefore grievous to them when it says, This is His commandment, that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another as He gave us commandment (1 John 3. 23), for their love goes out to "all the saints" of necessity, because of God's love which is in their hearts. That love is without partiality. It embraces all. And when God commands love to one another, and when Christ commands it, and when the Spirit inspires the apostle to write these commandments, the hearts of those in whom the love of God dwells are divinely gladdened and assured: they are strengthened in their confidence before Him; for that which they are instructed to do is just that which they long to do; and they find true joy in putting the same into practice: the opposite would cause them grief.

We are not overlooking the difficulties that exist on account of the corrupt state of the assemblies of Christendom. The truth which is before us was given in view of that. In spite of the failure of the assemblies, the Spirit has given through John that which is vital and abiding that our "joy may be full." The outgoing of love to all who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ is to be cherished and furthered in every way possible. To check it is certainly not the work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, to love one another is an obligation which the love of God has given to us. If He has loved us as He has done, it is said, "We ought also to love one another."

We must not ignore this, for the Spirit says, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" and, "If anyone hates his brother, he is in a hopeless state,—in darkness" (1 John 2. 9)! He may "say" he is "in the light!" but that only makes his condition all the more serious. Professing to be a Christian,—a brother, claiming to be in the light, yet in reality he is a benighted stranger to both divine
light and love. Still more awful, if possible, is the case of anyone who says he loves God and yet hates his brother. We are told that he partakes of that which is directly satanic,—"He is a liar" (4. 20). He may claim to be faithful, to be true to God, to stand for Him at all costs, to love Him, but the father of lies has sway over him and not the God of truth and love. All this is made known for the benefit of those who are truly the children of God, so that they may not allow any high-sounding talk to hinder their love going out to "all the saints,"—to all their brethren in Christ.

### Divine Love Manifested.

We have said that it is the love of God known in the heart that leads to this love towards "all the saints"; and that it is the commandment of God and the commandment of Christ which show us the channel wherein the Spirit gives grace and power for this love to flow. Therefore the more we dwell upon the great love which is told out to us in Christ, the stronger and fuller will be the tide of divine love which we shall show to one another in the truth and in the energy of the Holy Spirit. This love did not originate with us. The blessed fountain from which it flows is the heart of God Himself. Nor did its activities for our blessing begin at the time we were justified and cleansed by the blood of His Son. When we were lost and sinful, even then that great love went after us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 3. 16).

We are not told to search into our own hearts to discover this love. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There it shines for our faith to feast upon. "Hereby perceive we the love because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3. 16).

"What led Thy Son, O God! To leave His throne on high, To shed His precious blood, To suffer and to die? "Tears love, unbounded love to us, Led Him to die and suffer thus."

Nought could turn Him from the path in which His love was so severely tested. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Onward the Son of God goes to the cross. Forward He presses to the finish. He faces the pitiless storm that beats so fiercely against Him! He treads the thorny way which He knows leads to death. He sets His face as a flint to accomplish His stupendous task! Without human support or sympathy He bows in prayer, and sweat as it were great drops of blood bursts from His holy brow as He looks into the cup that He must drink. The armed band with lanterns and torches, led by Judas, bind and take Him. He stands before the high priest, and before Pilate,—before Jew and Gentile, and receives neither mercy nor justice. Away with Him! Crucify Him! the rabble cries. And He! "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Alone, despised, forsaken, acquainted with grief, smitten, afflicted, He goes to Golgotha bearing His cross. There they crucify Him. But He laid down His life of Himself. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Blessed, adorable Lord and Saviour, there is none in heaven nor upon earth like Thee!

### The Circle of Divine Love.

Risen now, and ascended to the Father's throne, He has redeemed us, and brought us into the light, His blood having cleansed away every sin. And like those who fed upon the peace
offering of old, we can now feast in communion together upon the love of Christ, and have fellowship one with another. We can put the truth into practice now, and rejoice with joy unspeakable before the Father and the Son. The Father sent the Son: the Son has brought us to the Father. The Father loves us: the Son loves us: we are to love one another. It is said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." The joys and communion and relationship of this blessed circle cannot be taken cognizance of by the world. Therefore it is added, "The world knoweth us not." Our portion is outside its circle of interests. The world loves its own, and those who are in life and in the light love one another. This gives the consciousness of the entirely new state and position into which we have been brought, even as we read, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1 John 3. 13, 14).

This last statement shows clearly that it is impossible to walk in the light or carry out the truth if love is absent. It is easy for a cold ecclesiastic or a mere religionist to say, we must maintain divine principles at all costs! But such language often betrays a hardened state of heart. Moreover, the principles are not divine which deny in theory or practice, or both, the nature and character of God. Again, one sometimes hears, It is no question of love but of truth. This also shows a wrong condition of mind and heart, as we have just shown. Truly, where divine love and life are there is also obedience to every word of God; but, mark well, my beloved brethren, the outstanding commandments of God and of Christ are connected with love to the brethren—to "all the saints." Don't let us shirk this! Let us sincerely confess to Him how short we all come in the practice of it; but let us not give it up, or seek to check it in others; but rather let us take the divine way to have increased grace to carry it out. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments."

It may be said, This is all the family side of things. Reply might be made, If the family relationship and love were maintained in divine grace and power, there would be no failure either in assembly order or gospel testimony; but if the mainspring is wrong, then all is out of gear. It was first love which was first left. But, surely the apostle, who was used to unfold little truth concerning the assembly and the mystery, also showed that this vital truth of divine love was absolutely essential. Did he not write, "Follow after love"; also, "If any man love God, the same is known of him"? and, "Love edifies"? Did he not speak of it as the "more excellent way"? and, in the letter which shows the glorious administration of the mystery according to eternal purpose, he exhorts the saints to be "imitators of God as dear children and walk in" love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. 5. 1, 2). Assembly and kingdom interests also, should surely be best understood in the royal family, where the Father and the Son are known. It was Paul who used the words at the head of this paper. He told the brethren at Ephesus and at Colosse that he gave thanks and prayed for their prosperity on account of their faith in Christ and "love to all the saints." Peter likewise says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." There is something divinely encouraging and pleasant in the expression used so freely by all the apostles,—"Brethren." The blessed Lord Himself thus spake of His own. We are told, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." This embraces all who are Christ's,—all the saints. They are all in the circle of divine love. To insist, even successfully, upon principles at the cost of this;
mark, we say, At the cost of love! is
to have a shell without the kernel, a cold
statue without life, a false bird in fine
feathers, an assembly without God and
without Christ, ready to be spued out of
His mouth. To be without divine love
is to be without God, for "everyone
that loveth is born of God, and knoweth
God. He that loveth not knoweth not
God; for GOD IS LOVE. He that
dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and
God in Him."

Difficulties in the Practice.

Some of the most zealous ecclesiastics
have been loveless men. They have
ostracized many of the choicest saints of
God,—always pleading the maintenance
of principles and order. Some they
have slandered,

and even slain or
burned. It is not without profound
significance that the only mention of
the assembly in the Gospel and Epistles
of John fixes our attention on that place­
loving ecclesiastic Diotrephes. Was he
marked by "love to all the saints"?
Truly he was prominent in his zeal for
casting brethren out of the assembly!
but, in all his zealosity, Did he love
the brethren? Nay; his zeal was evil
and not good. To overstep the mark in
ecclesiastical procedure is a serious
matter; and the zeal of many has carried
them far beyond the instructions of the
Scriptures. They have meted out to
devoted saints that which is
for wicked persons." Behold the result on every
side! Nevertheless, the real need not be
surprised, for all was foretold, and
"love to all the saints" is still the hall­
mark. It is most significant that the
very last words of the Spirit in the Bible
are, "THE GRACE OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST BE WITH ALL THE
SAINTS" (N.T.)! After all the failure
had been shown, this is the Spirit­
expressed desire of the heart. Christ
loved all the saints, and gave Himself
for all. He loved the assembly,—not
just a part of it,—and gave Himself for it.
Viewed as the body, we are all alike
members; and it is said, "The members
should have the same care one for
another." A few of the members have
no authority to form an independent
company of their own. As the bride
of Christ, the whole assembly will be pre­

tended to Himself in glory. As the
house of God, all are now built together
for a habitation in the Spirit. As the
flock, the whole assembly was purchased
by the blood of Christ. Those who
follow righteousness, faith, love, peace,
and call on the Lord together out of a
pure heart, according to 2 Timothy 2.,
must of necessity maintain these un­
alterable facts practically.

Where mercy is not blended with
truth, there can be no prosperity.
Mercy and truth are met together in
Christ; and it is said, "Let not mercy
and truth forsake thee, for thus thou
shalt find favour and good understand­
ing (or success) in the sight of God and
man." Through our Lord Jesus Christ
"grace and truth subsist" now, and
when we receive of His fulness, it is not
truth upon truth, but "grace upon
grace." Therein lies the secret for our
spiritual success to-day. Ecclesiastical
law-givers are often more stringent and
burdensome than Moses; but it is indeed
a double-dyed ministry of condemnation
and death. Neither we nor our fathers
were able to bear it. Those who were
zealous for the law and for the temple
when Christ was here, condemned His
hungry disciples for plucking and eating
corn on the Sabbath. The Lord pointed
out what David did when he was hungry;
also that the priests of necessity pro­
faned the temple on the Sabbath
days and were blameless, adding, "If ye had
known what this meaneth, I will have
mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not
have CONDEMNED THE GUILT­
LESS" (Matt. 12. 7). Is mercy
rightly understood? Is grace rightly
valued and shown? And love which
"never fails," from which grace and
mercy flow,—How much is it appre­
ciated? John spoke of "love in the
truth," and of mercy, grace and peace
"in truth and love." It is this beautiful
and blessed conciliation of divine quali­
ties which is so necessary, and yet seems
to be so lacking among those whom the apostle constantly speaks of as "Brethren," and to whom he so often says, "love one another."

The fact is, beloved brethren, where this vitality in the truth according to the divine nature is evident, the unreal go out of themselves. They are conscious that they are not of us. The light, the life, the liberty, and the love, enjoyed by those who "continue in the Father and in the Son," is not to their liking. They lack the nature to appreciate these things. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." Therefore John does not exhort us to put out, but to dwell in love. He says, They went out from among us, but they were not of us (2. 19). The "us," like "the brethren" in John, embraces, as we have said, all who are born of God, remember that, —"All the saints," as Paul puts it. It is Diotrephes who puts out, and puts out wrongly. If this sort of thing went on when apostles were here, we need not be taken by surprise by what happens to-day,—in the close of this remarkable period; but, contrariwise, being forewarned of God, seek grace nevertheless to carry out His commandment and the commandment of Christ,—to show that which is approved of the Spirit in Paul, "Love to all the saints." The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. The family cry, "Abba, Father," is found with each one, as he says, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Thus our own kith and kin are known.

The Way of Prosperity.

Finally, we must remind our hearts that our lesson is to be learned where divine love was manifested,—in Christ: not in the success or failures of the saints. The spirit would ever turn the eye to Him.

Is there to be prosperity in the wealthy things of God? Then let our "hearts be encouraged, being united together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Is progress to be made in the apprehension of the wide range of glory of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the centre? Then He is to "dwell, through faith, in our hearts, being rooted and founded in love, in order that we may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height." Is there to be victory in our conflicts with the foes of the faith? then let there be prayer in the Spirit "for all the saints," and for the preacher of the gospel (Eph. 6. 18, 19). In the face of all sorts of difficulties it is said in Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God," awaiting the coming of Christ. Here we see the divine way of prosperity;—the good positively before us, ourselves dwelling in God's love to us.

This love produces love, as we have shown. It is the like which begets like. Moreover, let our hearts be reminded again, "This commandment have we from Him,"

THAT HE WHO LOVETH GOD LOVE HIS BROTHER ALSO."

"Love never fails." With what exquisite tenderness its desires are expressed at the close of Ephesians by the pen of the apostle Paul, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." Do not our hearts say, AMEN?

O keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know,
And ever to Thy glory be
Walking in faith while here below.
The Godhead of our Lord Jesus.

The way in which the Godhead of the Son shines throughout the whole canon of Scripture is very wonderful indeed, awaking in the heart the most holy and powerful spiritual emotions, and calling forth worship of the most exalted character. I do not refer to the direct statements of His Godhead which are made by the Holy Spirit, though they are innumerable, nor to His mighty works, which unquestionably bear witness to His Deity, but to the glorious light that shines out in the way in which He did those works, in His words, in His relations and ways with men, and in His relations with the Father.

In the Old Testament the Creator is said to be Jehovah, the everlasting God (Is. 40. 28), and in the New Testament the Creator is said to be the Word (John 1.) which became flesh; the Son of the Father’s love (Col. 1.); the Messiah (Heb. 1.). The Christ of the New Testament is Jehovah of the Old.

And as to His works, what a multitude of miracles stormed the heights of man’s unbelief, and swarmed over the strongholds of antagonism to the light of God, putting to silence the miserable cavilling of the leaders of the people, and demonstrating that nothing but cursed prejudice against all that was good and of God kept them from falling at His feet in the acknowledgment that God had in Him visited His people.

And how different these works were done from the way in which the prophets of old performed miracles, or the way in which His apostles after the descent of the Spirit gave evidence of supernatural powers. With all these there was mingled with the putting forth of the power of God the evidences of their own weakness. See the struggle of Elisha with the might of death for the bringing back of the son of the Shunammite, and the prayer of Peter in the case of Tabitha (2 Kings 4.; Acts 9.). With the Lord there was none of this apparent weakness. As in the putting forth of His creative power, so in the deliverance of His creature from the consequences of sin, “He spake, and it was done” (Ps. 33. 9).

A Prophet when addressing the people must say: “Thus saith the Lord”; but Jesus says: Verily, verily, I say unto you,” and declares that the one who believes on Him has everlasting life, and that the one that saw Him saw the Father.

A prophet could carry a message of forgiveness from God to one who had sinned, but Jesus forgives the sinner (Luke 7. 48), and if they challenge His ability to forgive sins, and declare that only God has this prerogative, He demands of them which is easier, to forgive sins or to heal bodily infirmities, and sends the palsied man away to his own house carrying his bed (Mark 2.).

Nothing of the infirmities of the creature characterizes the words or works of the Son of God. That He was here as the sent One of the Father is just what He Himself declares (John 8. 42), and that the words that He spoke were the Father’s words, and the works that He did were the Father’s works, and that His path was marked by obedience and dependence is what He constantly affirms; but when speaking or working, the power does not appear to come from any source external to Himself. It was the Father that dwelt in Him did the works; and to one who desires to see the Father He says “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 16.). Only in one instance of miracle working do we hear Him invoking the Father, and that was on account of those that stood by, that they might believe that He was the sent One of the Father (John 11. 41, 42).

In all His works His divine glory is manifest, but it is not only in them that this comes to light. It is not in special occasions that His Godhead is most
brightly displayed, but just in the even tenor of His wondrous pathway through this world. Perhaps in His humiliation and His perfect obedience to His Father it shines most clearly, and in the Father’s appreciation of His whole earthly history.

That obedience to the will of God characterizes every activity of the elect angels cannot in the face of Psalm 102. be called in question; they have no will contrary to the will of God. I suppose the angels whom He charged with folly (Job 4. 18) were fallen angels.

But in their obedience there is no merit, nor could there be, however perfect this obedience might be, for the whole life of the creature must be devoted to the service of his Creator. What God makes He makes for a definite purpose, and it must serve the purpose for which it was created. If it does not it is not only absolutely useless, but a very real danger if unfettered and at large in the universe. The slightest departure from the position in which it was created is evidence of a will opposed to its Maker, and compels its Maker to take up the attitude of Judge toward it. No second chance can be given, for one act of rebellion, or the working of will, proves the sinner to have been inoculated with iniquity, and his whole system to have been corrupted.

But let me repeat what I have already said, there is no merit in the obedience of the creature, however perfect that obedience might be. Our Lord says to His disciples: “When ye shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17. 10). No merit attached itself to anything that they did; they could do no work of supererogation, nothing that could be passed over to help an unhappy delinquent. What God demands from the creature is no more than the creature owes, and this involves his absolute surrender to the will of his Creator.

But with our Lord it was very different. He was under no obligation to a power higher than Himself. I speak of Him as in the form of God, and before He took the form of a servant. He was Despot, not slave. When He took the form of a servant it was a voluntary act. He became in the likeness of men for the glory of the Godhead, in order that eternal counsel might be fulfilled, and in love to the rebel race of mankind.

This gives a peculiar character to His obedience, and makes every thought, word, and action of His meritorious. He took the place of a servant, and never left that place all the time He was here upon earth; but while this was so He never ceased to be Master. He could not give up Godhead, but He could, and did, give up the status and outward form of it. In order that the counsels of God might have their glorious fulfilment He put Himself under subjection to the Father, so that He could say that He was not here of Himself, but was sent of the Father. And having taken the place of a servant He was perfect in that place, and confined Himself to that place, even though the maintenance of it led Him to the death of the cross.

But just because of this there was merit in every thought, word, and action of His, from His lowly birth until He gave up the ghost on a cross of shame. The apostle Paul says: He “loved me, and gave Himself for me,” and He “loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” His death on the cross is just as truly the manifestation of His own love for those for whom He gave Himself, as it is the manifestation of the love of God. His was a freewill humiliation and a freewill offering.

Had He not been God I fail to see what merit would have been in anything that He did. It would only have been the carrying out of His creature obligations, and in the end there must of necessity have been the confession of His unprofitableness. But this is far from the truth, for we find Him claiming glory on the ground that He had glorified the Father, and finished the
work given Him to do (John 17). His work entitles Him to the highest place in the universe, whereas the work of the creature, however well done, would entitle him to nothing. Had Adam remained forever in his innocent state, what would it have entitled him to? No other position than the one in which he was placed by his Creator at the first? But our Lord is by His work entitled to the exalted position in which the righteous Father has placed Him.

It may just come up into the reader's mind that believers are viewed as receiving rewards in the day when they shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, and this fact would seem to go to prove that some merit attached to their service to God. But though it is perfectly true that the results of the service rendered to Christ will receive His commendation and will be rewarded, it is only after all in grace that such rewards can be granted to anyone; for the responsibility of the believer is to walk as Christ walked (1 John 2. 6), and to the height of that standard no saint of God has ever attained; and if he had he could claim nothing, for he would have done nothing but his duty.

With regard to our Lord it is all so different; His title to the dignity that has been conferred upon Him is owned by God, who has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Phil. 2. 9, 10).

And not only is His title to the glory owned by God, but, as I have already said, He could claim it, and does. He has a right to all the honour that has been conferred upon Him, and all the honour that is given to the Father must be given to Him also, and soon this will be acknowledged by the whole creation, and every creature in the universe will be heard saying: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, b unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever " (Rev. 5.)

What lustre the knowledge of this throws upon His every act of obedience down here in this world! How voluntary was His down-stooping! How deep was His humiliation! How infinitely perfect was His devotedness to His Father's name and honour! How complete His obedience to the Father's will! And all self-imposed! He says, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment ev'en so I do, and, "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end " (John 13. 14). How infinitely above all our thought He is! How inscrutable the mystery of His Person! How worthy of our eternal adoration and worship!

The Man of God. 2 Timothy.

Now that everything is broken to pieces, it is the individual that comes into prominence in the Word of God. It is so here in this epistle, and it is so everywhere else in Scripture, when the ruin of the corporate testimony has come in. It was so in Israel when the nation departed from the living God. And it is so in that which bears the name of Christ. Here we have the man of God referred to, who has studied Paul's doctrine, manner of life, knows what he has to expect from a persecuting world, is acquainted with the delivering power and faithfulness of the Lord, and has unbounded confidence in the Holy Scriptures (chap. 3. 10–17). At Pentecost it would have been out of place to have spoken of a man of God, seeing all were filled with the Holy Ghost. But in a day of ruin and general departure from Christ the man of God comes prominently forward.
What is meant by "The Lord's Table"?

(Read 1 Cor. 10. 16–22.)

There are three fellowships given us in this chapter into which the world was divided, represented by the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God (see ver. 32). The symbols of these fellowships are given us as follows:

1. The Jewish Altar (ver. 18), as representing Judaism.
2. The Table of Demons (ver. 21), as representing Heathendom.
3. The Lord's Table (ver. 21), as representing Christianity.

Much is learned by contrasts, and by briefly considering what is to be understood by "the Jewish Altar" and "the table of demons," we shall get help as to what is meant by "the Lord's Table." Note that we follow the divine order (1) "The Jews"; (2) "The Gentiles"; (3) "The Church of God.

The Jewish "Altar."

The Jewish "altar" is typical of "the Lord's table"; and two great thoughts are connected with the Jewish "altar," the same two thoughts are connected also with both "the table of demons" and "the Lord's table."

These two thoughts are—

1. Sacrifice,
2. Food.

With the thought of (1) sacrifice the word "altar" connects itself; with the thought of (2) food the expression "the Lord's table" connects itself. The altar, from the divine standpoint, sets forth the way of approach to God, whilst the table sets forth the blessings that those who are there enjoy in common the favours dispensed by the One who is thus approached.

* In Scripture there is only one devil, viz. Satan. All his supernatural agents are called demons, so we will adhere to this distinction throughout this article.

The "Altar" Character.

Let us see how this is so. We do not need to labour the point that sacrifice and altar go together. The constant sacrifices on Jewish altars are before the reader's mind at once. A sacrifice demands an altar, an altar demands a sacrifice. It presents the deeply touching thought that the death of our adorable Lord and Saviour is the centre of everything for God's glory in relation to the blessing of poor fallen man. It brings out too that from that death all blessing flows out, whether typically (Judaism) or antitypically (Christianity).

"The Lord's Table" Character.

Not only on Jewish altars were the sacrifices offered, but certain parts of them were for the food of the priest, and thus the Jewish "altar" was also known as "the table of the Lord." For proof of this turn to Malachi 1.

"Ye offer polluted bread [food, N.T.] upon mine ALTAR; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, THE TABLE OF THE LORD is contemptible" (verse 7).

This is a very interesting expression as showing clearly that the "altar" and the "table of the Lord" are convertible terms, each presenting a different aspect of the same thing.

Again:

"But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even His meat [food, N.T.], is contemptible" (verse 12).

This again is a most important verse as connecting Jehovah's table and Jehovah's food with those who served.

Judaism then can be defined as a system, the very centre of which was
the altar, setting forth in type and for faith God's disposition towards man, how in sacrifice God could be met in all His holiness, and His desire to bless in the disclosure of Himself find a righteous channel, but the altar also furnished a table from which He could dispense His meat, His food, His bounty, His blessing for the support of His people.

The first time the word "table" is used in Holy Scripture is in connection with the table of shewbread. Now that table is only possible because of the altar. Everything in Judaism flowed from the altar, it was the blood of the altar that was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, so that the table of shewbread owed its being to the altar in that way. On it were twelve loaves covered with frankincense. This was a memorial before the Lord, and in due course became the food of the priests, and that as identifying themselves in eating with all Israel.

Then again in Ezekiel 41. 22 we find that the altar of wood is described as "the table that is before the Lord."

So we see that the expression "the table of the Lord" is not a new one, though used in I Corinthians 10. in a new connection altogether, that is in connection with Christianity, which is as superior to Judaism as the substance is superior to the shadow.

The Syrophenician woman—a Gentile—had a good idea of the bounty of "the Lord's table" as connected with Judaism, though she recognized it as bound up in the Lord's person and not with a dead system whose leaders had rejected Him, without whom the shadows and types were indeed meaningless. When this woman cried to the Lord for help for her afflicted daughter, He tested her by telling her, "It is not meet to take the children's crumbs" (Mark 7. 28).

How wonderful must the bounty of Jehovah be upon His table, when in her estimation a fallen crumb or two would suffice to meet her need. And if this poor woman had such a sense of "the Lord's table" in her day, what sense have we of the bounty of "the Lord's table" to-day in the full light of a triumphant risen ascended Christ at God's right hand, and of all that is consequent on the outpoured gift of the Holy Spirit?

"The Table of Demons."

Heathendom was Satan's counterfeit, established with the view of opposing God, and to hold men in the darkness of that thrall in which he had bound them, and we are prepared to find in it these same two ideas of

(1) Sacrifice.
(2) Food.

(1) Sacrifice. This is borne out by the passage, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God" (ver. 20). (See also Deut. 32. 17.) Here we get the "altar" character of heathendom—the sacrifice being procured by Satan working on the darkness of the heathen mind, picturing their gods as about to wreak vengeance on them—their crops would fail, their children die, their animals be devoured by wild beasts, unless they were appeased.

(2) Food. This is borne out by the expressions, "The cup of demons," "the table of demons" (ver. 21). Alas! Satan feeds the flesh, and "the table of demons," on that side of it may be defined as a system by which he feeds the passions and unholy lusts of men in order to enslave their souls, ruin their bodies, and encompass their eternal destruction. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Ps. 74. 20). The records of heathen lands bear this out to the full.
How does the Believer get to "The Lord's Table"?

There again the answer is very simple. When a sinner believes the gospel and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and thereby added to the church, he is at "The Lord's table." To be added to the church is God's work and not man's, and consists in God reaching a sinner by His grace and power, communicating life to him and justifying him and sealing that work by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

If the believer were a Jew before conversion he was identified with the Jewish "altar"; if a Gentile with "the table of demons," but when he received the Holy Spirit he became identified with "the Lord's table." If he was not there, where is he? He could not be with anti-Christian Judaism; nor with demoniacal heathendom. He must be at "the Lord's table."

Can a Believer be put away from "The Lord's Table"?

Assuredly not; Scripture never says so. If the discipline of the assembly
must go to the sad length of putting away, the exhortation is "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5.13).

But seeing it is God's act and not man's to receive to "the Lord's table," it cannot be man's act to put away from "the Lord's table." To put a Christian away from "the Lord's table" would be to UNChristianize a man altogether, which no man can do, and which God won't do. Doubtless the predominant thought connected with eating, whether looked at in connection with the Jewish altar, the Lord's table or the table of demons, is fellowship. "Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of [in communion with, N.T.] the altar" (1 Cor. 10.18).

The reason is very apparent. The food in the Jewish system is derived from the sacrifice offered. The sacrifice speaks of death as the only means of meeting man's state before God, the only means of approach to Him, and stands as the centre, and from which all radiates, of the system it is connected with. Spiritual eating is one life-long expression of fellowship.

If things were normal eating in connection with the Lord's table would be solely and alone an expression of fellowship with the death of Christ and all that flows therefrom. And that is as it should be. But when the believer attaches himself to a sect or party his eating often degenerates into an expression of fellowship with that particular sect or party. This may not be openly stated, but tacitly this is often so. What is of God, mixed up with the sect or party, lasts; what is not, and that is a revival in some shape or another of the man condemned and set aside at the cross of Christ, will perish.

For when God saves He saves for ever, and when He gives the Spirit it is until the day of redemption, that is to say, until the Lord comes. Doubtless when a Christian is under discipline, or cold and worldly at heart, or ensnared by legality as the Galatian assemblies were, there is a lack of appreciation and appropriation of what "the Lord's table" really is, and practically such a one is out of touch with its fulness and blessedness.

It may be asked, Is it not possible for a mere professor to be at the Lord's table! We answer yes and no. Yes, in an outward way; no, if one thinks of what is vital and real in the matter. It is interesting that Hebrew 6.4-6, which speaks how far a mere professor may go, speaks twice of tasting, but never of eating. This is very suggestive and may help to guide our thoughts in this matter.

[Correspondence on such suggestive papers as the foregoing is invited.]

(To be continued.)

The Man of God.

The man of God will let nothing slip of Paul's doctrine, nor will he pay little regard to the same apostle's 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 no account. He will know that God has no respect to outward ecclesiastical correctness where the inward spiritual condition is bad. He knows that the ecclesiastical edifice, as set up by Paul and built upon by others, has become corrupted and 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. This is a citadel unassailable by the forces of the enemy, and upon the fact that he was an apostle according to this promise, this indomitable servant of the Lord retired with confidence. (J.B.)
Correspondence.

“A Letter as to the Truth and those who hold it.”

We desire to call the special attention of our readers to the following instructive and helpful letter which we have received.

“It was helpful and encouraging, beloved in the Lord, to have the third letter of John set before us in the May number of "Scripture Truth."

There are many beloved brethren who desire to walk in truth like the much esteemed Gaius. They have been instructed in the truth in their measure as he was; they find themselves surrounded with failure in the assemblies as he did; their love goes out to the brethren as his did; and yet they find such as Diotrephes casting them out of the assembly—How then are they to act?

A few facts concerning the beloved Gaius might help to answer this question. It is remarkable that he should be brought before us in one of the very last, if not the last, of the inspired writings; and that John should be used to do so; for Gaius, as we shall see, was closely associated with Paul. This fact will help those who sincerely desire to maintain Paul’s doctrine, and yet find themselves associated with that which practically denies it, and the nature and character of our blessed God also. Previous writings as to Gaius in “Scripture Truth” have helped saints, and, through God’s grace, these further remarks concerning him may do so likewise.

I will refer to each passage of Scripture where the Spirit mentions Gaius. A careful examination of the text shows that the same person is in view in each case.

1. At the start of his public confession of Christ he was baptised by Paul (1 Cor. 1. 14). This should be carefully noticed, for we shall see that he who began with Paul, and continued with him, is lastly sustained by the ministry of John when failure had come in. It is the same now. He is said to be of the Corinthians in this verse.

2. During the stirring scenes at Ephesus, when the truth was overthrowing the business of Demetrius, Gaius was seized by the crowd as being a well-known companion of Paul. It was in this city where Paul spent such a long time unfolding the truth, and where he first “separated the disciples.” Gaius is said to be a Macedonian in this Scripture (Acts 19. 29). He was evidently a Macedonian at Corinth, as Lydia was a Thyatiran at Philippi.

3. During the final meetings of the apostle Paul in Asia Minor, Gaius, along with others, accompanied him (Acts 20. 4). This was a memorable and important time. He was with him at the breaking of bread at Troas. He heard the all-night discourse there, and the warnings and instructions to others afterwards. The teaching, conduct, purpose, pleadings, tears, hopes and fears of the apostle were known to Gaius; and he held fast to the truth and was walking in it long after when John wrote to him.

4. In Romans 16. 23 we have a reference to this much-valued brother which exactly coincides with what we are told of him in John’s last letter. He is extending generous hospitality, not only to the servant of the Lord, but also to the whole assembly. His salutation is sent by the apostle to the saints at Rome. If, as it is commonly admitted, this is the same Gaius as we find in John 3- and 1 Corinthians 1. 14 then there is little ground for making the one mentioned in Acts a different brother. In any case, it is clearly evident he was well nurtured in the teaching and manner of life of the apostle Paul, and it is this which we desire to emphasize, for some, who mean well enough, excuse themselves for not practically carrying out the truth and the love enjoined upon us by the Spirit in the writings of John, wrongly believing that to do so means giving up what they think is the teaching of Paul! Needless to say, it is all a profound mistake. Some will even use the second letter of John to justify the refusal...
of godly brethren, known and commended as such, and who delight to speak of the love and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The case there named is that of one who is utterly without the doctrine of Christ and without God and this is so flagrant, and his works so wicked, that he is neither to be allowed to cross the threshold of a saint's house, nor even to be greeted! A very hurtful and unchristian system has been elaborated from a wrong use of this Scripture, because none other could be found, nor any principle which is really "divine," that even appears to justify the refusal of those we are elsewhere enjoined to receive.

5. We now come to the last mention of the beloved Gaius (3rd John), and, as we said before, Failure in the assemblies was an accomplished fact. We see, however, (a) how Gaius then acted, and we read (b) what the Spirit encouraged and exhorted him then to do. A brief statement of these things will help those who are similarly situated to-day, and answer the question we asked at the commencement of these remarks.

(a) He still held fast to the truth, and also walked in it (3). This would include Paul's doctrine. He received the stranger brethren, and he helped them. His faithfulness in doing this is commended (5. 6).

(b) He is told to continue in this; and to set them on their journey "worthily of God"—their passport (written on both sides) being I. "The Name"—what Christ is; and 2. "Taking nothing of those of the nations" i.e. from the unconverted (7). To receive such is obligatory if we are to be "fellow-workers with the truth" (8). In contrast, Diotrephes being named, as one who received not and who cast out those who did, it is then said to Gaius, "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good" (11). The evil was the refusal, and the good the receiving of the brethren.

Doubtless the Holy Spirit is speaking to the assemblies to-day; but it needs an unstopped ear to hear what He is saying. As always, He is calling attention to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and giving grace and power to those who heed to respond practically; and also the desire of heart for His return. An ear to hear is the great thing. Many ears are stopped by the voices and traditions of men. "What saith the Lord" is the important matter for brethren now.

You are daily in my prayers. I thank God for this. With loving greetings in the Lord, affectionately yours in Him,

H. J. Vine"

Answers to Correspondents.

"When Shall We Rise to Meet the Lord?"

A Reader sends us a pamphlet bearing the above title with the request that, since it is having a considerable circulation, we would say whether we consider it to be according to the truth. The writer claims to have had a special revelation from the Lord in consequence of which she tells us that the fulfilment of 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17—the Lord's coming for His saints, will take place on or about September 29th, 1917.

We would not question the sincerity of the writer of this pamphlet, she is evidently a true and devout Christian, yet we have no hesitation in characterizing this alleged revelation as a snare and delusion. It seems to have been one of those manifestations which were common a few years ago in connection with the extraordinary outburst of speaking with tongues, which occurred in many parts of the world, and which does not seem to have had any marks of being a work of God's Spirit, but which, to our own knowledge, often gave indications of being of evil origin.

The Word of God, as we possess it, is all-sufficient for our guidance (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17), and we need no such revelations as these, with their strange physical phenomenon of vocal organs being seized by some independent power and made to utter sounds entirely apart from the volition of the person concerned. The
Word tells us that we know not the hour of the Lord’s return, and "the hour" in this case means more than the exact hour of the day—as the writer of the pamphlet wishes us to believe, it means that the time is hidden from us. We know that such passages as Matthew 24. 42., Mark 13. 32, and Acts 1. 7 have special reference to the Lord’s appearing to establish His kingdom on earth, but we may be sure if the time and season for this, to which times and seasons belong, is hidden from us, no revelation has been made of the time of the secret catching up of those that are Christ’s at His coming. Indeed, that this is to take place is not really the subject of prophecy but was revealed to comfort sorrowing saints while they looked for the fulfilment of their hopes.

We must not relegate this looked for event to three months hence, but must be constantly in expectation of it. Ours it is to be sober and to watch as those that already belong to the coming day (1 Thess. 5. 1-6). "I come quickly" is the Lord’s word to us about it, thrice repeated in the last chapter of the Word.

The claim to have such revelations as these holds many dangers, and not the least of them is that they make the Word of God of non-effect, for if we now know the time of the Lord’s return, then those passages which say we do not have become obsolete, and why should not other passages be superceded in the same way? A case came under our own notice in which a person beginning with such manifestations as that of which this pamphlet speaks, ended by being forbidden by the same strange power to read the Bible at all.

It would be difficult for us to understand why these manifestations which seem to deal only with good things could come from an evil source were we not told in the Word of "seducing spirits" (1 Tim. 4. 2), and that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11. 14).

Who Will Be Taken When the Lord Comes?

The question is raised in this pamphlet as to who will be taken at "the rapture of the saints." The writer believes that only those who have "a full supply of the Holy Spirit," or what she calls "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" will be taken. She gathers this from the parable of the Ten Virgins, and says, "Those who have not the full measure of oil (emblem of the Holy Spirit) will be shut out." But the Lord did not say that the foolish virgins had not the full measure of oil in their vessels, but that they "took NO OIL with them." Those who will be on the wrong side of the door when it is shut are those who, though professors, do not know the grace of God, are not resting in the Lord Jesus for salvation, and are not sealed by the Holy Spirit. It will not be a question as to whether they are filled with the Spirit or not, but whether they are the Lords, sealed as His by the Spirit. Of those shut out He says, "I know you not," and He could not say that of any one of His sheep, no matter how wayward it might be.

The teaching that some who are true believers in the Lord Jesus will be left behind at the coming of the Lord is serious error and arises from the failure to grasp the truth as to Christ’s assembly. The word of truth is not rightly divided, and those scriptures which speak of the coming kingdom of the Lord are confused and confounded with those that speak of the assembly.

The assembly is one—it is one body, not merely a body of people that can be divided and separated one from the other, but a living organism of which Christ is the Head, and which is being formed now by the Spirit to be the vehicle by which Christ will fill all things when "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" He shall be Head over the whole universe of God (Eph. 1. 10–23).

The assembly is one building now being built by Christ; fitly framed together it growth unto a holy temple in the Lord, and will come out of heaven as the great City, the holy Jerusalem, every living stone in it filling its own place, and the whole in one indivisible unity being the vessel through which the glory of God and the Lamb who dwell in it will shine upon the whole earth (Rev. 21. 9–27).

The assembly is the one heavenly bride that shall be presented in marriage to the Lamb, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, before He comes out of heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19; Eph. 5).
The truth of the assembly demands that no part of it should be left behind in this world when the Lord rises up to rapture it to Himself. Moreover, the Word is plain, “Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15. 23). Again “ Behold I shew you a mystery we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (ver. 5). The “all” of the passage surely includes all believers alive at the moment of the Lord’s coming.

Have the Heathen a Second Chance?

Several of our readers have communicated with us regarding the paper entitled “Have the heathen a second chance?” which appeared in our February issue. One correspondent thinks that the tone of it is harsh. We are sure that our contributor, a missionary in China, would regret that the paper should have given such an impression to any. Another thanks God for the clearness and definiteness of it, much needed he thinks in these days of lax doctrine; another thinks that it goes too far, and says more than Scripture does on this solemn subject.

We are always glad to consider the views of our readers, but the question is “What is the revealed mind of God on this or on any other question?” If what our contributor has written is not according to the Word it must be rejected. If it is according to that Word, whatever fault may be found with the way it is expressed, we must accept it.

The question is “Will the heathen or any other section of mankind have another chance of salvation after death?” It cannot be questioned that since the late Dean Farrar launched his “larger hope” theories, the idea that men will have another chance of gaining the blessing that they have missed in this world in the next has spread rapidly through Christendom, but it is equally beyond question that along with the spread of these views, the authority of the Word of God has been largely thrown over and the thoughts and imaginations of men have been substituted for its plain and solemn words. And we believe that honest men will acknowledge that the foundation for this special doctrine, lies not in the Scriptures, but in what they think ought to be there.

But if we turn from the Scriptures where shall we find solid ground. We cannot trust the minds of men, for the Word of God tells us not only that the natural mind understandeth not the things of God (2 Cor. 2), but also that it is enmity against God (Rom. 8), so that it is bound in its very nature, unless renewed by grace and the Holy Spirit, to judge God and His ways wrongly.

Many are turning to spiritualistic mediums, hoping to get light by that channel as to the doings and destiny of those who are gone from them, but it is not the dead but demons that speak through these poor mediums whenever there are genuine communications, and we cannot expect the truth as to God and His ways from them. If we turn from the Scriptures our search for light is hopeless, but when we accept what they declare all is plain. In the Word we find that God gives a testimony of Himself to all men. It was painted out in a paper in our February issue that there had been three great testimonies since the world began. The testimony of creation was the first, and it declares the eternal power and divinity of God, and this testimony utters its voice to every intelligent creature under heaven. The heathen have this, and it is sufficient to enlighten their darkness. But Romans 1 tells us that “they are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.” So their foolish heart was darkened and they descended into the depth of that degradation in which they are found. The testimony remains for them, but do they heed it and seek after God their Creator, who giveth life and breath and fruitful seasons to them? No, the Scripture says of all whether civilized or savage, “there is none that seeketh after God” (Romans 3. 11). It was this that our contributor endeavoured to maintain from the Word and from his own experience, and also that the Word holds out no hope in the next world. And are there no exceptions to this terrible rule? None, evidently, except as the conscience is awakened by God Himself, and we are glad to have confirmed, from the experience of a
valued missionary friend, what we had always thought must be the case, that here and there a heathen appears who is truly seeking after God whom creation reveals before the gospel is brought to him. We have no hesitation in saying that in such cases the seeker had been born again through God's testimony to Him in creation. But there is not only the testimony of creation, but also the conscience. (See Rom. 2. 14, 15.)

God is now fully declared, not in His eternal power and divinity, but as a Saviour God, commending His love to all. More heavy is the responsibility of those who hear and reject this full testimony as to God's love and grace, and more terrible will be their doom. But whether for these, or those who have only creation to tell them of God, we have no word in Scripture to lead us to suppose that another offer of mercy will be made to them in another world. Thus far we may safely go, and while we would deprecate all theorizing about the doom of the dead, it is our responsibility to set the infallible and unchanging Word of God before the living, for now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation."

The Lord's Coming and the Feast of Trumpets.

In the pamphlet alluded to in foregoing answer it is stated, by way of confirmation, that the Lord's coming for His church must take place in the month of September, because the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23) took place in that month. There is no ground whatever for such an assertion. The Feast of Trumpets it is true took place in the month that answers to our September, but it fore-shadowed the gathering of Israel into the promised land, and has nothing to do with the gathering of the church out of the world at all. The writer confounds such passages as "the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4. 16) and "for the trumpet shall sound" (1 Cor. 15. 52) with such as "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds" (Matt. 24. 31), for no other reason as far as we can see than that the word trumpet occurs in each of them. The former speak of the catching up to heaven of the church into her heavenly place and blessing, the latter the gathering of Israel into her place of earthly supremacy and blessing in the Holy Land. We give some brief notes on the Feasts in this issue which may help our readers on this subject.

Should a Wicked Person still be put away from Christian Fellowship?

J.A.—The holiness of the house of God and of the name of the Lord demands that those who are identified with that house and name should clear themselves of all complicity with wickedness. 1 Cor. 5. instructs us as to this, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." And for their own sake also this is necessary, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (ver. 6).

But in connection with a solemn act such as this chapter commands, it is necessary that there should be the consciousness before the Lord of the source from which all wickedness springs—the evil in our flesh, and also, that Christ's sacrifice for us was the measure of God's judgment upon this; then comes the answer to it in us, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The Christian company is "sanctified in Christ Jesus," and so it is said of them, "ye are unleavened"; but they are to be in faith and practice what God has made them in Christ, and for this wickedness must be put away from them and evil judged within themselves. "Avoiding" them that cause division (Rom. 16. 17), withdrawing from those who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3. 6), and having no company with those who are in subject to the word (2 Thess. 3. 14) do not we believe contemplate the same extreme action that 1 Cor. 5. commands?
The next four Psalms remind us of several found in the second Book, which we have already considered. In the earlier ones it will be remembered that God is generally addressed as Elohim, while in these the title Jehovah is used throughout. The divisions of Psalm 140 are well defined, "consisting each of three verses, except that the third, instead of consisting of three verses of two members, consists of two verses of three members, so that the length of each is in fact the same."

The two first divisions contain similar petitions for deliverance from enemies, who are characterized by both violence and falsehood. As in the prayer of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20.), the trouble pressing on the spirit is first told out, and then Jehovah claimed as "My God," whereupon faith reaches more assured victory "O Jehovah Adonai, Thou strength of my salvation." If the power of Jehovah can be righteously introduced in aid of the believer, the battle and victory of verse 7 must be only a prelude to a more complete triumph, resulting in the judgment of the hostile powers however great they may be.

The last two verses declare the consequences of this setting aside of the opposition of evil by power: "Jehovah will maintain the cause of the afflicted and the right of the needy," and when the kingdom comes the upright shall dwell in His presence. During the present phase of the kingdom, we are under a providential government, not the manifested rule of righteous power such as the Psalm supposes, hence the believer cannot always count on a public vindication now. It is the time of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ and often the suffering of His followers.

Psalm 141. It has been truly remarked of this Psalm, that its interpretation presents peculiar difficulties by reason of the extreme abruptness with which the thoughts follow one another in verses 5-7. Various explanations are given, we can only give what seems to give the best sense and to be consistent with the context. From the two last verses it appears that circumstances similar to those giving occasion to the last Psalm are found again here, but in some respects, as we shall see, the exercise is deeper. Against the cunning and treachery of the workers of iniquity, the aid of Jehovah is urgently desired, "make haste unto me." Evidently then the question arises, how shall prayer from such as I am find acceptance with Jehovah? The word of God assures him that the incense and the sacrifices at the two altars in the tabernacle are accepted, he therefore desires that his own petition may be invested with the excellence of that which ascends from them. We can interpret the incense and the offering as typical of the Person and work of the Son of God, and know that prayer offered in His Name is answered according to the divine estimate of Him and of what He has wrought for sinners. How blessed such confidence! Yet we too may need to take account of what follows, for if my lips are employed to express my needs to a holy God, they should be kept from every utterance unsuitable to Him (c). James 3:9, 10); the heart also which prompted the petition must not incline to evil things nor be occupied in deeds of wickedness nor corrupting associations. We often use verses 3, 4 apart from their context, but when they are considered in connection with prayer their bearing on the conscience is much more serious. But there is more, the desire to be upright in approaching God leads to seeking the correction of others. That which may be hidden from my own consciousness may be readily discerned by another; hence at the cost of suffering, "let the righteous smite me—a kindness; let him reprove me—oil upon the head, let not my head refuse it." The sincerity of the desire for correction is evidenced by going to one more advanced in spiritual stature than myself.

The first line of verse 6 tells of judgment coming on the leaders of these evil men "their judges," but with this result anticipated, that their adherents would hear the words of the King and experience their sweetness.
The Feasts of the Lord. No. 1.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Lev. 23. 1, 2).

The Sabbath.

Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23. 3).

Remarks. God finds His perfect rest in Christ in regard to the fulfilment of His whole will and purpose. So that immediately upon the incoming of sin He could announce without fear of contradiction that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ the whole firmament was filled with angelic praise because He to whom God looked had come to do His will.

Christ is also the true Sabbath of rest for men. After the six days of labour of the Old Testament dispensations—without law and with law, under patriarchs, priests, princes and prophets—the best that man could produce was only "filthy rags." They could obtain neither righteousness nor rest by their labours. Christ came to bring to an end man's futile endeavours, and to say, "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest," and "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." The greatness of His person is the guarantee of the perfection of His work.

The Person of Christ.

God's perfect rest in Him. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 7). "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17). "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3. 35).

The Passover and Unleavened Bread.

"In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. 23. 5, 6, 7, 8).

Remarks. The Passover sets forth the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus in which all our sin was met in judgment according to God's eternal justice and holiness and for His glory, and by it we are not only redeemed but sanctified. The keeping of the feast of Unleavened Bread is the practical answer in us to the work of Christ for us. We gladly refuse the evil for which He had to suffer on our behalf, and walk in practical sanctification before God, Christ the Holy One being our food. No
servile work had to be done during the feast. The life of sanctification to God is not a life of legality or a weary round of galling duties or useless ceremonies; but the love of Christ constrains us, and we serve the Lord with gladness and singleness of heart. It is wilfulness that brings in the misery; obedience means blessing and joy.

The First fruits.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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 first fruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Lev. 23. 9-11).

The Resurrection of Christ.

“Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24. 1-6).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15. 20).

Remarks. Notice the expression, "the morrow after the Sabbath." That blessed "morrow" is called in the New Testament "the first day of the week," it is the Lord's day. How the heart thrills at the thought of it. It was the greatest day since the dawn of creation, yea, the greatest day that God ever made. For on it there rose up above all the disaster that sin had brought in the Man of God's pleasure, supremely victorious. What a moment that must have been to God! The power of Satan was annulled, death was robbed of its awful sting, the grave was vanquished, the might and triumph of God were fully disclosed, His new creation came into blessed visibility. Christ was the first begotten from the dead, the centre and the sun of a new world founded in resurrection, to be held in Him and by Him beyond the reach of overthrow for ever. And every believer is of that glorious risen Man; each one derives from Him and belongs to God's new creation.

Further, the sheaf of first fruits was the pledge of the harvest, and as the first sheaf is, so shall the harvest be. What a thought for us, "Christ the first fruits afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." His resurrection is the pattern of ours, but not only so, we shall be like Him.

“He'll give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own.”

“Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3. 20, 21). "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is " (1 John 3. 2).

"CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN" (Romans 8. 29).
The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh: sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord. And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the Lord. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest" (Lev. 23. 15-20).

Remarks. The two wave loaves set forth the assembly of God, presented to Him in all the efficacy of Christ's work and the acceptability of His person. The two may speak of Jew and Gentile brought together in one offering to God, if so, these twain are made one in Christ. The assembly is "one bread and one body" (1 Cor. 10. 17). Baken with leaven indicate that evil exists in those who compose the assembly, for leaven is typical of evil. Their sins are forgiven; that which they were in the flesh has met its judgment before God in the cross of Christ; they have a new life in Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwells in them, but all this does not remove or improve the flesh within them. But the loaves were baken, and the action of the fire arrests the working of the leaven, and fire speaks of God's judgment, so we learn that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). As we accept God's judgment as to the evil root within us, and walk in the sense of it by the Spirit's power, and see the grace of God towards us in this the flesh is kept in abeyance and sin does not have dominion over us.

A sin offering was offered with the loaves, teaching that we could not be before God at all apart from the fact that Christ was made sin for us. And ten animals were offered also for a sweet savour unto the Lord. They were seven lambs—The lamb typified the meekness and submission of the Lord. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter," and seven stands for perfection: HIS PERFECT SUBMISSION TO GOD. And one young bullock—the bullock speaks of strength of purpose in service, and one of singleness of eye and heart: HIS WHOLE-HEARTED AND SINGLE-EYED PURPOSE IN SERVICE TO GOD. And two rams—the ram speaks of consecration, for two rams were sacrificed at the consecration of the priests, we take this to represent THE COMPLETE CONSECRATION OF THE LORD JESUS TO THE WILL OF GOD. In all this that Christ is and which is so acceptable to God we appear.

The Assembly of God brought into being by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2. 1, 2).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1. 3, 4).
The two loaves are spoken of as loaves of the first fruits, connecting them with the sheaf of first fruits which speaks of Christ alone; but as is the heavenly (Christ), so also are they that are heavenly (His assembly).

The Harvest.

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 23. 22).

Remarks. The harvest was not a feast, but it is deeply interesting and instructive to see how and where it is introduced in this chapter. Naturally we should have thought that its place should have been next to the feast of first fruits, for in the natural order the harvest would follow immediately after the cutting of the first sheaf of it. But for God to get His harvest out of the world it was necessary first that His work of grace should go on in the world, and so the feast of weeks comes in between the first fruits and the harvest. That work of grace has been going on now for nearly two thousand years, and the harvest must surely be almost ripe for the gathering; the assembly is nearing its completion. What joy will characterize that harvest home when dead and living saints shall respond to the shout of the Lord and rise to meet Him in the air.

But the chief point brought out in connection with the harvest is that clean riddance had not to be made of the fields, the gleanings and the corners of the fields had to be left for "the poor and the stranger." This teaches us that when the church is taken out of the world it will not be the end of God's mercy and grace towards it. The poor and the stranger, setting forth Israel and the nations, will be thought of. Israel, now cut off from the land of promise, without king, country, or heritage, and the nations, sunk in the darkness of heathendom, utter strangers to the revelation of God's grace, are both to be brought into blessing. Their blessings—all the fruit of God's sovereign mercy—are described for us in the glowing prophecies of Isaiah and the triumph songs of David, and the reading of them makes the heart rejoice, so great are they. But great as they are and altogether worthy of the King who will give them, and great as will be His glory in connection with them, they are but the gleanings of the harvest and the corners of the field when compared with the blessings that are ours in Christ and the glory that God will get "in the church through Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end."

The Resurrection of the Dead Saints and the Rapture of the Living.

"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" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

The harvest brings us to the end of this present period of God's grace. What follows has God's ways with Israel specially in view, their restoration to the land of promise and blessings in the millennium age, and this will be taken up in our next issue in connection with the three remaining feasts, if the Lord will.
Nearing Home.

A letter from one aged servant of the Lord to another. The writer passed into the Lord's presence two days after his friend.

Beloved Brother,

A "companion in tribulation" from my bed of sickness I pen a few lines of loving sympathy to you in your weakness, and, I regret to hear, much pain and suffering. The Lord has spared me this, so far, and I pray for you that your anguish may be abated. "God is love" and He will never change. (Tell your dear wife this.) I am still bedridden: save for getting out on a spinal couch on wheels when fine into the garden and to a gospel meeting occasionally on Sunday evening, when held on the ground floor. But I shall go "upstairs" presently, and not come down again till He comes back to get His rights in this scene of His rejection. "Come Lord Jesus!" we may well say, with all our hearts. Won't it be grand to see Him face to face? Meanwhile we must think of Him, and make mention of Him, as Joseph desired, and not be like the chief butler, who "did not remember Joseph but forgot him." What a picture of our hearts.

Well, I suppose the end of the journey is near for both of us, though I may outlast you a little, and then you can look out for me at the Terminus. By grace—great grace "I'll be there" and so will you, dear brother. We have enjoyed sweet fellowship on the road, but it will be sweeter far at "home."

May the good Lord greatly help and cheer you in your feebleness, sustaining you to the end and making it very bright. People often ask—"Did he die bright?" I reply, "That is a small matter—Did he live bright is far more important." And that, I thank God, you have done, and helped many by your example. As you go you may say to your dear wife like Jacob—"Behold I die, but God shall be with you." Fine words for a death-bed. Some one asked an old Scotch saint, "Would you rather live or die?" He replied, "It does not much matter, for if I live He will be with me, but if I die I shall be with Him." Not so bad, eh?

Ever affectionately yours in Christ,

W. T. P. Wolston.

In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.

In studying the lives of the men who have obtained the most from God, men who have left behind them living monuments to God's faithfulness, what strikes one is that the dominant note in their lives is not one of intense conflict and anxiety, of trust at breaking point. Far otherwise! A quiet, restful, though persistent attitude of faith and prayer has certainly been the normal in their lives. It may be, should be so with us to-day.

For, being called of God to stand for Him, to turn precious promises into present blessed facts, at once I feel that I may not compass the majestic faith of Elijah. At least the feeling that I should need to, in order to obtain answers to my prayers, would have an infinitely discouraging effect. But I believe that each one of us can learn to be a child. (Few are the prophets, plentiful the children.) And I know that, coming as a child to a loving Father, whose barns are bursting with blessings, I shall not be denied my simple and needful requests.

It is this that would allure one to give time, and yet more time, to prayer; in that it need not, should not, always be a time of stress and strain. No, rather, God has designed us to have the natural, restful, trustful expectancy of a child towards One who is infinitely loving, infinitely powerful, and infinitely anxious to pour out upon each one of us every possible good gift and grace, to enrich us, and to enable us to join with Him in "bringing many sons unto glory."

The fundamental relationship must ever remain that of a child with a father. Therefore as children to a father let us come boldly in this time of our great need.
Do not these words: "meet for the Master's use" awaken a chord of earnest desire and spiritual ambition in our souls? Out of gratitude, if for no other reason, should we not like to be vessels meet for our Lord and Master's use? Surely none of us want to be armchair Christians, or to let life slip away in such a fashion that we shall have to look back upon it with regret. We want to make the most of the opportunities that are still ours, and to hold ourselves at the Master's disposal.

With this in view, I invite you to look with me at certain things mentioned in the first two chapters of 2 Timothy, things which must be true of us if we are to be vessels meet for the Master's use. In our English Bible all these things begin with the letter S, which will serve as an aid to the memory.

I. Saved.

The first qualification is found in chapter 1, verse 9, where we read that God hath SAVED us. Here we must all begin. No one can be meet for the Master's use until he can say, "Thank God, I am saved."

Can you truthfully say, "I know that the Lord Jesus Christ is my Saviour, and that in virtue of His atoning work upon the cross, upon which I have built my hopes for all eternity, I am saved." If you can say that, then notice that when the apostle speaks of our being saved he is not speaking so much of what we are saved from, but rather of what we are saved for, in connection with God's gracious eternal purpose. Read the verse.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.""}

If some one were to ask: "What did God save you for? What had He in view when He laid His hand of grace and power upon you, and plucked you from the very jaws of destruction?" would a ready answer spring to your lips?

What has God saved us for? Not merely that we might be happy for ever, and sing His praise. Long before there was such a world as this, God cherished wonderful designs of grace. He planned to have us in His presence, intelligently capable of knowing, understanding, and enjoying Him. God said, as it were, "I will not have them from amongst the angels. I want them from among the sons of men." In due time He laid His hand upon us and picked us up for His own gracious purpose.

We must keep this in mind. I do not say we must be always talking about it, but we must give it a place in our hearts if we are to be vessels meet for the Master's use. A young man in a business firm may be employed in one of two ways. He may be employed in a mere mechanical way and be told to do this or do that without knowing the reason for which the thing has to be done. He does it and gets his weekly wage for doing it. Or he may be an employee who understands what his firm is about, and is aware of the objects that they have in view. He is a confidential servant; he is admitted to the secrets of the Company, and is able to serve them in a far better way than the other. Now it has pleased God to treat us thus. He has not kept us in the dark, but has let us into the secret of His wonderful purpose for which He has saved us, and He counts upon our interest that we should not be indifferent to that purpose.

II. Sound Words.

In chapter 1, verse 13 we have the second qualification. "Hold fast the form of SOUND WORDS." If we want to be vessels meet for the Master's use, we must lay great stress upon the sound words of divine truth. Let us avoid
Speaking of this matter in a nebulous, hazy kind of way. It has become popular nowadays to speak of divine truth as if it were an indefinite, indistinct kind of thing, with no particular bounds or outlines, which everybody can mould according to his own notions. But God’s truth has been expressed to us in words, in divine words, the very words of the Lord.

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, speaks of these words again and again. In 1 Timothy 4. 6, he speaks of being nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, not merely the truth in an indefinite kind of way, but in the very words that are the vehicle for its communication. In 1 Timothy 6. 3, we read, “If any man . . . consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing.” We must give great place to the very words of truth.

In the verse we are considering the apostle says, “Hold fast the form,” or as the better reading is, “Have an outline of sound words.” That is, have the truth in definite form. You have your correspondence in the office classified. It is all arranged in an orderly way according to some system or other. Have an outline of divine truth like that, not in your notebook merely, nor on the shelves of your library, but in your soul. If you want not only to go to heaven when the end of your life comes, but to be meanwhile meet for the Master’s use, remember what the material is that He uses. His own words. If your mind and memory are stored with sound words, words of wholesome doctrine, you will find that they will not only nourish your own soul, but will serve you in good stead when the occasion arises for the Master to make use of you.

The fact remains, however, that we are exhorted to be strong. But mark, it is “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” It is a question, if I may use a homely metaphor, of the soil into which we are striking the roots of our soul. Here is an experienced gardener, showing me some of the plants in his garden. “Look at this poor, sickly thing,” he says, “it seems to be dying.” I ask, “What is the matter with it? Is it not in a proper situation? Has it not enough air and sunshine?” “No,” he replies, “it is in unsuitable soil. I am going to transplant it. Come and look at it in six weeks time and you will see a great difference.” The reason why we often find such difficulty in being strong is that we strike the roots of our soul into the wrong kind of soil. It may be the soil of legality. We think, if only I could be this, that, or the other, then God would be more pleased with me. That is legality, the withering soil in which so many souls try to grow, only to droop and fade. There is no possibility of the Christian being strong unless he strikes his roots into the soil of divine grace, the grace that is in Christ Jesus, the free undeserved grace which is at the disposal of every Christian. We must have our hearts established in grace. It has been well said that if a Christian loses the sense of grace in his soul, that moment he is out of communion with God.

III. Strong.

The third thing is in chapter 2. verse 1. “Thou, therefore, my son, be STRONG in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Be strong. But some will say, “What is the good of bidding one like me be strong? I am just as weak as water. I wish I knew how to be strong. It is what I want to be. I wish I could firmly plant my foot down and bid defiance to the foe. But that is just the thing I cannot do. To tell me to be strong is like going to a man whose legs have been shattered by shrapnel and bidding him get up and walk.

IV. Suffer.

Turn now to 2 Timothy 2. 12. “If we SUFFER, we shall also reign with Him.” We must be prepared to suffer.
It is no good our expecting to be vessels meet for the Master's use if we are going to run away when suffering comes. This suffering is not the ordinary suffering of everyday life, which unconverted people have equally with Christians. There is no getting out of that, but there is a way of getting out of the suffering which is normal to the Christian. Do you ask, "How can I escape it?" Easily enough. Keep your light from shining. Do not let other people know that you are a Christian. Speak of your Lord only when you are in the company of Christians. Do not talk about Him in the billet, camp, office, warehouse, or in the train. You will thus escape the suffering. But if you wish to be a vessel meet for the Master's use, you must be prepared to bear it. In what particular form it may come knocking at your door none can say. It will come soon enough, you may be sure.

V. Study.

In the 15th verse there is another word, "STUDY"; use diligence.

The Christian should aim at being popular in the right place, not seeking to win the admiration of men, but the approval of God. On a certain occasion, when a crowded train was disgorging its living freight upon the platform of — Station, the ticket collector at the gate experienced considerable difficulty in dealing with the crowd. All had to file through the one narrow exit, with the result that the people at the back began to use strong language about the delay. A gentleman as he passed through the gateway said to the collector, "You do not seem to be very popular with some of these folks."

"No," he replied, but pointing to the windows of an office above his head, he added: "That is where I want to be popular." His desire was to win the approval of those whose servant he was, rather than that of the people whose tickets he was checking. Where do we want to be popular? If we want to be vessels meet for the Master's use we must seek to be popular up there. "Study to show thyself approved unto God."

VI. Shun.

Coming to verse 15 there is a word we must emphasize, the word "SHUN."

"Shun profane and vain babblings." The babblings that the apostle referred to were, no doubt, the denials of the resurrection, which in verse 18 he deplores. But nowadays things have gone much further, and we find not only the resurrection, but the virgin birth, the deity and the sinlessness of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the necessity of atonement, the eternity of punishment, and the inspiration of the Scriptures denied. Such are the profane and vain babblings that we in the twentieth century have to shun as we would shun poison. It is a mistake to put ourselves in the way of hearing these things on the plea of charity. An Englishman, of course, has a sense of fair play. He says, "I would like to hear the other side of the story." This verse guards us against such a thought. We have to shun profane and vain babblings.

Moreover, according to verse 21, we have to keep clear, not only of the babblings, but of the babblers; not only of the false teachings, but of the men whose teachings they are. We have by God's grace to put our foot down firmly, if we want to be vessels meet for the Master's use, and give these things a wide berth. Only we must be careful not to go to the other extreme, and regard as an enemy one who is perhaps as true a servant of the Lord as any, just because we do not see eye to eye with him about the interpretation of some verse in Scripture.

There were two men in the west of America trying to find their way home
one foggy night. As one man was getting near his home he saw an uncouth form showing itself through the fog, and concluded it was a bear coming down from the Rockies. He got out his revolver and presented it at the object in the fog, when he heard a voice saying, "Don't shoot; it's only me." He was going to shoot his brother John, thinking him to be a bear.

Now do not let us shoot our brother under the impression that he is a bear.

VII. Sanctified.

Lastly, in verse 21, we read of being "SANCTIFIED." What does this word "sanctified" mean? It means to be held at the absolute disposal of one person alone. A verse in Psalm 41 gives the idea: "The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself." Let me explain.

I was staying in a house where I had a lot of writing to do. My fountain pen had run dry, and I had no means of refilling it. I said to the kind lady of the house, "Could you lend me a pen and some ink?" She brought me an inkstand with several pens. I took up the first one, and was preparing to write with it, when the lady said, "Excuse me; I did not see that pen was there. Would you mind using one of the others? It is my special pen, and I always notice that if anybody else uses it it does not write smoothly with me afterwards." That was a sanctified pen. It was a pen devoted to the exclusive use of its owner. This is the secret of true sanctification, to be devoted altogether to the use of the one to whom we belong; not to let the world lay its finger upon us; not to let the enemy make use of us for his own base purposes, for this will only spoil us for the Master's use. There are many enticing voices around us. To be "vessels meet for the Master's use" we need to remember that we belong to Him, not only by our own choice, but as having been set apart by Himself, and for Himself, as His. May God graciously help us to give these things a place in our hearts, and thus be vessels meet for the Master's use.

The Blessings of the Lowly.

The lamb is one of the lowliest and meekest creatures, and such as have his character have the very bosom of Christ: "He shall carry the lambs in His bosom" (Isa. 40. 11); yea, "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper" (Ps. 72. 12). The Lord giveth more grace, He resistent the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Grace upon grace is for the humble (James 4. 6). "God shall save the humble" (Job 22. 29); and hear his desire (Ps. 10. 17); revive his spirit (Isa. 57. 15); beautify Him with salvation (Ps. 149. 4); honour him (Prov. 15. 33); satisfy him (Ps. 22. 26); guide him in judgment (Ps. 25. 9); increase his joy (Isa. 29. 19); bless him and give him a sure inheritance (Matt. 5. 5). None can extol grace as the humble soul, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15. 10). Grace is mercy given for nothing, and the promise is made to the humble. In our thoughts of others, everyone is to esteem another better than himself (Phil. 2. 3).

Humility is a soul smoothed and lying level with itself, no higher than God hath set it, "I do not exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me" (Ps. 137. 1). The proud soul hath feathers broader than his nest. The humble soul is a door-neighbour to grace. Christ draws near to the cast down mourner in Sion, "to give him beauty for ashes, . . . the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61. 3). The Saviour's hand in heaven reaches down to lift up and hold up the dependent soul on earth.
"He was moved with Compassion." Mark 6. 34.

In a world of misery and want how blessed to know ONE whose heart feels it all, as it were makes it all His own, and whose emotions of pitying love are so expressed that we can know and see them: "He was moved with compassion." That blessed face plainly told of the throbbings of divine mercy that worked within. The heart expressed itself ere the hand moved to relieve what the eye looked upon. Nor was it a transient feeling, a passing emotion. Human misery found a home in the heart of Jesus, and He, who "is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," albeit now on the throne of God in glory, is still "moved with compassion," as He looks out upon, and takes in, all the misery and want that plead incessantly, in accents of ever-deepening intensity at the throne of mercy.

If the Shepherd of Israel was "moved with compassion" as He looked upon the "children of Abraham," as sheep having no shepherd, how deep must be the emotion with which the Lord Jesus now views the "children of God" now again scattered abroad! What terrible havoc the "grievous wolves" have made in "the flock of God!" How the speakers of "perverse things have led away disciples after themselves!" What wide-spread divisions and offences have they wrought "who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly"; surely all this appeals, with force, to Him Who loved the church and gave Himself for it.

But it is not only that Jehovah's people were as "sheep not having a shepherd." Had they not sinned themselves? Had their hearts been "right with Him?" Had they been "steadfast in His Covenant"? Full well He knew that it was far otherwise; the long sad history of that "perverse and stiff-necked" people was all before Him, "but He, being full of compassion, forgave them their iniquity" (Ps. 78.). And has the "church of God" suffered only from false teachers and bad guides? Have the "children of God" a better history than the "children of Israel"? Have they been less perverse and stiff-necked? Have they altogether kept His word? and have their hearts been right with Him, who redeemed with His own blood? How well He knows, higher privileges and better promises have but brought out deeper sin, and, relatively, less response to His love! Surely every heart, rightly exercised before God, knows this. How sweet then, in our day, to turn to Him whose "compassion fail not" (Lam. 3. 22), and who having loved His own that are in the world loved them unto the end!

We do well to be at home with that deeply moved heart of pitying and forgiving love, as it "began to teach them many things." True enough, He now speaks from heaven, but heaven is open to us, and distance there is none for faith, and we are an heavenly people instead of an earthly people.

Failure and ignorance are around us on every hand, and only rightly can we feel the one and minister to the other, as, in the deep sense of our own personal failure, we are really near Him who, above all evil, sees it all, only to find in it the occasion for the ministry of love.

They who would, in any little degree serve the sheep of Christ in these last and closing days of the church's history on earth, and amid "perilous times," such as we now are in, need much to ponder the words, spoken to us of old, "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother"; while, above all, much should they be, in spirit with that "faithful and merciful High Priest," who, Himself "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," is "able to have compassion on the ignorant and out of the way," and "ever liveth to make intercession for them."

(C. W.)
God’s Mercy and Man’s Inhumanity.

God is good and doeth good. No man could come to Him without getting good, for He IS good, but to hide away from Him can only result in evil and sorrow both now and for ever. It is the business of the servants of the Lord to proclaim the goodness of God, and again to proclaim it, for He is much slandered in these days, and it is a sad feature of the condition of men that they would rather believe the lie about God than the truth, their minds being blinded by the god of this world (the devil) (2 Cor. 4· 4).

There are some who boldly cast upon God the blame of all the cruelties that men perpetrate upon each other, and deny that God is good so long as they are prevented from gratifying themselves as they please, and are made to suffer in any way. The atheist takes a less blasphemous but equally foolish view of things and says, “There is no God.” A leader of this latter school has recently written—

"Under the weight of overwhelming calamity the world staggers and groans. Was all this designed before the foundations of the earth were fixed? How then can anyone worship the designer? Is it a by-product, an undesigned and unexpected result of creative power? How then can omnipotence exist? Does not the state of Europe make belief in God a superstition? In the shadow of the immense disaster the figure of the loving Father recedes into dim and formless outline. Trust in His care grows feeble and faint. Human tears blur the vision of eternal bliss."

We are glad that the writer of this paragraph has the feeling that if God is, He will love His creatures and care for them, but he stands with the fool when he says, “There is no God” (Ps. 14). If there is no God we are without hope, or our fellow-men to look to, and what faith can we have in men when we see that all their efforts to deliver themselves from their miseries and attain their ambitions only increase their sorrows. When we see that the more strenuous their efforts are the worse are the results.

It is the popular and easy way to blame Prussian junkerism for all the miseries of these days, but we must look deeper than that for the cause of them and remember that those who are readiest now to saddle Germany with the world’s calamity were foremost a few years ago in hailing her as the leader of the world’s progress in almost every department of life, but mostly in denying the true God, and His Christ and His Bible. That despised Bible delivered us long ago from any faith in man’s ability to deliver himself from the woes from which he suffers, and the present “overwhelming calamity” confirms what the Bible teaches, so that it is plain to us, and should be plain to all, that to be without God is to be without hope.

It is remarkable how the atheists themselves acknowledge the hopelessness of their position and prospects. One of the most famous of them has expressed it thus:

"Life is a narrow vale between the narrow peaks of two eternities. We strive to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings.”

And as to the end of life this same eloquent denier of the existence of God has said:

"For whether in mid-seas or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. Every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love, and every moment jewelled with a joy, will at its close become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death.”

Yes, we can understand the fears and gloom of the man who is without God, for without God we are without hope and without good.
But if "God is,"' and if He is good, why does the world "stagger and groan under the weight of an overwhelming calamity?" The question is not a difficult one to answer, it is found in a striking passage from one of the most human of poets:

"Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn."

But the Bible goes to the root of the matter and gives us the cause of man's inhumanity. He is not as God made him. He has broken away from God's rule, and proclaimed his independence of God, as a star might break away from its orbit. And this determination to be master of his own destiny is the cause of every sorrow and calamity.

"By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin," and the terrible consequences of that primal disobedience, which the whole race by nature has willingly endorsed, is that,

"THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS: THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD."

DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS:

AND THE WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN:

THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.

And that indictment was not penned by a sour pessimist in the twentieth century but is part of God's own summing up of man's condition in Romans 3.

Men delight in the thought that they are independent of God, but it is a delusion, they are not, for in Him we live and move and have our being. He is the faithful Creator, giving to all life and breath, and all things. His mercies preserve us. Every breath of our nostrils and every throb of our feeble hearts is by God's power and ordering. He is above His creation, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. 6. 16); yet He is not indifferent to the travail of His creatures, even though that travail is the result of their rebellion against Himself. He has His part in events of to-day and His part is that of THE LIVING GOD, THE PRESERVER OF ALL MEN (1 Tim. 4. 10). And this He has been towards men from the beginning. There have been times when His sore judgments have fallen upon men, as at the flood, and on the cities of the plain, and on the seven nations of Canaan, but this was because their revolt against Him was so open and determined and their moral degradation so horrible that the race could only be preserved by the extermination of those upon whom those judgments fell. As the surgeon's knife cuts deeply into the flesh to remove the foul cancer, so cut God's judgments into these scenes of violence for the good of His creatures. Yet judgment is His strange work. He delights in mercy. We count His longsuffering salvation. He is the preserver of all men.

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature," is an old proverb; but those who are without God know not how to preserve themselves, they can only destroy themselves and their fellows by their ambitious schemes. Were God not the preserver of all men, and did He not intervene continually in preserving mercy, the race would have destroyed itself long ago.

We have a solemn indication of this in Revelation 6. The seer in that remarkable chapter records his divinely-given vision of what shall follow the taking out of this world of those that are Christ's at His coming for them. The day of God's longsuffering will close and His mercy give place to His wrath. Men will be left for a brief space to their own devices before God's direct judgment falls upon them, and the Lord Jesus appears to judge the world in righteousness. There first appears

A RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE, with bow and crown, going forth conquering and to conquer. The victories he gains are bloodless and the whole description of him is one of promise,
but there comes a change, and any hopes raised in the hearts of men by his appearance swiftly disappear, for he is superseded by

A RIDER ON A RED HORSE, who takes peace from the earth, so that they kill one another; and this evidently indicates internecine strife more than war between nations—a "French revolution" throughout the civilized world.

A RIDER ON A BLACK HORSE follows, telling of grim famine, crushing with its miseries those who escape the sword, and making the way easy for

A RIDER ON A PALE HORSE who will come forth killing with sword, with hunger, and with death and with the beasts of the earth. And this is not the end as some men fondly hope that death must be the end of all things for them, for

HELL FOLLOWS with him to claim the soul of those whose bodies are slain by the overwhelming calamities that the prophet saw. How quick, how terrible is THIS DESCENT OF MAN, from the promise of the rider on the white horse to the hopeless depths of hell. Such will be the descent of man when God's preserving mercy is in measure withdrawn from him, and even now the swift steeds are bound to the chariot and are straining at the curb and would take that steep gradient at a headlong gallop, but for the restraining hand of God, and men, so blind are they, would fondly believe that they were speeding to the attainment of their most cherished ambitions. The ascent of man is a false dream, a delusion of the old serpent, the descent of man is a terrible fact.

Was it not so in the beginning? Adam was set up as lord of this lower creation to subdue it and to enjoy the fruits of it. To use the apocalyptic figure, he was set as a rider on a white horse. But how soon he was unhorsed by the devil! How soon he choose to ride in independence of God who would have preserved him in that position of peace and prosperity had he but trusted Him! And the inevitable result appeared in his own family, for when Cain rose up and slew his brother the red horse of hatred and murder had appeared. The cause of the overwhelming calamities is not that there is no God who cares for His creatures, as the atheist would tell us, but because men wont have God, because they chose their own way and hate His restraint. And with this goes hatred of one another.

God still shows Himself to be good. He does not leave Himself without witness to this. He is the preserver of all men and He gives us "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14).

He gives the increase of the earth in answer to man's toil upon it. Yea, every good and perfect gift comes down from Him, and He continues to give though the multitudes never so much as thank Him for His gifts. He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust, and He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and He turns the very miseries that result from man's inhumanity and injustice to one another to the good of all those who turn to Him, so that their sorrows often become their greatest blessings. His goodness is manifested in His command to men to repent, to turn from their own ways that can only involve them in everlasting ruin to Him who alone can do them good. It makes itself eloquent as He beseeches men to be reconciled to Him; it shines forth from the face of the Saviour who sits at His right hand, but who was once crucified at Calvary that men might believe the God loves them. "For God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

If any have doubts as to the goodness of God, because of the ills they suffer, let them turn to Him and test Him. Apart from Him there is no good and we have no hope. "Who is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."
Among his writings the late Dean Farrar has left a volume entitled "Seekers After God." Its principal characters are Seneca, the tutor of Nero; Epictetus, the philosopher of Phrygia; and Marcus Aurelius, Emperor of Rome.

In his book the Dean labours to show that the aspirations of these men were the yearnings of the human heart after communion with God; yearnings which, if they did not yield the peace realized by those in the Christian faith, at least brought a measure of light and comfort. This too, was to be expected, he thinks, seeing that mankind are told to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17. 24-28).

It is therefore proposed in this paper to enquire into the matter in the clear light of what information God has given us on it. This means, simply, that we shall search and see what Scripture says as to the natural man's yearnings for communion with God. The answer we will find in Romans 3. 11:

"There is None that Seeketh after God."

Let the reader note that this statement is found in an epistle that argues its points and demonstrates its conclusions by bringing forward evidence in proof. So that we would confidently assert that he who would enquire as to the facts regarding the heroes of Farrar will find himself on solid ground just in so far as he adheres to the Word of God.

Of course to say that man, although fallen, is still conscious of his dependence upon his Maker, whether he designates Him as the Great Spirit or what not, is only to say what no Christian would deny. And to assert further that periodically he may give expression to cries of weakness and need, however inarticulate they may be, is only to assert the truth. Indeed this can be learned at the outset of human history after the transgression of Adam, for when he repudiated the authority of God he certainly failed to eradicate the instincts of a dependent being.

But did Adam therefore seek to be recovered to communion with the God whose just claims he had so recently renounced? Alas! No! On the contrary the Scripture narrative alleges that he sought to hide from Him. Or did the violence that began to fill the world from Cain onward drive mankind to the covert of those wings wherein alone was shelter? The flood supplies the true answer. When that desolating judgment was past did its fearful example secure the allegiance of man to God as his gathering centre? We must look at the tower of Babel to learn the truth. Did the subsequent dispersion of the race over the face of the earth and the sense of weakness this entertained induce man to seek intercourse with the God who had circumvented his plotting after total independence? Nay, reader, the divine record shows that thenceforth a new and horrible thing began to spread until it prevailed over the habitable earth, namely, idolatry.

To this it may be answered: But did not the fact of idolatry demonstrate that man could not exclude the idea of God from his mind? True! but it also proved that even that idea had been wrought upon by Satan to secure for himself the homage belonging to the one true God. So much so that in a later day the apostle Paul could inform some who had been rescued from the diabolical system that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils (demons), and not to God" (1 Cor. 10. 20).

Indeed an impartial observation based upon the facts of history as accurately set forth in Scripture and only too plainly corroborated in profane writings,
would be that the children of men are "Departers from God" and not seekers after Him. Beyond question there appears at every crucial epoch an evil bias at work in their minds that never fails to sway them in the wrong direction.

Take for example Israel's conduct at the foot of Mount Sinai. It only needed a brief absence of the guiding and restraining presence of Moses to send them dancing around a calf of gold. And if we review their conduct in a later day we perceive the evil bias accomplishing their dispersion among the heathen, and we further learn that even the Jews subsequently recovered and permitted to rebuild the temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah were the forefathers of that generation which turned from the Son of God with contempt and hatred while preferring a robber. But to return.

No doubt Dean Farrar thought he was using the mantle of charity when he gave it as his opinion that the pagan philosophers of Greece and Rome were "Seekers after God." But it must not be forgotten that charity must always be according to truth, and therefore the most that can be said for Farrar's mistaken conclusions is, that, speaking from the view point of the natural man while ignoring the plain statements of God, he was misled into calling darkness light and evil good.

In point of fact the philosophers in question were not seekers after "God," but seekers after an ideal conjured in their minds which one of their kind has called "a projected image of our own highest conceptions," an image which varies according to the standards of different nations and according to the varying standards of different philosophers. An example of this was furnished recently when an Irish Roman Catholic who had turned infidel undertook to write a life of Christ. Of course it was a blasphemous work. But the feature of it which even the most laudatory of his critics were agreed upon, was the fact that his supposed Jewish characters and dialogues were not Jewish but Irish. The author in his attempted portrayal of Christ, without being aware of it, merely "projected an image" that told even his supporters how totally unable he was to rise beyond himself.

But let us now examine another question which arises. It is this. Even if some could be found who in their natural state could be described as seekers after God, would such be able to discover Him? Let us put the question in the language of Job,

"Canst Thou by Searching Find Out God?"

If we search the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation we shall find that the answer to this question is NO! God must give a revelation of Himself if men are to know Him. Were it otherwise God would be merely the "projected image of our own highest conceptions," or man would be equal to God and therefore not man at all.

At this point some may remind us that the heathen are held accountable to God "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1. 19-20): all of which it is most important to remember. But let us observe that even this is revelation. That is to say, God speaks by the things that are made and does so in such a way that His speech can be "understood" by the heathen wherever they will hear.

Nevertheless this revelation of God in "His eternal power and Godhead" (Divinity, N.T.), is not the revelation of God in His nature. It does not reveal His heart, although to be sure His goodness and beneficence are seen therein. To illustrate this: Suppose we had witnessed Stephenson's locomotive in
motion for the first time, no doubt the novel sight would have impressed us with a sense of the inventor’s ability, and possibly some might even reflect that his genius was constructive and beneficent rather than destructive and injurious, but we would not therefore have learned to know the man in his nature. His little son if only five years of age would have known him better than all the engineers of England.

But some one may ask: Has God revealed Himself in such a way as this? *Has He told out His heart?* Yes, reader, He has. In the Son He has declared Himself. Hence it is written: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18). Yes, in His holy life Jesus truly was, as has been said by a devout disciple, “all that man could be to God and all that God could be to man.” And never was this so fully declared as upon the cross. There it was that the ineffable love of God was exhibited in all its fullness before the universe.

But was there a particle of evidence at the cross to indicate that men were seeking God? Nay! It was demonstrated at the cross that men were “Departers from God,” haters of God. At the same time, blessed for ever be God! It was proved that God is the seeker.

God is the Seeker after Man.

One might say that Calvary was the culmination of the divine search begun among the trees of Eden, when God called unto Adam saying, “Where art thou?” That was the beginning of a long and persistent search which, in principle, was continued down the ages of time. Consequently we read how “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God” (Ps. 53:2–3). And did He discover any seekers after Him? Not one. On the contrary it had to be said: “Everyone of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” But although not a single human face was turned in the direction of God He did not on that account cease to seek man’s recovery. He continued seeking him. He was doing so in the works of creation; more tenderly still in His acts and ways among Israel; most searchingly through the appeals of men raised up for that purpose; while all that time (might we not say?), He looked down so longingly upon an alienated race. Could He do more? Yes! Did He do more? Ah! yes, HE CAME HIMSELF to win the affections of their hearts. When Jesus came, God came.

“Well might we read with adoring hearts the words of the great Seeker and Lover of souls: “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

And why did He seek them so? It was because in the compassionate love of His heart He would win them and so affect them that they would in result become seekers after Him, “Seekers after God.” Thus it is that we can understand those calls which only a divine person could utter, “Come unto Me”, for rest; “Come unto Me” and drink, etc. In His inimitable way He wrought to change wanderers into seekers. We read, for instance, that He foundeth Philip and saith unto him, “Follow Me.” Thenceforth we learn that Philip foundeth Nathanael and saith to him: “We have found Him,” etc.

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And now that we have been found of Him, now that we have been brought to God (1 Peter 3. 18), have we ceased to be seekers after Him? Surely not. It is true that we do not seek Him as those who know Him not, but we do seek His holy presence in the desire after increasing communion with Him. And this is good. For we know that if the divinely formed affections in the psalmist of old made his soul pant after God (Ps. 42. 1), they could not be less effective in Christians. Thus it is we hear the apostle saying to his beloved Thessalonians: ‘The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for (the patience of) Christ’ (2 Thess. 3. 5).

No doubt we ought to praise God more than we do that we have been set in relationships to God such as the Psalmist could not have known, and have received into our hearts the Spirit of sonship whereby we cry: Abba! Father!—all most true and blessed is this. Nonetheless, our desire after communion with God should surely take character from and correspond with growing strength with the place of nearness we occupy.

Brethren! let us ponder the words of Master Tauler of mediaeval Strassburg: ‘Hear how He calleth with His mighty voice, ‘Whosoever is athirst, let him drink of the water of life freely!’... Children, the thirst is first in Him. He thirsteth for the souls that are athirst for Him, and when He findeth us, He gives us to drink so gloriously, so freely, and so fully, that from us there floweth forth the living water. . . . If we hindered not His blessed work, how gladly, how fully, would that tide of life and joy flow down, as a mighty rain filling the valleys and depths. . . . The Holy Ghost prepares the house in which He comes to dwell. And He fills the house with Himself for He is God. Every chamber, every corner is filled with His presence, though often we are not aware of His presence and His work, because we are taken up with outward things, and He will not let us know the sweetness of His presence till we have closed the doors, and sat down in the stillness of rest, to listen to His voice. The disciples shut the doors for fear of the Jews. . . . The Jews in the disciples’ days could only hurt the body, but this present evil world will hurt the soul, and take from you the blessed intercourse of the heart with God.’

In conclusion let us weigh these words of beloved Mr. Cheyne: ‘Be as much as you can with God. I declare to you that I had rather be one hour with God, than a thousand with the sweetest society on earth or in heaven. All other joys are but streams; God is the fountain: ‘All my springs are in Thee.’’ Again, ‘Rose early to seek God, and found Him whom my soul loveth. Who would not rise early to meet such company.’

Growth in Unity.

LOVE is of supreme importance, if we are to know the joy of true fellowship and grow up in the divine unity in which grace has placed us; it is the divine nature, and so the true nature of Christ’s body. This is not human love, which ends with death and which has been terribly spoilt by each member of Christ’s body for every other member of it a real thing. It is the vital breath of God’s sin and selfishness, but the love that led the Lord into death for us that it might flow into our hearts, filling them with gladness, then upward from us to Him from whom it has come and outward to all who are His. One whole chapter (1 Cor. 13.) is devoted to a description of it. It is this that makes the care of assembly, the atmosphere without which no plant in His husbandry (chap. 3.) can thrive.

(J. T. M.)
The Court and the Tabernacle. (Read Exodus 27. 9–19.)

The Court of the Tabernacle consisted of an oblong quadrangle made of fine twined linen, suspended by hooks of silver, and upheld by pillars socketed in brass. It was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits broad.

On the east side the curtains were to extend 15 cubits from each corner, that is 30 cubits in all, leaving 20 cubits for the gate of the court.

It will be noticed then that the total length of the curtains was 280 cubits, exactly the same length as the ten curtains of fine twined linen which formed the innermost covering of the tabernacle itself.

In both cases the fine twined linen speak of Christ in His perfect purity of life. The ten curtains of fine twined linen were only seen by the priests; the curtains of the court were seen by the people generally. In both cases they measured 280 cubits, telling the tale that the blessed Lord was not one thing before men and another thing in the eyes of His own. True there is a different manifestation to His own to what is seen by the world, but in both cases there is nothing but absolute purity. When the question was asked of the Lord, "Who art Thou?" He could reply, "Altogether that which I also say unto you" (John 8. 25 N.T.). Who among Adam's fallen children could say that? Do we not represent ourselves to be better than we really are? How blessed to let our eye fall on perfection and rest with joy and satisfaction there.

And yet there is another side to this that is affecting to our hearts, and that is that Christ has left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (see 1 Peter ii. 21).

But the reader may say that we shall never attain to perfection. There is no greater mistake than to profess to attain to "sinless perfection." Those who fall into that error know neither themselves nor the subtlety of sin. One verse of Scripture condemns them, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1. 8). Yet though this be so, perfection is the only fitting place for our eyes to rest upon and the only object for us to have before us.

As Christ is our Object so we shall be transformed into moral likeness to Him.

Two hundred and eighty cubits is the multiple of 7 by 40—40 the number speaking of testing, 7 of perfection, thus bringing before us the full and complete test the Lord passed through, yet came out of the ordeal triumphantly. It is as if a swimmer dressed in linen were obliged to swim through a turbulent sea of pitch, and came out without a spot or stain. Forty is clearly the number speaking of testing, as witness the forty years testing of Israel in the wilderness, and the forty days testing of the blessed Lord in the wilderness.

The pillars supporting the fine twined linen were socketed in brass, and filleted in silver, and hooks provided for the keeping secure the fine twined linen.

The boards of the tabernacle were socketed in silver, here the pillars of the court are socketed in brass. Why this difference? The boards speak of the believer, and his standing (silver) in the full grace and power of redemption before God. The pillars socketed in brass reveal to us a very touching thought, viz: that the Lord Jesus could not have presented His blessed holy life of purity to men save on the ground of His atoning death. When God's chains were presented at Sinai, judgment alone was the result of the breaking of the law and the failing to respond to God's
claims. But the presentation of God in grace through Christ, could only be on the ground of His death. No gracious words could have fallen from His lips, no leper could have been cleansed by His touch, no blind could have received their sight, no deaf their hearing, no dead their life, had He not come to die. One gracious word from Him necessitated in righteousness His death.

So we have the sockets of brass—the presentation of His death as meeting man's need in responsibility, and not as presenting redemption from God's side, which is seen in silver, the ransom money.

But if the pillars were thus socketed in brass at the base they were filleted and hooked in silver at the top. God has His blessed appreciation of the atoning death of Christ, and it was in virtue of this in the eye of God (before the work was actually accomplished) that the pleasure of God in presenting in grace to men the perfection of manhood as seen in the person of Jesus could have been seen. He could say, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17).

Next, we learn that the gate of the court was to be made of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen with needlework. No cherubim, as in the inner rail were to be seen on it but it was to be exactly of the same materials and workmanship as the door of the tent. This shows that God's approach to man in Christ is in grace, as man responds and draws near he finds nothing but righteous grace. We have before spoken of blue as being a symbol of the heavenly character of the perfect manhood of our blessed Lord; of purple as symbolizing His universal glories as the Son of Man; of scarlet, His kingly glory as the Messiah in connection with Israel; the fine twined linen as bringing before us His blessed holy life, the needlework symbolizing all the minutiae of that life. Many a Christian will face a crisis by the help of God right manfully and yet fail in the small details of life, politeness, tact, consideration, etc.—qualities which may be natural but in Christians should have their spring in that new nature which is of God.

In connection with the pillars and sockets connected with the gate their number was four—a number speaking of that which is universal, thus bringing out the fact that God's grace is not presented to one nation, but to all nations, not presented to one class, but to every class. It reminds us of "God so loved the world" (John 3. 16). "Four" speaks of what is universal—the four corners of the earth, the four winds of heaven, etc.

Finally, all the vessels of the tabernacle service, and the pins to steady the boards of the tabernacle and the pillars of the court were all of brass, emphasizing how everything is ordered in its relation to Christ's death meeting man's responsibility before God, enabling God to come out as a Saviour God.

Thus the whole of the tabernacle speaks of the glories of Christ, the mystery of His person, the wonders of His work, the assembling of His people as God's dwelling-place on earth. Wondrous truths indeed, far beyond man's thoughts yet such as the Holy Spirit gladly leads us into.

Subjection to the Lord will keep us in separation from evil, i.e. HOLINESS, holiness without which there could be no practical unity; but holiness is not merely negative in character; it does involve separation from evil and all that is opposed to God, but it has its positive side—in holiness we are separated to the Lord, and as indwelt by the Spirit are put in relation with God in order that we may glorify Him.

True Christian fellowship is still possible, for the Holy Spirit is still here to make it so, but it can only exist and be maintained in HOLINESS, LOVE, AND SUBJECTION TO THE WILL OF THE LORD.
Doctrine and Practice.

WILLIAM BARKER.

In order to follow the apostle's line of argument in the Epistle to the Romans we should notice that the first section of the epistle, the *doctrinal*, comprises the first eight chapters. Each section is sub-divided into two, the first part ending with verse 11 of chapter 5. The second section of the epistle, the *dispensational*, runs on from the end of the 8th chapter to the beginning of the 12th. The third section, the *practical*, beginning with chapter 12, runs on to the end.—(Author's Note.)

Before we speak of what our practice should be like, it is very important that we should be established in the grace of God. Nothing seems to me more mischievous than for people who are not true Christians at all to be exhorted to lead a Christian life and practise Christian virtues, as if anybody could become a Christian by trying to lead the life of one, or by endeavouring to practise day by day what he believes to be Christian virtues. To live a Christian life you must first be a Christian. Hence the importance of being established at the start in the grace of God.

Let us therefore look first at the opening verses of Chapter 5. Notice how frequently God Himself is spoken of. First of all, we have peace with God; then in the second verse we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; in verse 5 we read about the love of God; in verse 10 we are reconciled to God; and in verse 11 we joy in God. The whole passage is big, so to speak, with God Himself in these various connections.

Perhaps it is not necessary for me to dwell on peace with God, the first great Christian blessing. It is the privilege of every believer in the Lord Jesus to be in the enjoyment of it. I do not mean that every believer is in the enjoyment of it, though he should be, as it is his undoubtedly through grace. Peace with God, let me say, has nothing whatever to do with the circumstances through which believers pass. Our circumstances differ. Sometimes they are of a pleasing nature; sometimes they are most trying.

It is the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding which is connected with our circumstances, but not so *peace with God*, of which our passage speaks. This is connected with the question of our acceptance with God. Having been justified on the principle of faith, what flows naturally from that is that we have peace with God. If our consciences have been awakened, and have been troubled about our sins, and we have understood what it is to believe in Jesus through the grace of God, and that God has justified us, we can but have peace. It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? So that a state of justification is the very opposite of a state of condemnation. If God condemns the sinner, he is condemned indeed; if God justifies him, then is he justified indeed.

Now a justified person is a person whom God holds to be righteous, and against whom no charge can ever be successfully laid. If then we are justified on the principle of faith by the grace of God, on account of the precious blood of Jesus, the natural and inevitable result is that we are perfectly at peace with God. We know very well that if God has justified us, we have nought to fear.

There is a further thing in verse 5. We read here of the love of God shed abroad in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit given to him. We become sensible that we are loved by God. It is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts, not love to God. No doubt the Holy Spirit does lead us to love God. Christians are those that love God, but this passage speaks, not of the love that is begotten in our hearts Godward, but God's own love to us. God loved us,
when there was nothing loveable in us, and this love of God, immense, immeasurable, is shed abroad in the heart of the believer, so that it becomes a great and a grand reality to him.

Passing on to verse 9, we read that, "Much more than, being now justified by His blood (the meritorious cause of it), we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Sometimes in the Bible salvation is spoken of as an accomplished thing; sometimes as a process going on, and sometimes as a thing that is still future. There is wrath coming, a day of wrath. We shall be saved from it. The One in the power of whose blood we have been justified, who is now living up there at the right hand of God, will take care that we shall be sheltered, and that the storms that are connected with the day of wrath shall never burst upon those who have been justified by His blood.

Moreover, as verse 10 teaches us, having been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we shall be saved by His life. That is the Lord Jesus in heaven. How little we think of it: His present ministry, saving us all along the road, a continuous salvation. He lives to bring us safely through...

We reach the highest point in verse 11. *We joy in God.* Beyond this we shall never go in heaven or on earth. How wonderful must that grace be that can so deal with us, put away our sins, overcome the natural enmity of our hearts, and set us at rest in God's presence, so that we can joy in God, make our boast in God, triumph in God, exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Another line of teaching comes before us in Chapter 6. Here we learn that we have died with Christ. *God is the new master.*

The apostle is led into this strain of argument to meet the objections that people raised in his day, and that many raise in our days, to the gospel of the grace of God. The apostle has shown in the end of Chapter 5, that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and that if sin reigned unto death, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. "Oh," says somebody, "if that is your doctrine, then a very just deduction to be drawn is that we may continue in sin that God's grace may abound yet more and more."

"No," replies the apostle, "no such deduction may be drawn." He does not weaken the doctrine of grace, but he brings in this other fact, the fact that we have died with Christ to our old master, sin, and it no longer has authority over us. We have come under the authority of God and of righteousness.

Just a final word on the practical section. In Chapter 12, the apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." I think this part joins on to the doctrine of Chapter 6. First of all, we are to *present.* The beseeching is based on the mercies of God, some of which have been seeking to set before you. Now we are besought to present our body, that which we have used as a vehicle for the doing of our own will, to be used henceforth for purposes that will serve His will and His glory. This is to be, on our part, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, our intelligent service. It is not to be a blind and unintelligent act the meaning of which we do not know. We are to own now God's claims over us, and day by day to glorify Him in our bodies. That is the first thing.

The second is: Do not be conformed to this world, the vast system of things that is around us, and in which God has no place, where man is the central and commanding figure, and where man's will is dominant.
Precious Gems of Scripture.

The "One Pearl."

"One pearl of great price" (Matt. 13. 46). "Every several gate was of one pearl" (Rev. 21. 21).

It is well known that the pearl is a symbol of the assembly. It is formed in the depths of the ocean within the shell of the pearl oyster, as a result of the intrusion of some foreign matter. The irritation set up calls forth the best energies of the bivalve, for failing to oust the intruder it proceeds to cover it with fine concentric layers of pure pearl; there is thus formed as a result of that which seemed only evil one of the most pure, beautiful, and valuable things in the creation; a pearl, distinct from the oyster itself, and yet of it. Such is the symbol the Spirit uses to teach us what the assembly is.

But when this type is taken up in Scripture there are not many pearls but one only in the mind of God. And it is so treasured by Him, that He names it thus but once on the sacred page: "one pearl of great price" (Matt. 13.)

It is His own workmanship; formed and fashioned in the darkness of this sinful world; but soon to shine back its iridescent beauty, in answer to His own light, in glory. It is the fruit of His own omniscience and omnipotence; to the praise of His glory, who works all things after the counsel of His own will. In spite of the intrusion of sin, nay the very intrusion of sin has yielded the opportunity for the manifestation of His wondrous wisdom and grace, He will through redemption bring up out of the dark waters of this world the well-loved assembly, the bride of Christ, which shall be to His eternal glory, and in doing this the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge has also been shown out, for He is the merchantman who sold all that He had in order to purchase this one pearl of great price. It is written, This is a great mystery ... concerning Christ and the assembly (Eph. 5. 32).

The Lord Jesus Christ when on earth gave to His disciples this parable to teach them the precious truth as to how He would find and secure the assembly (Matt. 13. 46). He distinguishes His own from the multitude by saying, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it is not given." What then would He have those who belong to Him to know by this interesting parable? That He saw the assembly in all its beauty according to the glorious thought and purpose of God. It is this of which the "one pearl of great price" speaks. It did not historically begin to exist before Pentecost: it was nevertheless in the mind of God before the world began: but in its beauteous perfection, it will first be seen as the future city of glory, described in Revelation 21., when each of its twelve gates shall be of "one pearl."

In its completed perfection, the outcome of the counsel and work of God, our Lord Jesus Christ viewed it; He saw and estimated its value; and He, who was the rightful heir of David's throne as Matthew 1. shows, and the heir of world-wide glory came from His heavenly glory to seek it, and gave all that He had to secure it for Himself. This assembly embraces every believer washed by the Saviour's precious blood and indwelt for the Holy Spirit. During its historical development in this sinful world they pass through repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Sanctification, cleansing, chastening, purging, tribulation—sorrow and joy in various exercises, are experienced by them, as they grow up to that beautiful perfection in Christ which shall be seen in glory. Christ loved His assembly with such a complete devotion that not only did He give "all that He had" for it, but, as Ephesians 5. 25.
tells us: He "loved the assembly and gave Himself for it." Behold Him hanging on that cross to make us His! And that great sacrifice did not exhaust His love for, ascended to God's right hand, He tenderly cares for His assembly and awaits the moment when we shall be presented to Him "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." The assembly is His; and He is worthy to possess that pearl of great price!

That this assembly, the bride of Christ, is not found in the Old Testament has often been pointed out. In keeping with this, neither is the pearl the symbol of it, mentioned there. Job 28. 18 is no exception, for gabiysh means crystal, not pearl. In the singular, it is only spoken of once in the New Testament (Matt. 13. 46); except in Revelation 21. 27; where, like the gold which is called "transparent," beyond anything known naturally, each gate of the heavenly Jerusalem is "of one pearl." Such symbols strikingly confirm the heavenly character of the assembly, the Lamb's wife. How blessed it is, too, to look beyond all the present exigencies of the way, and see at every approach to that glorious city the witness of "each gate of one pearl," the testimony to THE ONE-NESS OF THE ASSEMBLY as well as to its purity and preciousness, in short what it is to Christ who purchased it by His own blood.

When the Lord establishes the earthly metropolis in millennial magnificence, He says to her: I will make thy gates of carbuncles (Isa. 54. 12). The fiery-red splendour of these earthly gates are quite distinct from the out-of-the-depths soft, iridescent beauty and purity of the pearl gates of the heavenly metropolis. Indeed, the pearl is not a precious stone at all like the carbuncle; nor even as those found in the wall of the heavenly city itself. It is entirely unique; and the exquisite exactness of Scripture is seen in this, as in other cases; for it carefully distinguishes them thus: "precious stones and pearls" (Rev. 17. 4; 18. 12, 16). The out-of-the-world, heavenly character of the assembly is kept distinctly before us. Doubtless the glory of the earthly city will be exceptional. It will be like the new creation (see Isa. 65. 17, 18; and 66. 22); even if not that. This may explain the special and peculiar position in which the carbuncle is always found. If, as we have seen, the pearl is not found in the Old Testament, neither is the carbuncle found in the New. But always, save in the verse we have spoken of, it is found with the sapphire and the emerald before and after it (see Ezek. 28. 13; Ex. 28. 17; and 39. 10, N.T.). The sapphire symbol of universal glory, and the emerald of earthly, might well be placed in juxtaposition to that of the carbuncle. Its four appearances in the Old Testament, and its absence from the New, may show its earthly significance. In its origin, formation, growth, and beauty, the pearl stands singularly alone, as a unique and striking symbol of the assembly, the new and heavenly Jerusalem, the Lamb's wife.

When writing or speaking on such a blessed and holy theme as this one feels what watchfulness is needed, that there may be ministered to those to whom these realities belong, the heavenly grace that should accompany them. None others can appreciate them, we must not cast our pearls before swine (Matt. 7. 6); the unregenerate have neither the heart nor capacity to understand these things. The unfaithful woman, Babylon, described in Revelation 17. and 18., is decked with pearls; and in her unholy traffic she trades in them, as well as in the "bodies and souls of men" (18. 12, 13). How sunken and sinful does this loathsome system become! On the other hand, as preserved in a holy sense of the rejection of Christ, the pious women who truly belong to the house of God, the assembly, are exhorted to "adorn themselves with modesty and discretion, not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly clothing" (1 Tim. 2. 9). We are told what is beautiful and
valuable before God now: "the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." These divinely inspired words remind us again of that which arrested the gaze of the seeking merchantman—"ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE." In its completeness; in its beauty; in its value; He saw it, loved it, and made it His own.

How deep and divine will be His joy to have us with Him in the Father's house above! What an answer His satisfied heart will find in the assembly, to all that He suffered to make her His! And when she shines in surpassing splendour, showing the glory of God, the bride, the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem, shall show at every avenue of approach, the oneness of the assembly, for every several gate is of one pearl.

The most beautiful and valuable pearls are apt to suffer from a peculiar trouble called pearl sickness. The pure and lovely iridescence becomes dimmed; and the only known means of righting them is, to put them back under the waters of the ocean till they recover themselves once more. Is there not a lesson for us in this? The influences of this world, if we are not watchful, cause us to lose our heavenly hue and brightness; and we have to taste, it may be, once again, the darkness and hopelessness of all in this world, so that our faith and hope may soar up to where Christ is—the heavenly Bridegroom of the assembly; and take on afresh of His supernal lustre, as we long more ardently for His coming; when He will take us beyond the influences that obtain here, to shine with Him eternally in glory that can never be dimmed.

The Pearl of Price.

FOR Him who trod this earth alone
In spotless garments fringed with blue,*
In grace celestial, yet unknown,
Jesus the Holy and the True;

For Christ, in whom all radiance glows.
(His resurrection name declared,
Whiter His robe than Alpine snows),
A fair companion is prepared.

With her no garish pomp can vie,
Nor His thrice-blessed favour hold;
As Babylon, in crimson dye,
In purple, and earth's tinsel-gold.†

No! she must shine in heaven's attire
In purest byssus,‡ at His side;
The pearl of price, His heart's desire,
The ransom'd church of God, THE BRIDE.

* See Numbers 15. 37, et seq.
† Revelation 17. 4, et seq.
‡ Fine Linen.

"And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep having no shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6. 34).
"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Lev. 23. 1, 2).

Our brief study of the Feasts in last month's issue brought us down to the end of this present period of God's grace. The three remaining feasts outline for us the resumption of God's ways with Israel after the catching up to heaven of the dead and living saints according to 1 Thessalonians 4.

The Blowing of Trumpets.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. 23. 23, 24, 25).

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 10. 1-3).

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" (Joel 2. 15).

The gathering of Israel into the Promised Land.

"All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he liftest up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. . . . In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isa. 18. 3 and 7, 27, 13).

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24. 31).

Remarks. This feast does not foreshadow the coming of the Lord to rapture the heavenly saints, but the regathering of Israel into the land of promise. And the trumpets here spoken of must not be confounded with the resurrection trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15. 52, or the "trump of God" 1 Thessalonians 4. 16. Some are making this mistake and propounding wild theories as to the coming of the Lord in consequence.

The feast was for a memorial. The silver trumpets that were blown proclaimed the fact that the people were Jehovah's people and that He had a right to call them to His sanctuary when He would, and, moreover, that He delighted to have them thus near to Himself. It brought this fact to their memories. But it also foreshadowed the time when He will remember His covenant with Abraham, and will say to Israel now cut off and not His people: "Thou art My people," and He will summons them to the land to fulfil the promises made to their fathers.
It was thought by many that the ZIONIST movement which had as its chief policy the repeopling of Palestine with Jews was the beginning of God's summons to these people, and, as coming events cast their shadows before them, it may be that this remarkable movement was an indication of the near approach of the fulfilment of the promises to Israel. It must be noted, however, that this movement makes no reference to God whatever. He is left out of it entirely, and for the time being the war has brought it to a standstill.

Isaiah 18. 3 seems to indicate that when the summons really does come it will be a much more public matter than the Zionist movement is, for the inhabitants of the world are commanded to see. This would appear as though the whole world would be interested in the question, that it will be a matter of INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. It is now very probable that one of the settlements at the close of the present war will give Palestine to the Jews.

The Zionist movement to which we have referred gives evidence of the awakening of the national spirit amongst these people so long "scattered and peeled," and this is binding them together irrespective of the countries of their adoption. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37.) is the great and vivid picture of them. For centuries they have been like those bones, without unity, articulation, or hopes; without priest, prophet, country, or king, and, alas, without the true knowledge of God. Their condition has answered to Ezekiel's terse description, "Lo, they were very dry." But they are now beginning to stir, "a noise and a shaking" is being heard and seen, soon to result in the bones coming together "bone to his bone." And when God sets His hand to the work of gathering them again into their long forsaken land they will be as Ezekiel describes them "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: BUT THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM. That is, they will be in the land as a nation but void of faith in, or life towards God. They will probably be there boasting in their position as the result of their own wisdom and wealth. Their leaders will be shrewd men, such as have come to the fore in all the civilized nations of the world of late, especially in matters financial. In their worldly wisdom, and regardless of God, these leaders will make a covenant with Antichrist, and the head of the revived Roman empire (Isa. 28. 14, 15; Dan. 9. 27), but their wisdom will prove to be their folly and undoing, for it will bring them into the very sorrows that they hope to escape by such a treaty. Not of such as these will God build up that beloved nation, for He resisteth the proud, and will choose them, as He does now, that which is foolish, weak, and base to confound the wise and the mighty. This is clearly stated in Zephaniah 3. 12, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people and THEY SHALL TRUST IN THE NAME OF THE LORD." This godly remnant will go through Jacob's sorrow with the rest of the rebellious nation, but their light and witness for God in the midst of it will grow as the tribulation increases. We gather this from the fact that the trumpet was blown at the NEW MOON. The new moon teaching us that a feeble faithful remnant will begin to catch the light of the soon-to-rise Sun of Righteousness, this hope will sustain them through the tribulation through which they will pass (Num. 10. 3; Ps. 81. 3). Matthew 24. describes this period. But the way into blessing is brought before us in the Feast of Atonement.

Matthew 24. 31 refers to the gathering of the ten tribes. It is the Jews who are first gathered into the land and who go through the great tribulation; these are the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin who rejected and crucified the Lord.
What is meant by “The Lord’s Table”? No. 2.

An Illustration of the Lord’s Table.

(Continued from page 141).

AND when the Queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and

1. The meat [food, N.T.] of his table, and the sitting of his servants,
2. The attendance of his servants and their apparel,
3. His cupbearers also, and their apparel; and
4. His ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit left in her (2 Chron. 9. 3, 4).

If we use this as an illustration of what comes out in 1 Corinthians 10. to 14., we shall get a very good, if not exhaustive, idea, of what “the Lord’s table is.”

(1) “Meat Food [N.T.] of His Table.”

What precious food is to be found on “the Lord’s table.” As 1 Corinthians II. follows 1 Corinthians 10., it is clear that the central point in Christianity as to our response is being gathered in the Lord’s name, and with His blessed presence in the midst answering to the desire of His heart in the remembrance of Himself. But let it be clearly understood that we do not go to the Lord’s supper to get, but to give. We do get, and nowhere more richly do we enjoy the love of God and all that the death of Christ means than there, but we go because we are blessed. To treat the Lord’s supper as “a means of grace,” that is, to put the getting of blessing first is foreign to Scripture. Indeed the more distinctly we go to give the more we get, for the Lord will be no man’s debtor. His way is to give in order to get. What grace!

1 Corinthians 10. 16 speaks of the cup as the communion of the blood of Christ, and the loaf as the communion of the body of Christ—in the former the Jew and Gentile, to be blessed as such in the day to come, will have their part. For the present that cup is in the custody of the church of God. The Lord in instituting the supper says of the cup, “This is the blood of the new testament [new covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26. 28).

The “new covenant” is yet to be made with Israel, but meanwhile the blessings of it are antedated and are enjoyed in connection with Christianity, which, needless to say, goes much further in blessing than the new covenant.

But the loaf speaks of a fellowship which is exclusive to Christianity, for it immediately says, “For we being many are one loaf and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf” (1 Cor. 10. 17). How truly affecting it is to have these emblems before us, the Lord’s presence affecting every heart.

What a feast of divine love, though, as we must insist, we go to remember the Lord, not to receive, or be edified, or hear a sermon or anything of the kind. How the “altar” side comes out, the death of Christ in all its wondrous meaning affecting each heart.

But let it not be thought that the Lord’s supper, precious and special as it is, exhausts the provision and scope of “the Lord’s table.”

It is the materializing of “the Lord’s table”—a thing quite foreign to the truth—that has led to its being confused with the actual table on which the bread and cup rest at the supper. In the same way to talk of “setting up the Lord’s
is to express a totally wrong idea. Then again "received at the Lord’s table" and "putting away from the Lord’s table" have their origin, we believe, in the same limitation of thought. Surely it is in grasping the very largeness and breath of God’s thoughts that we shall be kept from that which is the denial of that largeness and breadth—from sectarianism, from saying "I am Paul, Cephas, or Apollos." It will deliver us also from that worst of sectarianism, which says "I am of Christ," that is, daring to monopolize Christ as the badge of a party, even more a party because it refuses to admit it, instead of being simply gathered in the Lord’s name with all that that means to all who are subject to His word.

(2) "The Attendance of His Ministers and their Apparel."

This brings us up to 1 Corinthians 12., where the gifts, their distribution, and their work are spoken of. The Lord has His ministers at His table, even as King Solomon had at his table. The word of God is indeed the substance of all ministry. In addition to the Old Testament, so largely in type, biography, and direct prophecy, prophetical of what was to come, we have the New Testament containing the inspired written ministry of the apostles and prophets, and the foundation of all ministry laid thereby. All subsequent gifts must come to that source of supply as dependent on the direction of the Lord and the supply of the Spirit in their ministry.

There are gifts distinctly given by Him, who led captivity captive and gave gifts to men, but there is room for all in this administration which must not be separated from the "Lord’s table." We would heartily deprecate "clericalism" as being opposed in principle and practice to the teaching of Scripture. But on the other hand we would just as much insist that there should be the recognition of distinct gift and ministry, and the opportunity for the exercise of it among saints given, or else they will be the losers, and a slight put upon Him, who has given these gifts. Let there be much prayer for them that they may be kept in lowliness and above all in love.

That all may take part in this blessed service brings us to chapters 13. and 14. At the end of chapter 12. the apostle exhorts the saints to covet earnestly the best gifts, yet he shows them a more excellent way, that is LOVE—true DIVINE LOVE, whilst in chapter 14. he shows that one word would govern those who truly help—EDIFICATION.

On this line the apostle in another epistle speaks of the body edifying itself IN LOVE.

Happier and more profitable by far to have love and no gift, than to have gift and no love—happiest of all when there are both.

And as to the apparel of the ministers, it seems to bring out the truth that what should mark every servant of Christ is the being practically governed himself by the truth he ministers, that he should be the living exponent of his own ministry.

How true this was in all its absolute perfection in the case of the blessed Lord.

(3) "His Cupbearers and their Apparel."

The cupbearer bore the wine, which makes the heart rejoice. Is not the true ministry of the Lord’s things, especially of that which relates to Himself, His person, and His work, calculated to stir up and warm and draw out the affections of the Lord’s people? Eating and drinking go together. If we really appropriate the food on the "Lord’s table" there is sure to be the result—joy, delight, and worship springing up in the heart.
"His Ascent by which He went up unto the House of the Lord."

It is remarkable how in this picture there is a connection between eating and worship. Psalm 22. 29 helps as to this: "They that be fat upon the earth shall eat and—WORSHIP." That is those who are characterized by appreciation of the spiritual food on "the Lord's table" are characterized by worship. How is it that there is so little worship? Because there is so little spiritual eating.

When the Queen of Sheba saw all these things in connection with King Solomon there was no more spirit left in her, so when the believer comes to the true end of appropriation and assimilation of the Lord's thoughts for us, the presentations of Himself and His love, he is emptied of himself, and so filled with His goodness and glory that he becomes a worshipper. John 4. brings out in a deeply touching way that the Father is seeking worshippers. What will heaven be but worship? What is the great poverty to-day among Christians? Worship! But behind that, there is a cause, that is lack of exercise of soul in appropriating and assimilating God's bounty, that is of divine eating, which always results in worship.

All Spiritual Food comes from "the Lord's Table."

It follows from what we have laid down that all spiritual food comes from "the Lord's table." Do I get any help from my personal study of the Scriptures, do I receive any blessing from any ministry of the world, whether oral or written, or even in private conversation—all food comes from "the Lord's table."

But says someone, What about this day of ruin? We are in the presence of sects, parties, divisions? What are we to do?

Doubtless this state of things is the enemy's attempt to rob us of the full blessing of "the Lord's table," and alas! to a large extent he has succeeded. Many gifts are in associations where we cannot avail ourselves of them, many of the Lord's people deliberately follow in sectarian paths and on party lines. The remedy for this state of things will not, alas, be general, but individual. The more individuals are affected the more the recovery will be. The great point for the moment is to be right oneself.

This brings us to our last point.

"The Lord's Table."

The remedy is to be subject TO THE LORD. Am I implicitly bowing to His word, and following His leading? As 1 Corinthians 14. 37 puts it so solemnly and forcibly, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD." If every saint and every minister of the Lord were thus subject ten thousand difficulties would vanish, unscriptural and unrighteous barriers would be removed, the flesh and self-seeking would be judged, the Lord would have His place, and nothing but blessing would flow.

May the Lord give us true enlargement of soul in the contemplation of these truths.

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). There is no other fellowship, no other bond, and this alone will survive.

We are conscious how feebly this great subject has been presented, but enough has been said to exercise us upon this most important matter. May God give us right thoughts by His Spirit.

But ye, beloved, building yourselves on your most holy faith. [We cannot do that if we neglect the Word of God]; praying in the Holy Ghost [We cannot do that if we are walking in the flesh]; keep yourselves in the love of God [We cannot do that if we love the world]; seeking the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life [We cannot be doing that if our hopes and ambitions are centred in anything below].

In every Christian heart that is not withered and cramped by carnal things there is the desire to save others, it is one of the chief instincts of the divine nature that is in them. They do not desire, as God does not desire, that any should perish, they want all, as God wants all, to come to the knowledge of the truth. "The damnation of hell" is not a question of words with them, it is a reality, terrible and everlasting, and they want to save men from it and to serve God in doing it; but they know, if they are intelligent, that if men are to be saved from this final doom, they must be saved from the snares and seductions of the devil that lure them on to it: to save them from these is to save them from that. So they will endeavour to save men from the blinding doctrinal errors of the day, the profane and vain babblings (2 Tim. 2. 16) and doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4. 1), by which the faith of some is overthrown; they will endeavour to save men from the pollutions and enmity against God that are native to the flesh, and from the seductions of the world and from placing their hopes in the false dreams of man's ability to evolve himself and his world into all that he and it should be.

But how shall we save others from the soul-destroying teachings that characterize these last days—teachings that deny the God of Genesis 1. and John 3. 16, and Revelation 20. 12—the God who is Creator, Saviour, and Judge—that deny the incarnation of the Son, His holy humanity, His sacrificial death, His bodily resurrection—unless we are rooted and grounded and built up and made strong in the faith? How shall we save others from the corruptions of the flesh unless we are manifestly praying in and sewing to the Spirit? How shall we drag others out of the world that is to be destroyed by fire, as the angels dragged Lot out of Sodom, unless we are morally out of it ourselves, its seductions having no power over us because our hearts are kept in the love of God? How shall we turn men from its will-o'-the-wisp promises unless we ourselves have been attracted by that sure and blessed hope of our Lord's return.

It is, surely, only as those things that are brighter and better than the brightest and best that can be found below are controlling our souls that we ourselves are safe and able to save others also.

We need less newspaper and more Bible, less minding of the flesh and more sowing to the Spirit, less seeking the threads and shoe latchets from the King of Sodom and more feeding on the bread and wine that Melchizedek brings from the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis 14.), of whom we can now say "God is love"; less building of homes and hopes in a world that has rejected God and His Son and more reaching outward and onward to that world of glory that the death of Jesus has opened for us.

We press these things upon others because it is pressed upon us that we are neither safe ourselves nor able to serve God in saving others if we are neglectful in these things.

"And of some have compassion." If we are to fulfil that exhortation
compassion must first flow into our hearts, and from whence does it come? It does not spring up from false teaching, or from the flesh, or the world. This tender pity that expends its all to bless those in distress and danger is a divine quality. And if our hearts are to be full of it we must build ourselves up in the faith, pray in the Spirit, keep ourselves in the love of God and be conscious of the eternal and incorruptible riches that are ours in heaven above.

But we shall not maintain true compassion for souls, the compassion that will make us zealous for their salvation, unless we hate the flesh and the garments spotted by it. And since the flesh is in us, we shall not hate its works unless we judge it by the standard of the FAITH, which is God fully revealed to us in Christ; and from the standpoint of THE SPIRIT by whom we have access to God in prayer; are consciously in THE LOVE OF GOD, which the flesh cannot bear, and are looking for THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO ETERNAL LIFE, in which the flesh has no part.

It may be that we have longed to obey these exhortations and earnestly sought to do so, but we have failed, and have bitterly to confess that we have fallen under the power of the very things from which we would deliver others. Where lies the fault? In that we have sought after these things by human effort, and in our own strength and have not understood that One alone is able to keep us from falling. It changes everything when we understand that, when we see that our safety, service, and song are all alike dependent on this one great fact. WE ARE NOT ABLE BUT GOD IS ABLE. He is able to keep us safe amid abounding evils and in the happy confidence that this gives we can serve Him in saving others and sing our happy songs of praise to Him the while.

Consider it, dear brethren. God gave His Son to save us, in this we perceive His love towards, and His grace and power that are equal to His love are put forth for the constant and complete deliverance of those whom He has saved. He is able to keep us from falling. May we not rely upon Him, rely upon Him wholly, constantly, and without misgiving, to keep us in these things wherein lie our present safety and without which we can neither serve nor sing?

Consider further this wonderful statement He is able to keep you from falling—more than equal to every snare and power of evil below—"and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Such is the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, such the perfection of the righteousness in which we stand in Him that the glory of God will discover no imperfections therein but will make manifest its exceeding blessedness, and so will God have exceeding joy in the results of His wisdom and grace. Well might we sing unto Him, the only wise God and our Saviour, glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and for ever. Amen.

**That Precious Name.**

**LORD** Jesus Christ!  
Thy precious Name!  
Is to our hearts most sweet,  
It moves our inmost being, Lord!  
To worship at Thy feet.

**Lord Jesus Christ!**  
Thy holy Name!  
To us beyond compare,  
Uplifts our hearts to heaven above,  
Thou art our treasure there.

**Lord Jesus Christ!**  
Blest Son of God!  
Our hearts with one accord,  
Unite to praise and worship Thee,  
O most beloved Lord!

**Lord Jesus Christ!**  
Thy peerless Name!  
So full of Truth and Grace,  
Shall cheer us till we meet above,  
And see Thee face to face.
The Sun of Righteousness and the Bright Morning Star.

(A. J. Pollock).

"Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2).

"I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22. 6).

It is not a little remarkable that the allusion to the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings should occur in the last chapter of the Old Testament. The hope of the Jewish saints is thus given to their last prophet, Malachi, and just before their scriptures are closed this wonderful hope is presented to them.

Similarly Christ as the hope of the church is presented to the believers of this dispensation in the last chapter of the New Testament as the bright morning Star. It is given to the last writer in the New Testament to present Christ in this blessed way.

Whether it be the dead in Christ of bygone ages, or the living believers in this dispensation, or the Jew and the nations in the day to come, Christ alone is their Hope.

We turn from the nauseating spectacle of millions of the most highly civilized of the nations, in lands where the gospel of light has been shed, relentlessly slaughtering each other in the most scientific way possible—we turn with relief from this spectacle to the contemplation of Him, who alone can give true peace.

Amid all the pressure and sadness of the moment, how sweet and cheering it is for the saints of God to be waiting for the coming of the Lord. It is a very deep and general belief among Christians—a belief begotten we are persuaded by the Holy Spirit of God—that His coming is very near at hand.

The church, because of her heavenly calling, will be caught away from the tribulations that shall purify the earth, preparing the Jew for their Messiah, and the Gentile nations for the reign of the Son of Man. How encouraging is the promise, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 10-11).

And just as the pen is laid down and the task done, we read the cheering words: "I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And again, almost in the last line, we read, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

What a glory shall be our Lord's when He comes to gather His own to greet His bride, to bring His saints with infinite joy into His Father's house, exclaiming, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me" (Heb. 2. 13). That moment of triumph draws near—very near. We are in the very threshold of this glorious event. May we be truly expectant.

And then the earth purified by terrible tribulation, the nations prepared by travail of anguish, God's ancient people bowed in deepest repentance, with the spirit of grace a supplication poured upon them, shall behold with wonder and joy the glorious sight of the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings.

Righteousness shall reign. "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" (Zech. 14. 20) shall be engraved upon the very bells of the horses. Nations "shall
beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2. 4).

What a day of glory will that be when the Sun of righteousness shall come, and by His bright warm beams shall drive away all darkness and blight, when at last the heaving breast of this earth shall be soothed and at rest, when the very ground soaked in blood, and torn by the passions of men, shall be all smiling and verdant.

Partakers of the Altar.

This practice of the offerer’s partaking of his sacrifice was followed in the heathen sacrifices to which the apostle alludes (1 Cor. 10. 18–21); part was offered to the idol, and with the rest they made a feast, being together partakers of it. Again, when the apostle is giving liberty to the Corinthians to eat what was sold in the shambles, he limited them to that which they ate in ignorance. “If any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice to idols, eat not.” They sprinkled the blood on the altar, and then ate the sacrifice; and therefore those who knowingly partook of it were held to be partakers of the altar, this being the way of showing communion, whether it were with an idol, or between a believer or God. And this has in it a blessed meaning. Christ is not only here represented as the perfect burnt-offering wholly given up to God in death for His glory, but also as an offering on which to feed; not only is He God’s delight, but He is that of which we can partake with Him. He is the subject matter of communion. . . . The communion is between all saints, the worshipper, the priest and God.—(J.N.D.)

(From revised notes of Leviticus 1.–8.)

The Riches of His Grace.

Satan doth take advantage of the weakness of many, proving to them that they are not worthy of Christ; which is the way of a sophist, to prove an evident truth which cannot be denied. But there is no greater vantage can be had against sin and Satan than this; Because I am unworthy of Christ, and out of measure sinful, and I find it is so (Satan and conscience teaching me that truth), therefore ought I, therefore must I, come to Christ, unworthy as I am. Free grace is moved from God’s good will, to the end, that sin, being exceeding sinful, grace may be abundantly grace.

Satan suggests a true principle—Thou art not to come to Christ; Ah, here triumph against him, for the contrary arguing is gospel-logic. Satan’s reasoning would be good, if there were no way but the Law to give life. But because there is a Saviour, a gospel, the riches of God’s grace, a new and living way to heaven, the contrary arguing is the sinner’s life and happiness. Because I am unworthy I come, for were I worthy it would be no more grace but merit, but because I am totally unworthy grace finds its blessed opportunity, and where sin abounded grace does much more abound, and God finds His honour and delight in the unfettered activities of His love, and Christ is crowned with a great glory when He saves great and unworthy sinners.
“Not Forsaking the Assembling of Ourselves Together.”

THE Lord is coming again! The midnight cry has gone forth after long ages of slumber! “BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM! GO FORTH TO MEET HIM” (Matt. 24.). This was foretold in the Scriptures of Truth. And to it and to the glory of the coming One, the Spirit is bearing witness still, unto the churches (see Rev. 2. 3) in an unmistakable way. And as the return of the Lord approaches those who are really His will be found assembling together, and encouraging one another in Him, their Lord and Leader.

The one perfect offering at the cross has fitted them to draw nigh to God. They have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. His blood having cleansed away all their sins, they are to be remembered no more; and, it is said, ‘Where there is remission of these, there is no more offering for sin.’ The Lord Jesus, who made the one and perfect offering, is not seated at the right hand of God. Therefore they may boldly approach to God as worshippers, and gather together for mutual edification, in a way that becomes the holy presence of our God and Father.

Those who have believed to the saving of the soul will thus approve the reality of their faith and be preserved in the presence of the grave and subtle dangers which beset the closing moments of the present period. These dangers are specially indicated by the Spirit, in the two Scriptures which speak of our “assembling together” (Episunagôgê) (2 Thes. 2. 1; and Heb. 10. 25). The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is in view in both passages. The first speaks of “the complete collection” (as the word means literally), or gathering of the saints to the Lord Himself when He returns; the second speaks of “the complete collection” or gathering together of those who believe now, as the day of His coming draws near.

Is the reader one of those who will be gathered with all who are the Lord’s to our blessed Lord in the air, when He calls us to Himself by His assembling shout (1 Thes. 4. 16)? And if so is the reader approving himself to be one by gathering with His own now as he awaits Christ’s coming? Hebrews 10. 25 tells us that “the custom of some” is to forsake this present gathering; and the following verses indicate that such may be carried away with those who “sin wilfully,” by apostasy from the Son of God. For those who do so apostatise there “no longer remains any sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment.”

To forsake the assembling together of saints is a downgrade path! In the verses quoted its process is solemnly shown. First, there is neglect; then it becomes a “custom.” Sinning wilfully follows—that is apostasy. The unreality of such a one finally becomes evident; for, though he had once been sanctified by the blood, and had been where the gracious Spirit of God acted, now he esteems “the blood of the covenant, whereby he has been sanctified, common, and has insulted the Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10. 29). Judgment follows of necessity.

In view of the seriousness of this matter the question may be asked, What is this assembling together?

Meetings may be and are arranged by religious leaders, which certainly do not in any way answer to the scriptural order of an assembly of those who are forgiven, sanctified, and made purged worshippers, through the one and perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such leaders may hold meetings to propound their views, right or
wrong; but the assembling together of which our Scriptures speak takes no cognizance of these. At the very beginning, before “the faith once delivered to the saints” was falsified and corrupted, we are told in Acts 2. 42, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

In 1 Corinthians, chapters 11. to 14., the Spirit gives us, through Paul, further instruction as to assembling together. These Scriptures, which are specially said to the commandments of the Lord, should be read, and considered well, so that we may have His thoughts in answer to our question. There is the assembling to eat the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Himself: there is also the assembling together for prayer, and for edification. In Hebrews 10. 25, the main thought is for encouragement, as it says

“ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER”

(N.T.)

These assemblings together are enjoined in the Word of God. That is quite sufficient for those who are obedient to God, and obedience is more to Him than sacrifice. We have no authority to make meetings, or gatherings, such as we may think suitable, or to arrange to gather together only with those whom we think to be suitable persons. We are to assemble according to the Scriptures, and to do so with those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ through His work of redemption. We are not left to pick and choose; or to please our own inclinations, but to be obedient to the Word. In that lies both our safety and happiness.

Christ is our bond. We are to assemble with those who own Him. They may not all be to our liking naturally; but it is said, He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. 2. 11); and we are told to love one another. Indeed, He, the Lord of life and glory, Jesus, the Son of God, speaks of them as “My brethren.” They are called in Scripture, saints, the children of God, and the sons of God. They are members of Christ’s body, the assembly of which He is the glorified Head. With Him and with them our happy lot is cast, and with these we are to assemble as His coming again draws near.

Mark again, It is no question of arranging a meeting for a preacher or a teacher. There are evangelists and shepherd-teachers; and their labours are to be heartily supported; but what we are speaking of is the assembling together of the brethren themselves—the members of the body of Christ. There may be no teachers or preachers among them, but they themselves are “not to forsake” assembling together. Gifts may be raised up, or sent by the Lord amongst them; but they are to flock together as the sheep of God’s pasture. Jude, who desires that we should have the faith as it was once delivered to the saints (3), says, “But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

When our blessed Lord comes for us, and we are caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air; when the great and glorious

“GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM”

takes place, not one of His own will be absent from that assembly. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will present us all there, to be with Him and like Him for ever and ever. “He died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” Such is His love that He will have us all there, the complete collection of all who are His, for His own joy and satisfaction! But Hebrew 10. urges that we should be completely collected together now, as His coming draws nigh. It is not conceivable that a saint can truly rejoice in the former and be deliberately neglecting the latter.
Beyond the darkness of the world's night our hearts see the harbinger of the coming glorious day JESUS, "THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR!"

The Spirit and the bride say to Him, Come! and to others, who have an ear to hear, they say, Join with us and invite Him to come! and if there is a thirsty soul, to him they say, There is living water for thee. Come! Yea, what our own souls know and enjoy, flows, like the river of God, in divine abundance! Therefore, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely! (Rev. 22.17). Such is the last beautiful picture of the assembly, the bride of Christ, given in the Bible. Surely there has been much assembling together, and all hearts have been filled with the love and loveliness of Jesus; the Spirit has captivated every one with the beauty of the Bridegroom; and in harmony with Himself, as one, they say to the blessed Lord, COME. How delightful to His ear will be such an invitation from the assembly He loved and gave Himself for. May we therefore, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together now, as the custom of some is—but encouraging one another in Him, who is soon coming to assemble us all together to Himself in the air,—so richly enjoy the living abundance of heavenly blessing which is ours in Christ, that together we may truly sing in harmony divine,

"Spirit and Bride,
With longing voice say, Come;
Yea, Lord, Thy word from that bright home,
Is, Surely I will quickly come!
E'EN SO, LORD, COME."

Intervention, or Moral Consequence.

THAT God has been pleased to intervene in the downward course of human affairs is abundantly plain.

Thus He intervened for the deliverance of Israel when He heard their cry in the land of Egypt; He did so over and over again at the intercession of Moses on their behalf; so in the case of Samuel, Hezekiah and others, pardoning their sins and granting relief from enemies. He intervened most of all in the gift of His Son when in Him He found a Ransom, not for Israel only, but for the world at large. All this was the result of His pity, mercy, and love.

But there are occasions when He has seen fit not to intervene. For instance, there was no interposition on behalf of fallen angels. Sin originated in those heavenly beings by the working of pride. They "left their own habitation," and are "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (see Jude). That which awaits them is, no possible intervention of mercy, but only the judgment of that day.

This is the result of their apostasy and is its fearful moral consequence. Again, there is the sin of the first man who, whatever may be his own eternal future, has plunged the world in a deep and long-lasting ocean of misery, and involved the whole race in the dread consequences of his transgression. "Death has passed upon all men for that all have sinned." This awful moral effect we are bitterly proving to-day. Intervention in mercy as to this judgment there is none. "There is no discharge in that war."

Again, there is the Flood; it was sent as a divine protest against universal corruption, and as a terrible witness to God's hatred of sin. Mercy did not interfere with the desolation of the forty days' rain, nor the extinction of everything that had life, till the very mountains was submerged and the entire race (save eight) absolutely obliterated. Sin and judgment fol-
lowed as cause and effect. Moral consequence was necessary in the maintenance of divine holiness.

Again, Israel sinned until there was "no remedy" (2 Chron. 36. 16). And this favoured and oft-forgiven but rebellious people had, at last, to reap what they had sowed and bear the consequence of their disobedience. They were carried captive beyond Babylon. This, too, in order to prove that God will not be mocked. He may be, and is long-suffering. Oh how long, how patient, how infinitely gracious is He to guilty, wayward, wilful man! How His gospel proclaims that grace, and points to the death of His beloved Son as the highest, richest proof of His intervening mercy:

"In Thee only good,
In us only ill,
And sin has but shown us
Thy love deeper still."

All true; but while "God is love," let us never forget that He who is love is God! And that while love is His nature, righteousness, holiness, and truth are (speaking reverently) His character. No act of mercy, no intervention of compassion is wrought at the expense of righteousness, for on this "His throne is established," and necessarily so.

The word that has gone out of His mouth, whether known by man or not, must be fulfilled. And if that word be disobeyed, or set aside, or perverted by an individual, or by a nation, then the consequences of so doing must be borne individually or nationally; and it may be that in the violation of that word by the proud nations of Christendom lies the secret of the present convulsion.

"A little while," says Christ, "and I will come again." Within a little while He will come again and see you; and see that ye keep yourselves for Him; abide in Him. Christ says to you, "Weary not, fight on, be true to Me, as I was aye true to you."

"We follow in His footsteps;
What if our feet be torn?
Where He has marked the pathway
All hail the briar and thorn."
Printer’s Error.

Our readers would notice a glaring error at foot of page 164 of our July issue. This was caused by disarrangement of lines at printer’s office. The paragraph in question should have read as follows:

LOVE is of supreme importance if we are to know the joy of true fellowship and grow up in the divine unity in which grace has placed us; it is the divine nature, and so the true nature of Christ’s body. This is not human love, which ends with death and which has been terribly spoilt by sin and selfishness, but the love that led the Lord into death for us that it might flow into our hearts, filling them with gladness, then upward from us to Him from whom it has come and outward to all who are His. One whole chapter (I Cor. 13.) is devoted to a description of it. It is this that makes the care of each member of Christ’s body for every other member of it a real thing. It is the vital breath of God’s assembly, the atmosphere without which no plant in His husbandry (chap. 3.) can thrive.

We greatly regret the mistake and would have stopped the whole issue had time permitted. Readers can correct their copies by indicating that the 3 last lines in the first column should appear before the 3 last lines of the second column. (Ed.)

Other Corrections.

Page 164, second column, line 27, read ‘‘Mc’’ for ‘‘Mr.’’

" 165, second column, line 44, read ‘‘claims’’ for ‘‘chains.’’

" 166, first column, line 34, read ‘‘vail’’ for ‘‘rail.’’

" 173, line 4, read ‘‘is’’ for ‘‘was.’’

" 175, first column, line 7, read ‘‘breadth’’ for ‘‘breath.’’

The Effect of Prayer on the One Who Prays.

HANNAH, the wife of Elkanah, had a great sorrow weighing on her heart, crushing all the brightness out of her life. But she carried this sorrow in prayer to God. She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore’’ (I Sam. 1. 10). . . . ‘‘SHE CONTINUED PRAYING BEFORE THE LORD.’’ . . . she spake in her heart’’ (ver. 12, 13).

And the result of her praying was that ‘‘the woman went her way, and did eat, and HER COUNTENANCE WAS NO MORE SAD’’ (ver. 18).

Oneness of Purpose.

‘‘Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them that thy profiting may appear to all.’’

The expression ‘‘Give thyself wholly to them’’ is literally, ‘‘Be in them,’’ immersed, absorbed, occupied with them. The same expression was used by our Lord as a child of twelve. He said, ‘‘How is it that ye sought Me, wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?’’ literally, ‘‘in the things of My Father.’’
"Come!" "Come!"

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22. 16-21).

It is a comfort—a very great comfort from the Lord—that we are assured in His Word as to what the end of our earthly pilgrimage will be. He has told us, "Surely I come quickly." He is coming. And what can sustain or cheer the heart like this?

Christ is coming for us, His bride, and the Holy Ghost is WITH us. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost, and He abides here still. He is dwelling in us individually, and abiding collectively in the church of God—in His assembly—and is leading on the saints to the moment which the Scripture keeps before us—the moment when the Lord Himself will come.

There is great beauty in the words of the Apostle John. They often come to my heart with great sweetness: "They shall see His face." Beloved in the Lord, will not that make up for everything we have to suffer down here? "They shall see His face." What will it be to be with Him; and then—to be like Him—all through grace? That is the end of our pilgrimage. Peter says: "Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The Holy Ghost has linked and connected us with Him; and we have learned to trust His grace and appreciate His preciousness. In measure we can say we know the unspeakable joy of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the joy which the Holy Ghost gives the soul when Christ is the simple and only object. There is nothing like it. We have known it; we enjoy it, but cannot describe it. To present Christ to us thus is the normal work of the Spirit of God. and so to keep the heart full of the joy of the Lord. And, beloved, it is joy, and the joy of the Lord is your strength. When the soul is maintained by the Spirit of God in the enjoyment of Christ, there is strength. There is strength for the homeward path, and the path of testimony, no matter what the difficulties may be. God knows each of our paths. You have got to tread your path, and God is sufficient. You cannot tread mine; I cannot tread yours. Each has his own path with its peculiar difficulty and trial, and there are grades of strength vouchsafed by Him all along the way, and as the Holy Ghost fills your soul with a sense of the preciousness of Christ and the hope of His coming you will have joy all the way through in spite of every trial.

Christ is coming for you. What a cheer to the heart. The way in which it comes in is very beautiful. The curtain was about to fall in this wonderfully dramatic book—for we have scene after scene of the future unveiled, of God's dealings with earth in the Revelation—and He comes out Himself. I AM JESUS. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." The blessed Lord loves to remind us that He has not forgotten us. And although the night has been long, and although a thousand years have almost twice rolled by since this word was spoken by Him and penned by the Spirit of God, still says His word—I Jesus have sent to tell you, I come—I come quickly. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
I think it is so lovely to see the way in which the Spirit of God comes in here at the very closing of the Scriptures and identifies the church with Himself. There is a distinct interruption in these last words of the Lord to His saints. As He presents Himself as the bright and morning star He is interrupted, His words are broken in upon by the cry of the waiting Spirit and of the affectionate bride: “And the Spirit and the bride say COME.” Is not that lovely, beloved? That is the second time only in the whole book in which you get the voice of the church. In the first chapter of Revelation Christ is presented in His personal glory. There is grace from “JESUS CHRIST, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.” And there is an interruption in this revelation of His glory.

The Spirit of God leads the church upon the earth and it breaks out into an ascription 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, His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.” It is the voice of the church here upon earth. The moment He shows Himself the voice of the church itself is heard in the loving outflow and response of the heart to Him. “I am the bright and morning star.” And the Spirit says, “Come.” And the bride says, “Come.” Yes, He gets a responsive voice from earth. Is it wrong for us to say, “Come”? Nay; the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And does He not delight to hear that word of love from His ransomed bride? Ay, He delights to hear it.

This word “come” is a very thrilling little word. It means that our hearts will never be truly satisfied until He comes. For not till then shall we be with Him, and see Him. It is the language of the heart waiting in true affection—right, proper, divine affection produced by the Holy Ghost in the heart that is waiting simply for Christ.

But there is another “come.” “Let him that is athirst come.” And this is addressed to the unconverted. Nobody preaches the gospel so sweetly, earnestly or entirely, as the man who is waiting for the Lord.

Then the Lord Himself responds in a lovely way to the invitation sent up to Him from earth. The Spirit has said “Come,” and the bride has said “Come”; and He which testifies these things says, “Surely I come quickly.” And who says “Amen”? Why, surely you and I—surely the church. “Amen” is our word—not His. As we read it in our Bible it may seem as if He said it. But it is really ours. It is not for us to say “quickly.” But when He says “quickly,” that exactly meets the longing condition of our hearts. We can acquiesce in that, for we long to gaze upon His blessed face. So we add our deep “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Until He does come what have we in the interval? Why, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” That is the thing. He is coming, and if He does not come until to-morrow—what? Troubles and trials? Not at all. But the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. That is where God’s Word ends.

I may say our last word is acquiescence with the truth He has brought out. It so suitably and beautifully meets the heart, this word of His: “I come quickly.” And this grace till He come: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Oh, beloved friends, what debtors are we to that grace—the grace that brought Him down to bear our sin and woe, and the grace that keeps us now and will keep us until the end. How that grace should lead us to separation from the world to-day. How it should lead us to purity of heart, and impel us to cleave unto the Lord, and fill us with ever-growing longings to see His face.
Answers to Correspondents.

The Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2. 6, 15).

Enquirer.—The Nicolaitanes were a sect that sprang up in the early years of the church that gave themselves up to the grossest immoralities as part of their religion. They turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. It is very likely that Peter in his second epistle chapter 2., and Jude in his solemn epistle both had these people in view.

It is said that they claimed Nicolas Acts 6. 5) as their founder, but the evidence in support of this claim is most unreliable, and his character as given us in the Word makes it most improbable. It is said also that the name is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Balaam; thence their name, for the evils that they boldly practised were on a par with those with which Balaam ensnared Israel. It would appear, however, from Revelation 2. 14, 15, that they were a separate sect to those who followed Balaam's doctrine. This we know of them that their doctrines and works were alike hated by the Lord.

Unleavened Bread and the Lord's Supper.

Boscombe.—“Why is not unleavened bread used at the Lord’s Supper as it was at the Passover feast? The ritualists use, I believe, unleavened wafers at the Sacrament. Has the loaf any significance?”

The Passover belonged to a dispensation of types and symbols, and the putting away of leaven (leaven being always a figure of evil) and the eating of unleavened bread as commanded at that feast was to teach the Israelites, and us for whose learning these things were written, that if the Passover lamb had died to deliver them from the just judgment of God against evil they must put away evil from themselves. God could not tolerate that amongst His people from which He had redeemed them by the blood of the lamb. The great reality of which this shadow speaks is not the Lord’s supper, but (1) “Christ our passover is crucified for us; (2) therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5. 7, 8).

Unleavened bread had to be eaten not only at the passover supper but for the seven successive days. No leaven had to be used or seen in an home. Those who wish to go back to the shadows should do so wholeheartedly and consistently.

The character of the bread used at the Lord’s supper is without importance, had it been necessary for the proper celebration of it to have had a special kind of bread the Holy Ghost would have indicated this when correcting abuses in regard to it in 1 Corinthians 11.

We would not object to eat unleavened bread at the Lord’s supper unless it was insisted upon that it was necessary to the proper celebration of it, for that would mean occupation with the material, and what is external, with forms and ceremonies, and not with the deep spiritual realities that the emblems bring before the soul. This is the ritualistic error and is exposed for us in Colossians 2. There it is termed the “rudiments of the world,” and we read, “Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ” (vers. 16, 17). These things belonged to a carnal religion in which God had no pleasure, and which only puff up the carnal mind and give a false sanctity to the flesh.

The one loaf is of deepest significance, not only as representing for us the body of Christ which was given for us, but as setting forth the oneness of the body of Christ of which every partaker of the one bread forms a part. “For we being many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10. 17). The unleavened wafers at the sacrament would be so far a denial of this great truth.
Reconciling the World

E.D. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19). This statement describes the character in which God has drawn nigh to men in Christ. He was not here *imputing sins* but *displaying grace*. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He did not come to introduce the day of vengeance, but to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4. 19). (See how in quoting these words from Isaiah 61. 1, 2 the Lord omitted to complete the quotation. "The day of vengeance of our God," belongs to His coming again, not to that first coming in grace.) Christ's presence in the world was evidence that there was no hatred in God's heart towards men, but that His whole desire was their reconciliation to Himself.

But the world was not reconciled by Christ's presence here, it saw and hated both Him and His Father, yet the gospel, which is the ministry of reconciliation, and which has been committed to God's servants, is still here, and by it God is beseeching men to be reconciled to Him. This continuation of longsuffering—this day of salvation is based upon the fact, that "He hath made Christ to be sin for us, who know no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. But it is only by and in Christ Jesus that any are reconciled. The mass continue in rebellion, and God continues in marvellous longsuffering to beseech men to be reconciled to Him.

A.J.A. The paper in this month's issue, "The Testimonies of God and the consequences of refusing them," has been written in answer to the questions you raise.

Correspondence on questions raised by the papers entitled "What is meant by 'The Lord's Table?'") will appear (D.V.) in our next issue.

The Testimony of the Lord in Heathen Lands

We are apt to think that the days of martyrdom of those who love the Lord Jesus and witness for Him are past, the following news from the far-away SOLOMON ISLANDS sharply reminds us that this is not so. There are faithful bands of Christians in that dark archipelago who value the prayers of their fellow-saints at home.

Mrs. Deck tells of a sad tragedy at Bedimanu on the East Coast of Malayta. "Barnabas of Urisu, whom we often call the apostle of S. Malayta, was invited by his brother to open a school for his own people at Bedimanu. Very thankfully he consented, taking eleven Christians from Urisu in his big canoe to help him. For three days they had meetings twice a day, with thirty or forty heathen in the canoe house. Suddenly one morning, while the lesson was being given, the Chief sprang up and killed Sam Karimarau with one blow of his axe. A general attack followed. Barnabas and one woman who clung to him were spared and his own wife and another girl who were cooking escaped. (They were found later at Aiyo.) But all the others were killed. Poor Barnabas could not find his wife, and he and the women made their way over the mountains to One Pusu with the dreadful story. His first words were: 'Oh, Doctor! I have many and great troubles!' After years of work and patience, suddenly, at one sweep, almost all the Urisu teachers had been killed before his eyes. Then too, the work so on his heart must now be left, for three important Chiefs were among the slain, and the heathen at Urisu would be thirsting for his blood for three reasons. 1. He took them. 2. His canoe carried them. 3. His people killed them."

The full story cannot be told here, but one word must be added: "Dear old Barnabas has taken it all in his usual trustful way. He is always thinking about Urisu and praying that he may be allowed to go back. There was nothing outstanding in the gifts or character of the Urisu Christians ... but they were at Bedimanu solely for the Master's sake, and in His service, and on them God has bestowed more abundant honour."
The Feasts of the Lord. No. 3.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Lev. 23. 1, 2).

The Feast of Atonement.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Lev. 23. 26-32).

The Repentance of Israel and the Cleansing of their Sins.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 12. 10-14; 13. 1).

Remarks. No account is given to us here of the sacrifices for sin to be offered on the day of Atonement, or of the blood being carried into the holiest as in Leviticus 16. The prominent thing is THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE. When this comes to pass they will learn that the one perfect and all-availing sacrifice has been offered for them, for they will look upon Him whom they pierced. To this repentance Peter called the people in the early chapters of Acts, but they would not hear. But on the day of which this feast speaks they will hear the word and behold their Messiah, whom they despised and rejected when He was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities; then will they mourn and repent.

Notice how solemnly emphasized are two things: "YE SHALL AFFLICT YOUR SOULS," and "YE SHALL DO NO MANNER OF WORK." They set forth God's way of blessing for His people then, and His way of blessing for sinners now—(1) A sense of their sinful condition, which means repentance. (2) Their absolute dependence upon the work of another for the removal of their sins. This one is Jesus, who by one offering has so glorified God that He can say, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10. 17).

While no mention of the sin offering is made, as we have already pointed out, it is interesting that an offering made by fire unto the Lord has its place, teaching us that while the nation mourns before God the sacrifice of Christ in its burnt-offering character stands for them, and is accepted for them to make an atonement for their souls, and while God thus accepts them a sense of His grace will fill their souls and keep them from despair. This is beautifully expressed in the
words, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATIONS. In the sense of His goodness they will lie in supplication at the feet of Jehovah, like the woman who wept at the feet of Jesus in Luke 7.

Then will come home to them the truth of Hebrews 2. 16, 17. And they will be filled with wonder and worship because of the measureless grace that made Him pass by angels and take on Him the seed of Abraham, that He might be as one of them, though needing no sacrifice Himself, to be to them a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for their sins—the sins of the people. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2. 16, 17).

Moreover, as Aaron came out to bless the people after having carried the blood into the Holy of so will He appear unto them, apart from the question of sin for their salvation, Hebrews 9. 28, and the final part of Ezekiel’s vision will be fulfilled. God’s Spirit shall be poured out upon them and they shall live, a nation born in a day, "an exceeding great army.” This brings us to the last of the seven feasts.

He that hath an ear let him hear.”

Revelation 2, and 3,

Let him that hath an ear divinely opened,  
Hear what the Spirit to the churches saith;  
For He would tell how many things have happened  
To grieve the Lord, on whom we rest our faith.  
Great was the love which brought Him here to win us,  
To die on Calvary to make us His!  
Yet, soon the churches left the love of Jesus,—  
Falling away! nor feeling ought amiss.  
Hark! to the churches God is saying this.

Let him that hath an ear to hear the speaking,  
Of Him who warns the wandering churches yet,  
Hear, as He shows the road they now are taking,—  
The downward road! where Christ they soon forget.  
There the arch-enemy awaits to take them;  
Laying his snare where least they think it is;  
Till, 'neath his sway, true sight and sense forsake them;  
Sunk in the world, they feel its guilty kiss.  
Hark! to the churches God is saying this.

Let him that hath an ear to hear, awaken  
To heed what's said, though fast be closed the door  
Upon the One who has not yet forsaken  
The churches, which have spurned Him more and more.  
Faithful He stands, and knocks though none should heed Him;  
True to the faithless; from the deep abyss  
To which they sink His hand would lead them;  
Lifting them high to pure and heavenly bliss.  
Hark! to the churches God is saying this.
Scripture Truth.

Let him that hath an ear alert to listen,
Hear what is said by Him whose holy Name
Is still professed by many;—I will chasten
Those whom I love, for I am still the same:
Loving them notwithstanding all the failure
Seen in the churches: hearts there are who miss
My presence there, and I will be their treasure,
Now and for ever—such My pleasure is.

Hark! 'tis the Saviour who is saying this.

Let him that hath an ear attend the saying
Of Him who walks 'midst candelsticks of gold;
Whose eyes as flames the assemblies are surveying;
All that is good or evil they behold,
I know thy works, He saith; I'm He that liveth;
I once was dead.—but living now, it is
My voice which warning to the churches giveth,
Though down the way of lust and pride they press.

Hark! 'tis the Lord whose voice is saying this.

Let him that hath an ear divinely given
Hearken to Him whose glory nought can dim,
The Son of God, who shines unsullied, even
Though dark apostasy turns souls from Him.
Faithful and true, He stands without a blemish;
Holy and pure, no failure can be His;
Nought e'er His faithfulness shall tarnish;
Jesus, Yea and Amen, all perfect.

Hark! 'tis the Spirit who is saying this.

Attuned mine ear to hear the Spirit's speaking,—
He leads me on where discord cometh not;
Where every tongue in harmony is seeking
To tell of Him whose beauty's without spot:
His loveliness there fills the enraptured vision
Of that true bride, the assembly which is His;
Blest answer to His lowly, earthly mission;
Her faithful love the Bridegroom's portion is.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Oh, sing, my soul, of this.

Forgiving Yourselves.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God in Christ hath forgiven you" (Eph. 5. 32).

An alternative reading is, "forgiving yourselves." Earlier in the chapter we are spoken of as "members one of another." If a man has an unreliable knee which sometimes drops him on the ground, his brain takes a much more sympathetic view of the failing member than it would of another person's foot should the latter have caused the fall.

Many Christians seem to think that God has two standards of forgiveness, one for Himself and another for the people. He has but one standard and that is His own. The authorised version is misleading. It should be, "As God also in Christ has forgiven you, Christ is the measure of the grace He has shown us. Can any one tell how much he has been forgiven? The realization of the extent of that forgiveness is the measure of our spirit towards others. An unforgiving spirit is but an evidence of small apprehension of the revelation of God in Christ.
The Testimonies of God and the Consequences of refusing them.

The question that lies at the foundation of all theological controversies, and which must be settled before Truth gets its rightful place on the throne of the human mind, is this: Have we a complete, unerring, revelation from God? If we confess that we have, and are assured that the Bible is that revelation, let us be true to our confession, and let us not negative the whole power of it by a process of reasoning that manifests a will at variance with the declarations of a God that cannot lie.

We are not allowed by the Scriptures, nor would it be wisdom on our part, to pick and choose among the communications God has been pleased to make to us, for it is very likely we would cast aside that which is vital to the health of our souls. If we do not believe all, what assurance have we that we believe anything? The things revealed cannot at present be proven by ocular demonstration: faith is not sight. The day that will manifest everything has not yet dawned. It would be very strange indeed if we could find nothing in the revealed will of an infinite Being that would be beyond the compass of our natural (not to say fallen) minds. Let us not forget the words of our Divine Redeemer: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18. 17). Both in the natural and spiritual spheres there are things that seem contradictory and impossible of reconciliation, but how could this be otherwise when we contemplate the works of One infinite in wisdom?

A WAY OF SALVATION.

Nothing in Scripture is more clearly and simply declared than the fact that God in His unfathomable grace has through the death of His only begotten Son opened up a way of salvation for the whole human race, and that the force and virtue of this work was retrospective, the righteous basis upon which God acted in grace from the beginning (Rom. 3. 25). But as in the wisdom of God it was necessary to place man under trial, in order that it might be demonstrated that there was no power in the creature to effect his own recovery, this work which was the intervention of God in the sinner's behalf could not be undertaken until the trial was over. It was when we were manifested as without strength that Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5. 6). Hence it was not until the world had been four thousand years under sin and death that this mighty work was undertaken. But the ground upon which God always received the penitent was the blood of Jesus. To-day this fact is declared, the love of God to all has been manifested, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to all, and the soul who believes the gospel is saved. But in all dispensations, and in every part of the world there was always enough to guide the seeking soul back to the bosom of his Creator.

HIS WORD.

Whatever the dispensation might be, and in whatever character it may have pleased God to address Himself to men His word was always the vital link between the soul and Himself. It might be a way of acceptance for the sinful creature pointed out by sacrifice, as it seems to have been before the deluge; or a testimony to the One True God rendered in an idolatrous world, wherein were lords many and gods many, all demons, as in the days of Abraham; or His merciful and gracious ways with a rebellious nation, as in the case of Israel; or the testimony of the heavens and the earth declaring His glory and His handiwork, along with the countless manifestations of His goodness to the whole human race, as
it always has been in all parts of the earth; or the gospel of His grace, as it is to-day: but whatever the testimony might be, faith in that testimony linked the soul vitally with God. This left at all times, and still leaves, the impenitent sinner without excuse.

Left to himself no man will avail himself of the blessings held out to him by God, and the testimony of God is always repugnant to the natural mind. The most favoured parts of the earth and the least favoured were alike rebellious. If anything the brighter the light, the greater the enmity against all that was of God. No nation wrought greater abominations than the nation of Israel, to whom God had showed such kindness and mercy, and in whose midst He had condescended to dwell. If there were those in all ages that turned to eternal profit the testimony of God, it was because of the sovereign operation of God in their souls, producing that which was ever indispensable to vital relationship with Him; for new birth was always a necessity if one was to know God in the grace of His heart. And though the necessity for this was not stated in plain words from the beginning, a spiritual mind could easily have seen it in the Scriptures; and for not having known it our Lord seems to have censured Nicodemus.

THE GOSPEL.

In this present dispensation the gospel is the means by which God is saving souls out of this world that lies under judgment. But if men will not believe the mighty testimony rendered to the goodness of God in the darkest parts of the earth (Acts 14. 15-17; 17. 24-28), what hope is there that they will believe the gospel when it is preached to them? That the light of the gospel is greater than the light of creation no one is likely to deny; but which is harder to believe—that God made the worlds, and that He is kind to the unthankful and the unholy, or that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for ungodly sinners? Surely it is easier to believe the former than the latter.

To this it may be replied, If this be so, why send the gospel to men at all? If they have all the light necessary to guide them back to God, they require no more, and therefore better leave them as they are. But such forget that it is by the gospel that God is saving sinners to-day, and not by any other means, and it is He that is saving. Old Testament saints were led to God apart from the gospel as we have it. Job was brought into the most blessed relations with God without much more than he might have gathered from the little light that was shining in patriarchal days. Elihu speaks of the righteousness of God, as it might be observed in his dealings with men, and the Lord out of the whirlwind speaks of His power as witnessed in creation, but in things not beyond Job's own power of observation. And all this is most blessedly used for the recovery of the poor afflicted creature, and for his enlightenment as to his own sinful state by nature. But to-day it is by the presentation of Christ to men that He is turning sinners to Himself, and therefore His gospel must go out to the most distant corners of the earth. Men are saved in this dispensation by faith in the glad tidings of the grace of God (Mark 16. 16; Luke 24. 46-47; John 6. 51-57; Acts 4. 12; 17. 30, 31; Rom. 1. 16; 10. 9-18; 2 Tim. 2. 10; 2 Thes. 7-9). It is by this means God is working. The report goes abroad by His servants in the power of the Spirit, men bear the good news of salvation, and where God grants faith the report is believed, and those that believe turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that have been sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26. 18).

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

But I will come to the day of judgment. I need scarcely remind the reader that the believer does not come
into judgment (John 5: 24), though he must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 10), but for this we have boldness, because "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4: 17). We are already in the relationships and grace and favour and eternal love, of which the Son is the worthy Object. Therefore the day of manifestation can have no terrors for us. It can but bring to light the perfection and glory of the workmanship of God in grace, of which we shall be witnesses in that day.

But the principles upon which God will judge all who come into judgment are those of righteousness and truth, for whether in grace or judgment He never departs from these principles. We are told in Romans 2, that He will render eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for "glory, honour, and incorruptibility," but without the gospel men never heard of these things. The law set men to seek by the fulfilment of his obligations life upon earth. It is the gospel that sets these great objects before the soul (Rom. 5: 2; 2 Tim. 1: 10). Therefore apart from hearing and believing the gospel the conditions upon which eternal life is said to be granted cannot be fulfilled.

But indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish are to be visited upon those who are contentious, and who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness. The truth is whatever testimony may be set before men. In chapter 1 we see that the descendants of Noah so turned the truth of God into a lie, that God was compelled in righteousness to abandon them to their own uncleannesses. They disregarded the testimony of creation, and went on in their godless ways, heaping up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. These had not the law, and will not be judged by it, but by the light which they had; and verse 12 tells us they shall perish: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." But the Jew has had greater privileges. He has had the law, but like the Gentile he made no saving use of the light given to him, and will be judged by the law; but by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified in the sight of God: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. 3: 10). Surely those with the light of the gospel are very much more responsible, and their condemnation consequently greater.

But is it absolutely necessary to be forced by Scripture into the conviction that to come into judgment is to be condemned? Do we not know that innocent people are always immune from judgment. In this world of maladministration and lack of wisdom the guiltless may be dragged before the judge, and even condemned; but such a thing is impossible in the dealings of God with His creatures. No one can be brought into judgment unless he is guilty and no one can escape when brought into judgment. Therefore the Psalmist says: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143: 2). The justified can never be brought into judgment; the judged can never be justified.

Every soul of man has always had, has now, and always shall have while upon earth, sufficient light to guide him to God; but of that light no man left to himself has ever made any saving use; he has always sinned against it, for the light has always been hated. All who are saved owe their salvation to the sovereign operation of God. Men may find fault with the ways of God, and that because of their innate enmity against Him, as well as their want of understanding, but we may be perfectly sure that He will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He is judged by His creatures (Ps. 51: 4).

THE MYRIADS OF THE LOST.

A great deal is said regarding the myriads of the lost, because when
disasters take place the human mind is always appalled by numbers. But what difference can it make to the person who suffers (and of whom else need we take account) whether it be himself alone, or whether he have a million along with him in his woes? And have all the myriads of angelic beings who shall perish for ever no feelings to be considered? What the number of such may be we may have some feeble idea if we consider that a legion of demons could be concerned with one man.

To contemplate the judgment of God is surely appalling to poor creatures like ourselves; though at best we have very little sense of the terrible nature of that judgment. Think of what it was to our Lord when in the Garden that bitter cup was presented to Him. He who best knew the terrible nature of that judgment feared it most (Heb. 5.7). It is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God in the day in which He takes vengeance upon the evildoer (Heb. 10.31).

The judgment of the living and that of the dead, in harmony with every other scripture that speaks on the subject, declare plainly that there is no hope for the man who has been disobedient to the light given to him of God (2 Thess. 1.6–9; Matt. 20.25; Rev. 11–15). We may rest assured, however, that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Men in their natural and evil minds are ever ready to attribute cruelty and carelessness to God, but when the day comes that will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts, the day in which God will vindicate Himself concerning all His ways with His rebellious creatures, it will be seen how just and true those ways have been, and in his own defence no creature will be able to lift up his voice.

No, my reader, there is no opportunity for man but the present, and to-day the saving testimony is the gospel of the grace of God. If you are appalled as you contemplate the awful doom of the impenitent show it by a life in which your neighbour may find no stumbling-block over which he might stumble and for ever perish. You will not persuade everyone to believe the gospel, but it may please God to use you to the blessing of many, and in this you will have your present and eternal joy.

In spite of the best tidings that ever fell upon the ears of mortal men, in spite of the terrors of eternal wrath, in spite of the most faithful preaching and pleading by servants of God filled with His Holy Spirit, men will waste their precious three-score years and ten in pursuit of things that can never satisfy the heart, and they would go on doing so if they had a thousand years, as was almost reached by the antedeluvians, the thoughts and imaginations of whose hearts were only evil every day (Gen. 6.5). The answer of the human heart to every testimony on the part of God is: “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways” (Job. 21.14). No one will come to Christ except the Father draw him; but everyone that is drawn by the Father comes (John 6.44, 45).

We can well leave God to safeguard His own glory. He is well able to vindicate Himself, and He will do it to the confusion of all His enemies. He has in unfathomable grace given us a revelation of the thoughts of His enemies. He has in unfathomable grace given us a revelation of the thoughts of His heart, and it is our salvation to believe it in the very way in which He has given it to us, neither adding to it, nor diminishing from it, nor mixing it up with our own carnal thoughts. Let us therefore sit down in His own presence, and in the distrust of ourselves, and let us ponder that revelation by the aid of the Anointing that He has given to us. If we do this we shall be set free from all uncertainty and error: for the meek He will guide in judgment, and the meek shall He teach His way (Ps. 25.9).
"That which is Right and Good."

"Ye shall DILIGENTLY keep the commandments of the Lord your God." And again, "Thou shalt do that which is RIGHT and GOOD in the sight of the Lord"

Deut. 6, 17, 18.

All this is morally lovely. We have here unfolded before our eyes those eternal principles which no change of dispensation, no change of scene, place, or circumstances can ever touch, "That which is right and good" must ever be of universal and abiding application. It reminds us of the words of THE APOSTLE JOHN TO HIS BELOVED FRIEND GAIUS, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil; but that which is good." The assembly might be in a very low condition; there might be very much to try the heart and depress the spirit of Gaius; Diotrephes might be carrying himself unbecomingly and unwarrantably towards the beloved and venerable apostle and others; all this might be true, and much more, yea, the whole professing body might go wrong. What then? What remained for Gaius to do? Simply to follow that which was right and good; to open his heart and his hand and his house to everyone who brought the TRUTH; to seek to help on the cause of Christ in every right way.

This was the business of Gaius in his day; and this is the business of every true lover of Christ, at all times, in all places and under all circumstances. We may not have many to join us; we may perhaps find ourselves, at times, almost alone; but we are still to follow what is good, cost what it may. We are to depart from iniquity—PURGE ourselves from dishonourable vessels—FLEE youthful lusts—TURN AWAY from powerless professors. And what then? "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace." How? In isolation? Nay. I may find myself alone in any given place for a time; but there can be no such thing as isolation, so long as the body of Christ is on earth, and that will be till He comes for us. Hence we never expect to see the day in which we cannot find a few that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; whoever they are, and wherever they are, it is our bounden duty to find them; and, having found them, to walk with them in holy fellowship, "until the end."

(C. H. M.)

The Love of Christ.

In that night wherein our Lord was betrayed, He ordained the Supper for you. In death He had more mind of you than He had of Himself. In the garden, on the cross, in the grave, His silly lost sheep was aye in His mind. Love has a brave memory, and cannot forget. He has graven you upon the palms of His hands; and He would show you those hands pierced as they have been for you, as He showed them to His disciples on the resurrection day, and He looks to His hands and says, "My sheep I cannot forget. Yea, in My death, My spouse, was aye in My mind. She took My night's sleep from Me, on that night of agony in the garden and for her I gave Myself to judgment and death.

What think ye of His love? What of these feet, that went up and down the world to seek His Father's lost sheep, pierced with nails? The eyes that were oft lift up to heaven unto God in prayer, wearied with tears? His head pierced with thorns? The face that is fairer than the sun, spit upon, smitten and maimed, and the hair pulled out of His cheeks. He took shame and gave you glory. He took the curse, and gave you the blessing, He took death, and gave you life.
The title of Psalm 142 connects it with that part of the life of David, given us in 1 Samuel 21:22, and with Psalms 34, 52, 56, 57. Of these Psalm 34 is perhaps the most noteworthy, affording us an insight into how it came to pass, that the distressed, the indebted and the discontented companions of the anointed king became under his instruction “the mighty men” of the kingdom. (See 1 Sam. 22:2; Ps. 34:3, 8, 11; 2 Sam. 23:8, etc. For a New Testament application, we may refer to 2 Tim. 2:12.)

From the expressions of loneliness and distress in our Psalm, we may infer it was written before Psalm 34, which gives the answer to the prayer and exercise of this Psalm. In seeking refuge among the Philistines there was a manifest failure of David’s faith, the more surprising (except to those who know the treachery of their own hearts) as there had been so marked an intervention of the power of God on his behalf (see end of 1 Sam. 19). David, in fear of Saul, made his plans, deceived his friends and then his enemies the Philistines, evidently without reference to God, now in our Psalm, we find him shut up to Jehovah alone; none else would know him, none cared for his soul, but “when my spirit is overwhelmed within me, thou knewest my path.” Nevertheless whatever might be his consciousness of God’s perfect knowledge of his sorrows and circumstances, it was his wisdom to pour all out into His ear, as though He knew nothing. This is one of the many practical lessons we may learn from the Psalms, and is emphasized to us in Philippians 4:6. Relief will surely follow, and the more detailed our prayer, the more assured will be “the peace of God,” flowing into our souls. The only mention of anything in the way of plea that Jehovah should answer the Psalmist’s prayer, besides the need expressed, is in the last verse, “bring my soul out of prison that I may give thanks to Thy Name.” We may remember it was otherwise with Paul and Silas, they sang praises in prison, for they were in the path of obedience and testimony; but when, as in our Psalm, the suffering is on account of our own error, we may have to wait for our home-made imprisonment to end, before praise will be given by the Spirit.

Psalm 143. The sections of this Psalm have been variously marked by commentators, perhaps the best division is into three equal portions of four verses. In the first of these we notice at once an advance in spiritual depth upon the Psalm preceding; here an answer is claimed according to the faithfulness and righteousness of Jehovah, while at the same time, there is the full acknowledgment, that if He enters into judgment with man, none is righteous. This confession puts the soul right with God morally, so that it can claim divine faithfulness and justice in its favour, thus anticipating what the cross alone reveals fully according to Romans 3:21, etc. It is on the ground that the righteous judgment of God has fallen on Him who bore our sins, that we Christians know that God is faithful and just to forgive us, on our confession (1 John 1:9). The depth of the distress expressed in the words of verse 3, reminding us of Psalm 141:7, shows what the faithful will pass through, in the time of Jacob’s trouble (see Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21). These and other Psalms provide words whereby the afflicted saints of that time may tell out their sorrows to Jehovah and know that His faithfulness and righteousness are for them.

In the next four verses there is a calling to mind the deliverance of Israel’s earlier days, not in the unbelieving spirit of Psalm 77:5, but rather like Gideon, whose query was the expression of a puzzled faith and therefore receives an encouraging answer (Judges 6:13, 14). Here the remembrance of ancient days is accompanied by a sincere longing after Jehovah which gives a depth and earnestness to the petitions, we should do well to consider. Verse 7 should be compared with Psalm 28:2 to show that what distinguishes the believer from the world, carelessly travelling the downward road, is the consciousness of having to do with God.
In the last section, while seeking instruction to carry out the will of Jehovah, and again appealing to His righteousness for deliverance, the enemies of the saints are brought under His eye, for their destruction, for only by their removal will the kingdom be established, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**PSALM 144.** In this Psalm the same hostile powers, which have been before us in the preceding Psalms are prominent again, and David's own people are seen to have been in rebellion against him (ver. 2). The Syriac and Chaldean versions, however, with a good number of Hebrew MSS. read the plural "peoples" as in the parallel passages in Psalm 18. 47 and 2 Samuel 22. 48. But most authorities regard the usual reading as correct. Other passages corresponding with some in Psalm 18, should be noticed in 1., 2., with verses 2 and 34, also verses 5, 6, 7, with 9, 13, 14-16. From this comparison we learn that the Psalm now under consideration was written before the 18th. The deliverance sought for in the one is accomplished and given thanks for in the other.

Attention has often been called to the question, "What is man?" in verse 3, and its occurrence again in Psalm 8. and Job 7. 17. The answer in each case is so diverse, that it may be useful to compare them again. In the mind of the suffering patriarch, man was not worth all the pains which God was taking with him, his life was but a breath and his days vanity—what is man, that God should set him up as one in whom His ways were to be displayed? In Psalm 144. the thought is more difficult to grasp and it has been supposed that the weakness of man is alluded to, in order to show his dependance on the help and power of Jehovah. But there is little doubt the question is why so puny a creature should be found opposing himself to the carrying out of the purposes of the Almighty God.

"Jehovah, what is Adam that Thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of Enosh (frail, weak mortal) that Thou makest account of him?" The reply is his destruction, "Bow Thy heavens, O Jehovah, and come down," scatter and defeat my enemies and deliver me. In Psalm 8. on the other hand, the question reads, "What is Enosh that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of Adam that Thou visitest him?" Here Messiah takes the rôle of the son of Adam, all things are put under His feet and further according to Daniel 7. 13, 14, the purposes of God for the establishment of His kingdom find their centre in Him. All things are to be placed under His feet, and though we do not yet see this accomplished, He is exalted and crowned and the church given to Him, to be in the peculiar relation of body to Him as Head (Eph. r.). But this is the great secret of the New Testament unrevealed in previous ages. In our Psalm victory over all opposition is looked for, in order to introduce the kingdom in power, and a new song is promised, suited to it (ver. 9). Perhaps the new song may be found in the Psalm immediately following. The last verses beautifully describe some of the features of the future kingdom, with which Psalm 128. may be compared; in these it is worthy of notice, that however blessed outward prosperity may be "blessed is the people, that is in such a case"; yet the Spirit will not admit full blessing in these things, but adds, "blessed is the people whose God is JEHOVAH."

**What does "If we walk in the light" mean? (1 John 1. 7).**

"The light" is the blessed spiritual sphere into which the believer in Christ is brought, according to the truth of Christianity, which is God fully revealed. He is not in "the darkness," nor in shadow, but in the full blaze of divine light and love, even here. He has been brought out of darkness into marvellous light. "God is in the light" and no longer hidden behind a veil as of old; and in that light the Christian walks and lives. There are, in fact, but these two spheres to walk in—light and darkness, and no other. The light is a sphere of holiness, and therefore exhortations abound that the believer should conduct himself holily—that is true; but, walking in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Blessed privilege! It is not here a question of how we walk, but where we walk.

(J. W. S.)
Questions and Answers.

Feet Washing.

When the Lord Jesus said to His disciples “Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13. 12-15). Did He mean them to actually wash each other’s feet as was taught by some of the “early fathers,” or had He a spiritual meaning in His words? Explain 1 Timothy 5. 10.

Our Lord’s act in washing His disciples’ feet was evidently symbolic of the present service that His own may have “part with Him” (ver. 8). To them He intended to convey a spiritual lesson and not to prescribe a literal form to be carried out under all circumstances. It was after supper that He performed the act, an unusual proceeding in itself, for in that country the feet of guests were washed on entering the house (see Luke 7. 44) and not when the repast was finished. Then again the outward act could have been understood by the disciples at the time, for it was a common custom, and indeed it was by Peter, who sought to prevent his Master from carrying out such a servile office. The Lord’s reply is significant, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” Having taken His garments and sat down again, He pointed out to them the lesson they could receive then, that if He had stooped to the lowest service on their account, they also were to consider no act too lowly to perform one to another. Hereafter when the Holy Ghost had come (chap. 14. 26), they would understand the spiritual import of what He had done.

In the East, the literal act would be suitably carried out by the saints as we see it was, from 1 Timothy 5. 10. In Western lands, there are other things equally lowly which in love we may do one for another. The true path of service is in lowliness to esteem others better than ourselves, not seeking a place of prominence, but following the example of the Master, who said “I am among you as He that serveth.” The lowly in spirit ever find greater nearness to Himself and such are truly able to carry on the spiritual service of removing from the walk of the saints, that which may be hindering their fuller enjoyment of the things of eternal life.

J. Green.

Division and the Energy of the Holy Spirit.

Is it right to say that division between saints is a sign of the energy of the Holy Spirit?

With the fact that the blessed Lord died “to gather in one the children of God” (John 11. 52), and His prayer in John 17. before us, we can but view division in that family with the profoundest sorrow and shame. The blame is ours whenever it occurs, nor can disunity be the work, or energy of Him whose unity we are enjoined to keep in the uniting bond of peace (Eph. 4.3). Far otherwise! Hence we read in Romans 16. 17, that they who cause division are to be avoided; in 1 Corinthians 3. 3, that they are a mark of carnality; that in 1 Corinthians 1. 10, “there be no divisions among you”; that in 1 Corinthians 11, their coming together was for the worse, because of their divisions; that in 1 Corinthians 14, the same care for one another, as members of the one body, would effectually obviate division; and finally that, in Galatians 5. 20, seditions (divisions) and heresies (schools of opinion) instead of being the fruit of the Spirit, are the works of the flesh.

We learn from the Word then that divisions in the flock of God, which is also His family and assembly are the work of the wolf (John 10.), or of the energy of the flesh (1 Cor. 3.), and are the product of wisdom which is earthly, sensual, and devilish (James 3.). A serious consideration indeed for all the servants of Christ to-day, whose business it is to gather with Him, as the one only centre, and not to scatter abroad to any other name or centre but Himself alone.

J. Wilson Smith.
The Good and the Right Way.

There is a striking lesson and much encouragement for those who serve God amongst His saints in Samuel's address to Israel when they demanded a king such as other nations had (1 Samuel 12.). What lay behind that demand was lack of confidence in God. Israel had forgotten His mighty works of old and had been very faithless to their covenant with Him, and Samuel had to say to them, "Ye have done all this wickedness." And yet he exhorted them to "fear not," and the basis for this encouragement for them was that God was faithful, that He had not forgotten them or ceased to care for them. This is most beautifully expressed in verse 22 of the chapter, "FOR THE LORD WILL NOT FORSAKE HIS PEOPLE FOR HIS GREAT NAME'S SAKE: BECAUSE IT HATH PLEASED THE LORD TO MAKE YOU HIS PEOPLE."

Now the knowledge of God's faithfulness had its effect first of all upon Samuel, and he says to them: Because God won't forsake you neither will I; because He will continue to care for you so will I. I am His servant and so I will serve you, for you are precious to Him, you are His chosen people. So, "AS FOR ME, GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD SIN AGAINST THE LORD IN CEASING TO PRAY FOR YOU: BUT I WILL TEACH YOU THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY."

Nothing could be grander than this. Samuel had listened to the Word of the Lord, and was one of the men of prayer of the Old Testament. He had learnt in communion with God what His people were to Him. Hence He would exercise this loving patience towards them. He would by His conduct amongst them manifest God's feelings towards them. He saw them so identified with the Lord's Name and glory that to cease to serve them he knew would be to sin against the Lord.

This has not been the way of all who have professed to serve the Lord. Some seemed devoted for awhile, but the test came and proved that they were not thinking the Lord's thoughts about His people, nor considering His great name's sake in connection with their service towards them. Self was mingled with their devotion, and because they were not accorded that recognition that they looked for they ceased to serve, from feelings of wounded pride. Or sectarian feelings, which always spring up from the flesh, governed them, and made them think more of the prosperity of a party or a special cause than of the whole company of God's redeemed people. We know something of the miserable bigotry and spitefulness of the flesh when it works in this sectarian way, for it is in all of us, and the more hateful is it because often working under a cloak of pretended faithfulness to God.

But we desire to point out "the good and the right way," for no servant of the Lord can lead others in it unless he is walking in it first himself. Faithfulness to God made Samuel serve on, even though the people had rejected him as they had rejected the God whom he served. It was sufficient for him that God loved them and had chosen them; this made them precious to him, so that in spite of their wicked ways he continued to intercede for them. And though the more he loved the less he was loved he did not stand aloof from them censoriously, or allow them to drift to ruin, as though they were nothing to him. No, he would lay hold of God for them by prayer, and he would lay hold of them for God by teaching them the good and the right way.

The need is men of Samuel's spirit, more intercessors, servants, pastors of this sort, and so much the more we need them as faith grows weak and love grows cold. May God in His great mercy to His people give such servants to them now.

Notice what is was that Samuel pressed upon Israel.
"ONLY FEAR THE LORD AND SERVE HIM IN TRUTH WITH ALL YOUR HEART; FOR CONSIDER HOW GREAT THINGS HE HATH DONE FOR YOU."

Let the servants of the Lord do these things themselves, discarding every other purpose and motive and way as being utterly beneath those who are called to serve the Lord, and they will find that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

This notable and comprehensive exhortation was based entirely upon God's faithfulness and love, and ministry of this sort is needed: Let us tell God's people what He is, more often than we tell them what they ought to be, for they will never be what they ought to be except as they are under the power of what He is.

The Church and Its Glory.

The first chapter of Ephesians introduces us to the name of FATHER, the character in which God has revealed Himself to us and from whence flow to the church the fruits of grace, and all the circumstances of its state of glory, as everything for Israel flowed from the name of Jehovah. To this name of Father, however, is added another relationship, distinctly marked in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and closely allied to the principal one, namely, the Father has given the church to Christ as His bride, so that it will fully participate in all His glory.

In adopting us for His children, the Father has associated us with the dignities and glory of His Son, the "firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29). As the bride of Christ, we enjoy, in virtue of His incomparable love to us, all the privileges that belong to Him.

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands" (John 3. 35). This is the first great truth we desire to set out from. And as the Son has glorified the Father, so the Father will glorify the Son. Our second point is: we shall participate in the glory that is given to the Son, as He said in John 17. 22, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," and it is that the world may know that the Father loves us as He loves Jesus Himself. In seeing us in the same glory, the world will be convinced that we are the objects of the same love; and the glory which we shall have at the last day will be but the manifestation of this precious and astonishing truth.

Thus the hope of the church is not alone salvation, that is, to escape the wrath of God, but to have the glory of the Son Himself. That in which the perfection of its joy consists is the being loved by the Father, and by Jesus; and, in consequence of this love, the being glorified. But more than this, the Father would have us enter into the full intelligence of these riches, and has even given us the first-fruits by the presence of the Holy Ghost in all those who are saved.

(J. N. D.)

The Servant's Need.

To be anxious for souls and yet not impatient; to be patient and yet not indifferent; to bear the infirmities of the weak without fostering them; to testify against sin and unfaithfulness and the low standards of spiritual life and yet to keep the stream of love free and full and open—to have the mind of a faithful shepherd, a hopeful physician, a tender nurse, and a skilful teacher—requires the continual renewal of the Lord's grace.

(Saphir.)
"I have loved you."

Malachi 1:1, 2.

"I HAVE loved you, saith the Lord."

Such was the "burden" of this prophet. He was "the messenger of the Lord." This is the meaning of his name, and the message he bore had this for its summary: "I have loved you, saith the Lord."

Of "the messenger" himself we know nothing. His parentage is untold, his history is unwritten, his birth-place and burying-place are undiscoverable.

But his message remains for the comfort of God's people in all time, and we may learn from it that which will encourage our hearts even if in the depths of self-despair.

Internal evidence would point to the prophecy having been uttered about the period during which Nehemiah ruled in Jerusalem, and found sadness of heart because of the condition of the remnant returned from Babylon. The messenger of the Lord does not mince matters in his denunciation of the state of priests and people, but with clarion note sounds out their sin and warns them of the results of their evil ways. Nevertheless the deep underlying "burden" is Jehovah's love, to which, alas! the people were so little responsive. Still He loved them in the face of all that they had shown themselves to be. He loved them and would love them still in spite of themselves.

Do we ask, "Why did Jehovah love Israel?" The answer is not far to seek. Deuteronomy 7:7, 8, supplies the reason. Moses shows the people that it was not because they were a great or remarkable people that Jehovah had loved them. They were only a poor and feeble little company, "the fewest of all people," and they were not to be wise in their own conceits. The Lord set His love upon them and chose them just because He would do so. They gave Him no reason for His love. The reason was in Himself. Thus the love remained in spite of their weakness and waywardness. It was an everlasting love wherewith He loved them. Chastened sorely the nation might be and was, but it was ever the hand of love which wielded the rod. Dark indeed have been the depths to which Israel has fallen, and desolate in truth is its present condition, but the love of Jehovah to them nationally abides, and out of their degradation and distresses they will yet be delivered. And so in the close of the prophecy we find Jehovah's promise for their future: "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings," and Israel shall "go forth and grow up" and flourish. Jehovah will yet in His unchanging love show Himself strong on their behalf and they shall be blessed.

From all this we who believe during the time of Israel's casting off may take the greatest comfort. The Lord has loved us because He has loved us. Knowing all that we were and all that we should be, He loved us. There was no "because" on our part, the "because" was with Himself. Because He was love He loved us. Because He is love He loves us still. We have learned more and more of the evil of our sinful nature as the days have sped past, and it may be have had to prove the folly of our wilfulness; but amid all this His love has remained unchanged, for He loves because He loves.

We love Him because He first loved us. He has given us a reason to love Him. Our love is responsive to His, it is but the echo of His own. And poor indeed at best is the love of His own to Himself.

The history of Israel's failure has been repeated in the history of the failure of the church of God. What the Lord Jesus said of the church of Ephesus is true of the church as a whole: "Thou
2° Scripture Truth.

Little did he know of all that has now been revealed—of all the wealth of blessing which love has lavished upon us in this day of fulness of privilege. But what he knew drew out his heart in praise and adoration. And can we be silent? Shall we not sing and sound His worthiness and yield to Him the glad worship of our hearts. As we look at the cross of Calvary and see all that love has thought and wrought for us, our hearts must be moved to say, "The Son of God . . . loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2.20). Christ hath loved us and given Himself for us." And in response say with the Psalmist, "I love the Lord," and with the apostle, "We love Him because He first loved us."

Then as we further trace the course of the church's time history as sketched in the seven epistles to the churches in the province of Asia (Rev. 2.3) we see that matters go from bad to worse, until in Laodicea we find the Lord knocking outside the door. As it has been well said, "That He is outside shows what the church is—that He knocks shows what He is." The church has changed, alas! but He is unchanged still. It has left its first love, and journeying down grade has become indifferent to Christ, lukewarm as to that which concerns His honour and the glory of His name. BUT HE HAS NOT LEFT HIS FIRST LOVE. He is not indifferent to the needs of His own. The love of the Saviour abides, and we hear the love note sounding amid the darkness, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." The hand of love knocks at the closed portal and the voice of love asks for entrance.

He loves with an everlasting love.

Though vine nor fig-tree neither Their wonted fruit should bear; Though all the fields should wither, No flocks nor herds be there; Yet God the same abiding, His praise shall tune my voice; For, while in Him confiding, I cannot but rejoice.

In holy contemplation
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new:
Set free from present sorrow
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let the unknown to-morrow
Bring with it what it may.
"Your Own Stedfastness."

It seems to me that there is great force to-day in the warning conveyed in the words: "Beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Peter 3. 17).

A steadfast course on the part of the Christian is of chief moment—one that is not deflected by attractions that are counter to those of Christ and His commands—but that, like Paul’s in Philippians 3., has the surpassingness of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as the great object before it, until the mark for the prize in glory be attained.

Steadiness, along with progress in the divine life, is the proof of the operation of God in the soul. It is a lifelong miracle, as great indeed as the first quickening from a state of death in trespasses and sins to the blessed relation of a child and son of God. This called for the mighty power of God, but surely the maintenance of that soul, amid all the weakness of the flesh and the tremendous energy of evil around, is equally the work of God. For this we have the precious ministry of our great High Priest on high: "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him"; and but for His ability to do so, where would we be?

"Your own stedfastness" is a remarkable expression. For if one regards his own career as a Christian he is bound to acknowledge a thousand deviations from his object, and he who knows himself best, and who also knows the keen edge of true discipleship, is the first to own it; and yet, thank God, there is such a fact as "your own stedfastness." It can be seen in many a bright and faithful witness, amid all the snares of the sorry "Vanity Fair" of this world, through which they pass. It was seen in full perfection in Him who was in every sense "the faithful witness," and now the "first-born from the dead"; but, miracle as it surely is, "your own stedfastness" is as actual a fact as is any other part of the operations of God. The successful passage of Israel through the Jordan was as signal a proof of the work of God as their crossing the Red Sea forty years before. It was His mercy and power in each case.

But what is the special snare and hindrance to this "stedfastness" to-day? It is "the error of the wicked." And what is this special error? It is found in our present chapter (2 Peter 3.) and in that which precedes it. In this we read of "false teachers" in Christendom, who deny the Lord who brought them (it does not say "redeemed them") and whose one business it was to contaminate the flock of Christ. Their practice and doctrine were on a par; for the denial of the Lord in doctrine was, and ever must be, the total subversion of true moral conduct. Their influence is pestilential. They had been affected, no doubt, for a moment, by "the holy commandment (beautiful word) delivered unto them"; and had, so far, admitted the moral worth of Christianity; but, like dogs, they had returned to their vomit, and, like swine (externally washed) to their wallowing in the mire. Against such an influence the apostle warns the church. They were guilty of a fearful sin—that of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and of producing, by the corruption of the best thing, the worst of all corruptions, "their damnation slumbereth not." God will visit their sin upon them—as the "tares" they shall be gathered and consumed.

The snare of chapter 3. is the boast of the last-day scoffers, that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," and that any such event as the coming of the Lord in judgment is a delusion. Say they, "Where is that promise?"

Oh, do they never read the Bible? or,
as quoted by Jude) to the end of the Revelation by John. I question if any statement in Scripture is more generally or emphatically announced than is “judgment to come.” But this ribald, infidel, last-day scoff, whether shot by the tongue of the atheist or written by the polished pen of the critic, is more than likely to injure the faith of the lambs and sheep of Christ; and hence the timely warning. The error of the wicked may lead them away and cause them “to fall from their own steadfastness.” But to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

The peril to-day is great, but safety lies in the exhortation following: “Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Very much what we saw in the life-practice of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3.

There is really no security against error save in a growing, deepening knowledge of the Lord Himself. Let us set our hearts on this most precious knowledge. The walls of no ecclesiastical fold, however strong, can afford this security. There must be growth in grace and in the personal knowledge of the Lord, in order to maintain true steadfastness in testimony to Him.

Assembling Yourselves Together.

It is quite certain that those who are whole-hearted for Christ desire to be in His company. They instinctively wend their way to the spot where He is known to be.

Is there such a spot on earth? Yes;—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18. 20). No one who is truly conscious of the greatness and excellency of His person, and of the blessedness of communion with Him, can be willingly absent from that favoured place. A neglected Lord’s Supper, and a neglected prayer-meeting, speak aloud of a Laodicean state of the heart towards Him. We read that of old “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2. 42). Alas, that there should be such a lack of continuing steadfastly now.

Does the Lord say to the Father, “In the midst of the church (assembly) will I sing praise unto Thee” (Heb. 2. 12), and can we suppose that He fails to notice whether we are there, or not, to join in the song He leads?

In the coming day of review before the judgment seat of Christ, how shall we like the disclosure that self-indulgence, a little unfavourable weather, or a passing tiff with a brother or sister in Christ, has outweighed with us all the mighty motives for a loving response to His wish, “Do this in remembrance of Me”? (Luke 22. 19).

It is deeply humbling to think that any who have tasted the Lord’s love can take advantage of not having to work on the Lord’s day to spend its morning hours in bed, and that others can excuse their absence from its meetings on the ground of visiting, or receiving visits from friends. Priceless opportunities of gratifying the heart of the Lord, and of showing our attachment to Him, in the scene of His rejection, are thus wasted and lost.

It is mere mockery to repeat, “Come, Lord Jesus,” and use glowing expressions of desire to be with Him in glory, if, by our absence from His assembly, we betray our indifference to His presence here.

Beloved, “It is high time to awake out of sleep” (Rom. 13. 11). May we take to heart the solemn and impressive exhortation of the word, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting (encouraging) one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching (Heb. to. 25).

(L. A. Westcott.)
Take Heed.

I KNEW a man years ago who was very active in preaching, and very intelligent in the Scriptures. He was looked upon in the district where he lived as a steady useful servant of the Lord. Suddenly his service ceased and he drifted into the world and finally came to an untimely and shocking end. One who had been intimate with him in what seemed his bright days told me that he believed he knew the secret of his absolute departure from the Lord. It was prayerlessness. He had said on one occasion to his friend, "I don't think God intends me to pray as you do. I can never spend more than five minutes on my knees at one time. I must be up and doing something."

I knew another man, more gifted and intelligent than the other, who gave great promise of being a true help in the church of God. He, too, made shipwreck, and I think I know the secret of his fall. In his brightest days he said to me, "I never got any good, or blessing out of any trouble that ever I had." He was not exercised by the chastening of the Lord.

These are two things that we shall do well to pay earnest heed to. We cannot prosper in our own individual spiritual lives if we are prayerless; we must drift away from the Lord if we are unexercised by the chastening of the Lord. And to continue in service if our own state is bad is to run the risk of great disaster. May the Lord give us the spirit of grace and supplication, and make us keenly sensitive to the chastenings of divine love. The first puts us into contact with divine power and grace. The second shows us the weakness and the evil ways within us, and turns our feet in the way of holiness, and assures us that perfect love that seeks only our good.

(J. T. M.)

The Power of Prayer.

SOME are discouraged; they can neither fight for Christ nor do anything to promote His cause, as wanting strength of body and means. Nay, but if thou canst pray, thou dost set the whole wheels of Omnipotency on work for the building of the Lord's house; in which regard the prayer of a sick and poor man shall do more in war for the cause of God than twenty thousand men. It was not Ahasuerus, nor the grace that Esther found in the eyes of the king, that saved the Jews from destruction, but the prayers of Esther and her maids. It is true an angel brought Peter out of prison, but what stirred that wheel in heaven? Here's the cause, "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12. 5). Every one who hath the spirit of adoption, though poor and rejected of men, by prayer hath powerful influence on all the nations of the earth. Prayer can reach as far as Omnipotency, accompanied by the wise decree of our Lord; and the poorest girl or maid that can pray, doth lend a strong lift to heighten the footstool of Christ's royal throne. Children and poor maids by prayer may put the crown on Christ's head, and hold up His throne, and may store and increase heaven by praying, "Thy kingdom come"; and may by prayer bind kings in fetters, chain up confine devils, subdue kingdoms.

It is not knowing the character of the world through which I move that gives me power; we get no strength from the contemplation of that, but intercourse and living communion with the Head. We should get near enough to Christ to enjoy Him, and to know Him truly, and to gather up all that is like Him.
The Christian and the High Cost of Living.

(C. Knapp, Florida)

The writer remembers how in the autumn of '96 good potatoes were sold at the starch factories in Minnesota for ten cents per bushel; and about the same time corn in the cob was being burned in Nebraska as the cheapest form of fuel. Flour was almost correspondingly cheap.

What changes since then! The world was not thankful, God was forgotten, and to-day we stand confronted with conditions, economical and political, such as no one, three years ago, would have believed possible.

And in view of the present distress, and worse to follow, doubtless, what is the Christian to do? What is to be his attitude in the midst of all this change for the worse, especially as these changes bear directly, to many, on the barest means of subsistence?

Of course we know the believer's hope and hourly expectation is the coming of the Lord. It is his joyful prospect of hearing at any moment the shout of the Lord, the archangel's voice and the peal of the trump of God. "Nothing this hope can dim," nor can its blessedness be exceeded; no blessing possessed or in prospect can possibly surpass it. We would not for a moment turn the Christian's attention, or the eyes of his heart, from the sky, whence shall come his happy deliverance from the condition of groaning in which many now find themselves in an unusually intensified form.

But since He may tarry for yet a little while longer, and men at the helm of the world's affairs warn us this war may not be brought to a successful close as early as it had been hoped, it is necessary to look the possible future full in the face; and again we say, What is to be done?

There is special comfort to be found along these very lines just now in that part of Scripture where we might least expect it—the book of Revelation. In chapter 6, "the seals are opened one by one." We see come forth at the call of the living creatures horsemen, the first on a white horse; he goes forth conquering and to conquer—another Napoleon, carrying everything before him. At the call of the second living creature another rider appears; by him peace is taken from the earth (how perilously near we are to that already) that men should kill one another. Famine follows: "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Here we have the "high cost of living" advanced to the limit. A "measure" (cheœnix) was about a quart and was considered a day's ration sufficient for one person; and a "penny," as we know from the parable of the labourers (Matt. 20.), was a day's wage, the equivalent, say, of two dollars in one day. This brings us to the appalling conclusion that in these coming days of unprecedented scarcity it will require the day's earnings of a working man to purchase sufficient to feed himself, or another beside himself, if he is willing to eat the coarser kind of food (barley); but what is to become of his family—his children or others dependent on him?

Mr. F. W. Grant in his notes on this passage in Numerical Bible, says it is the price of their staples increased eight-fold, while Mr. Wm. Kelly in his smaller and latest exposition of the Revelation makes it to be sixteen times above the ordinary prices prevailing in John's day. If we divide the difference between these equally competent authorities we have the unprecedented increase
of twelvefold in the cost of one of life’s prime necessities.

This is for the time of tribulation yet to come, and we, the church, thank God, will be at that time in the glory with Christ, having been previously caught up with Him at His coming, in the air. But whether it be ourselves, Christians now, or the remnant by and by, what is the comfort for us in the passage quoted? Just this: Whatever the scarcity, however high the prices of life’s chief necessities may soar, God has fixed a limit to those prices. He, the “faithful Creator,” and loving Father of His children, watchful guardian and provider of His own (see I Tim. 4. 10), has determined all beforehand and can say of rising prices as He says of the wild raging waves of the sea, “Hitherto shalt Thou come and no further!” It is not, after all, boards of trade, stock manipulators, speculators, or even duly appointed federal food commissions that fix prices of that which is required for the sustenance of His saints. No, the “Lord Almighty, —He who loves me—God!” determines this matter; and this is our confidence and rest. Famine and want cannot proceed beyond the bounds set for them by the decrees of the Almighty. This will be the consolation of saints in tribulation days, as they will learn from Revelation 6. 6, and it is ours for to-day.

Take courage, then, tried children of God. And see that ye murmur not, nor be tempted to speak evil of dignities, whether it be Prussian Kaisers and war lords abroad, or those set in authority at home. God is above the highest and ruleth not only in the heavens above but also in the kingdoms of men below. He is allowing all this trial; and whether it be “the beginning of sorrows,” to continue and increase until it culminates in the frightfulness of “the great tribulation,” or is merely a prelude to subside at length and be followed by a lengthening of the nation’s tranquillity, it is just the same to you. See that ye be not troubled. The very hairs of your head are numbered and ye are dear to God. He fed a nation of six hundred thousand footmen (to say nothing of women and children) for forty years in the deserts of Arabia, and though for their sins their carcases fell in the wilderness, we do not read of a single one of them starving to death. No, nor will you or your little ones be forsaken in this day of distress and ever-increasing calamity. We look to Calvary and there learn the extent of the love of God to us; and then when we look round about us and see all that is so rapidly and alarmingly coming to pass, we can say in the triumph and confidence of faith, “He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Yes, how shall He not? And though we punctuate with the question mark, we might consistently conclude the glorious challenge with an exultant exclamation!

This does not mean that we shall be exempt from trial, for we are assured by even a “son of consolation” (Barnabas, Acts 14. 22) that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” But we have the sure promises of God that we shall not want, that we verily shall be fed, and that we have but to seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness and all these things (life’s necessities) shall be added unto us.

What of the Future?

It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people too;
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And He Who feeds the ravens,
Will give His children bread.
Old Testament Saints and the Church.

It is of the utmost importance to rightly distinguish the various dispensations which God has appointed, in the course of which He calls out from amongst men the different families, who will each have their place in the scheme of glory that He has designed, to give honour to His Son.

Ephesians 3. 14, 15, tells us that every (not "whole") family in heaven and on earth, has its name and place assigned to it by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The plan has its source in infinite love, and the Scriptures are given that we may understand what is the purpose of His will, and be able by His grace to direct our walk and conduct in holy conformity to the place He has given to the saints of the dispensation in which He has cast our lot.

In the first place it must be borne in mind that the cross is the dividing line between that which was expressed in type and shadow and the realities which are established in Christ risen; between the testing of the responsibility of man in flesh and the bringing in of divine righteousness. Until Christ's death and resurrection were accomplished there could be no association with Him in life, the corn of wheat abode alone (John 12. 24). Nor indeed could the relationship which belonged to Him as Son of God be imparted to others until He was ascended; our Lord emphasized this when He said to Mary, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20. 17).

It had not been possible until then for the saints to be associated with Him as His brethren. Still further, no new creation could exist until He should rise from amongst the dead, the beginning of the creation of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5. 14-17). And yet more, there could not have been formed for Him a body, the members of which should be bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, until His death had taken place; the antitype of the sleep in which the first Adam lay, when from his side was taken the woman, his bride and helpmeet. It is also evident that until Christ died and rose again the middle wall of partition still existed between the Jew and the Gentile; the first positionally nigh, the latter afar off, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances forming an insuperable barrier to their union (Eph. 2. 14-17).

Our Lord alludes to the change of dispensation which His death would effect when, in answer to Peter's confession of Him as the Son of the living God, He says, "On this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18). His resurrection demonstrated the fact that He was the Son of God, superior to death, whose power He had vanquished (Rom. 1. 4). And it was on this foundation that He proposed to rear the imperishable structure of His church. Our Lord does not say, I will continue to build, as if the work had been already proceeding in former times, but He looked forward to the inauguration of that which had never existed before, His assembly. While this refers to the church viewed as the house of God, the same is true of the church seen as the body of Christ, the mystery. Ephesians 3. 5 states clearly this was not in other ages made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Furthermore (ver. 9) this secret was hid in God from the beginning of the world, but now the principalities and powers in the heavenlies learn by the church the all-varied wisdom of God. The whole of Ephesians 2. 3 draws the contrast between the position of Gentile and Jew before the cross, and the present position of the church, in which they are found reconciled to God in one body; being built
upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (the order excluding Old Testament prophets), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, a title which Acts 4. 10, 11 shows, refers to His resurrection and ascension. Nor is the testimony of Colossians 1. 24-27, any the less definite.

The careful consideration of the foregoing scriptures should bring conviction, that however godly the Old Testament saints were, whatever the victories of faith that they achieved, and however great their personal honour in the day of Christ's glory, yet the place which the wisdom of God has assigned to them is not that of the church, the body and bride of Christ. The design of God in the church is to show forth unto eternal ages the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. 2. 7). And in view of this the Holy Ghost is given to gather out of all nations the objects of His grace, and to form one body, by the baptism of the one Spirit. That the Holy Ghost was not active in this way in Old Testament times is evident from John 7. 39, John 16. 7, Acts 1. 5, Acts 10. 45, Acts 19. 2, scriptures which show how very distinct the present period is in the ways of God, to be followed by another in which He will build again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15. 16-18). God knows all His works from the beginning, and it is our wisdom to observe, with humility, the way His all-varied wisdom has called into existence each family of faith for His glory, rather than comparing Old and New Testament saints, or estimating what in our opinion each deserves for the devotion with which they have served God. He will not be unmindful of their faithfulness, at the same time He knows how to adjust their reward to the scheme of His own workmanship, which shall call forth the adoring praise of all things in heaven and on earth.

What then is the portion of the Old Testament saints? Abraham looked for a city, David expected the coming King, Daniel was to rest and stand in his lot at the end of the days. These with many others all died in faith, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They turned their backs upon the objects which the world of their day was pursuing, and sought a better country, that is a heavenly; and God, the Source of this desire in their hearts, has answered it by preparing for them a city. But let us not confuse these worthies of faith with the formation of the city that is prepared for them. John the Baptist, the greatest of that dispensation, describes his own and their joy (John 3. 29): "'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.'"

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are inscribed on the city's gates, for the administration of the city is towards God's ancient people, and the gates are named as the gates of a city usually are, according to the direction towards which they look, and the roads which lead from them. Besides which, the Lord has given to the twelve apostles a very special place regarding Israel: "'Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel'" (Matt. 19. 28). The twelve gates stand upon the twelve foundations, and the gate is the place of judgment.

God is the designer and constructor of this city. If His master-hand has taken the most unworthy of His creatures, fitted them by His skill for the place of greatest nearness to Himself in order to manifest how great His grace is, to Him alone be the praise. No family, whether of Old or New Testament saints, but will reflect some glory of God, who has formed all things for His pleasure. None will envy the portion of another, but all will be filled with wonder at the Divine wisdom which has set each as jewels in their own setting. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

Psalms 146–148.

The last five Psalms follow David's Psalm of praise in giving worship to Jehovah, the glories and blessings of whose kingdom are worthily celebrated. There is little doubt they were written for use in the rebuilt temple, after the return from the captivity in Babylon (see Neh. 12. 27, 42–47), allusions to which are made in 146. 7–9 and 147. 2. This is confirmed by the tradition preserved in the Septuagint, that these two Psalms were written by Haggai and Zechariah. Whoever the author may have been, the Spirit inspiring them connects the God who is worshipped with the nation of Israel and its sanctuary (146. 10; 147. 12, 19; 148. 19; 149. 2; 150. 1). No such local allusions occur in Psalm 145.

In referring to the restoration from Babylon, it must be remembered that this was only a foreshadowing of the return to the land yet to take place, when these Hallelujah Psalms will be sung again in strains of praise which will never be silenced. Then it will be manifested that the kingdom of Jehovah, as the God of Zion, will be for ever (146. 10) a consummation which fills the heart and lips of the Psalmist with praise (verses 1–2).

Human leaders there had been; of too many of these were the words of the Prophet true: "Children are their oppressors and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths!" So now the Spirit warns, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help." But this only serves to bring out more brightly the contrast of verse 5: "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help," the faithful Creator, who keepeth truth for ever and reigns in righteousness and mercy, such will be the character of the rule of Jehovah, exercised in the midst of Zion (Zeph. 3.).

Psalms 147. continues the same subject, especially noticing the gracious care of the God of creation for His saints, however humble their position or sorrowful their state: it forms in this way a fine answer to the question in Isaiah 40. 27, and the reply of the Prophet may be compared with verses 3–6 of our Psalm.

It is not by the strength of a horse or the energy of a man that God delivers His people, but by means which make His mercy manifest.

The Psalm may be divided into three sections, each of which begins with a call to praise, 1–6, 7–11, 12–20. In the first, there is evident reference to the return from Babylon, and the mercy and goodness of Jehovah in this restoration and in healing the broken-hearted are witnessed, as well as His power and wisdom in the sphere of creation. Moreover, under His direct rule the wicked no longer prosper.

In the second section there is an interesting account of how Jehovah adapts the resources of nature to the needs of His creatures, but it is expressly stated that His pleasure is in those who recognize Him in His own character.

In the last section Jerusalem and Zion are addressed and summoned to praise Jehovah, as having entered into special relations with Him (verses 19, 20). Taking account of the condition of His people, He has adapted His blessing to their needs and so orders all the phenomena of nature, that they are favourable to them (compare Rom. 8. 28).

Psalms 148. This Psalm looks on to what is perhaps the most glorious consequence of the rule of the Son of Man, that all things animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, both in heaven and on earth, will be united in Jehovah's praise. The two sections of the Psalm are plainly marked, verses 1–6, 7–14. In the first, the Spirit calls for praise from the heavens and in the heights above (Luke 2. 14), while in the last part the earthly things are summoned to take up the same chorus. According to verse 2, the angels and the hosts of heaven are linked not with the nations on earth, but with the created heavens (1 Kings 8. 27), in praise to the Name of Jehovah for creation and preservation. For a similar connection see Psalm 104. 1–4, in which the waters referred to are doubtless the same as in verse 4 of our Psalm and the waters above the firmament of Genesis 1. 7. (The part of the angelic hosts in the creation of the earth is given in Job 38.)
Precious Gems of Scripture.

The Sardonyx.

"The fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius" (Rom. 21. 20). "Ye have come to . . . the city, . . . and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enregistered in heaven, . . . and to the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. 12. 22-24).

The sardonyx is mentioned but once in the whole Bible;—in the fifth place, in foundations of the wall of the heavenly metropolis in Revelation 21. 20. There it shines as a symbol between the emerald and the sardius.

The "precious onyx" is the first stone named in the writings of the Spirit, as well as being the first in the creation group of Job 28. It is a striking symbol of Christ's glory and dignity as the Firstborn of all creation. Therefore it is absent from the bride's adorning in Revelation 21. But the mention of the sardonyx there, shows a special relation of the assembly with Christ in this distinction; and its connection and combination with the sardius stone have a meaning of divine importance for us, in its one appearance on the inspired page, as we shall presently see.

The sardius is the deep blood-red stone,—very precious. It is named next after the sardonyx, as the emerald is the next before it. The sardonyx is a combination of onyx, sard, and milky-white chalcedony, in alternate layers. Like the onyx itself, it was used for beautiful ornamentation, cameos, and engravings. What then does this stone, of such singular mention and association, speak of as a symbol, in its fifth place in the heavenly city's wall?

The answer will be found in another scripture which speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem, where the distinction which is symbolized again finds but one mention in the Bible. It is "the assembly of the firstborn (or firstborn ones, plural) who are enregistered in heaven" (Heb. 12. 23, N.T.). Our Lord Jesus Christ stands alone as the Firstborn; but there is an ASSEMBLY OF FIRSTBORN ONES in glorious association with Him through divine grace; redeemed by His blood; and taken out of the world to be exalted in heavenly glory.

Set in the fifth place, the sardonyx beams brightly as a witness to divine grace. Its connection and combination with the sardius reminds us that our glory and blessedness is through the precious blood of Christ. And as set after the fourth stone, the numerical symbol of earth, of which the emerald also speaks, we are thus reminded from whence we were taken. The assembly of the firstborn are enregistered in heaven. On the onyx were engraved the names of God's earthly people (Exod. 28.); and the sardonyx was similarly used; but now, those who share in this new dignity and blessedness are themselves enregistered where Christ Himself is,—in heaven itself.

"Called from a world, and heavenly on by birth, (Who once were but the citizens of earth) As pilgrims here, we seek our heavenly home, Our portion in the ages yet to come."

If we would better understand the distinctive glory into which these firstborn ones are brought, in contrast to the assembly as seen in other ways, we must learn of Him who is Himself THE FIRSTBORN, PRE-EMINENT IN ALL THINGS. The very expression Firstborn involves others being brought in; and it is striking that the eleven times that the onyx is mentioned in the Old Testament is completed by the one mention of the sardonyx in the New; thus:—$11 + 1 = 12$; the number of administration. He associates us with Him in this through redemption; and we must learn in His presence that in which He would give us to have part with Him; for on the ground of His blood-shedding He has already reconciled us to the Fulsnes that dwells in Himself, in the body of His flesh through death; even as all things will be presently reconciled to that fulness by Him. May we enter into it more
An Enquiry.

What is Meant by the Lord's Table?

In response to our invitation we have received letters regarding the paper entitled, "What is Meant by the Lord's Table?" which appeared in our June issue. The question that has raised most enquirY is, "Is it possible to put a person away from the Lord's Table?" And about this we feel that something more needs to be said. Our readers will readily agree that it is both safe and wise in an enquiry of this sort to discard phrases and terms, no matter how long honoured, and take up in their stead words of Scripture, especially so as in this very epistle (1 Cor.) we are told that the Apostle unfolded these things not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth (chap. 2. ver. 13).

Instruction as to putting away a wicked person is given in chapter 5.: the Lord's Table is the theme of chapter 10.; and we must not overlook the fact that the Lord's Table is not mentioned in the former chapter, nor has putting away by the assembly any place in the latter, and we believe that the confusing of the two has led to the weakening of the lines of truth in both.

Chapter 5. brings out the solemn truth that the Christian company is an unleavened company (ver. 7), sanctified in Christ Jesus (chap. 1.2). A company set apart for God, Christ Jesus being the measure of that sanctification. But in order to this all the evil that they had done, and all that they were as to their former sinful state (chap. 6. vers. 9, 10, 11) had first to come under God's unsparing judgment, and this took place when Christ our passover was slain for us. They had appropriated this judgment to themselves when they believed the gospel, but it had to be kept up by them continuously, they had "to keep the feast ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Having become the temple of God, which temple is holy (chap. 3. vers. 16, 17), they had to maintain their separation from the evil of the flesh and the world. Their sense of this had become dulled, or had never been truly awakened. They were not alarmed or grieved at the outbreak of sin in their midst, hence the need of the tone that the Apostle adopts towards them as to their own state. But there was more than this; he commands them with Apostolic authority, and as inspired by the Holy Ghost to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (ver. 13). The continued presence of this evil-doer with them as one of themselves was a denial of the holiness of God's temple, which temple they were, and a falsification of the fact that they were "called saints," and "sanctified in Christ Jesus."

This command to put away such a one holds good to this day; no plea of weakness or the divided state of the assembly of God can relieve us of this solemn obligation when need arises; and where there is indifference to it, or wilful disobedience of it, there is an association that is virtually denying the truth that "Christ our passover is slain for us"—the truth that lies at the very threshold of our relationships with God and one another.

The man put away according to this word would be put away from all privileges that Christians share in common, that is, assembly privileges. He would be put away from all his former intercourse with those who partake of those, as being unfitted by his state and conduct for such intercourse; he would be "without" and not "within." Thus would his brethren express towards him their abhorrence of evil, and maintain what was due to the Lord's name.

But the substitution of the term "put away from the Lord's table" for "put away from among yourselves," has led to the false thought that one so dealt with was merely to be deprived of participation in the Lord's Supper, but might still be allowed to maintain all other kinds of intercourse with the saints, and the inevitable consequence of this, to those who come under this judgment of their brethren, is that the seriousness of their position is not felt, and they have not been brought to that deep repentance and abhorrence of their sin as was the man of 1 Corinthians 5. And the saints themselves have failed to realize, not the holiness of the Supper
merely, for that does not come in here, but the holiness of the Christian company, what they themselves are as an unleavened company, sanctified in Christ Jesus. This latter is of the greatest importance, and should cause us much exercise of heart.

If the necessity for maintaining practically the unleavened character of the Christian assembly had been realized the church of God would have been delivered from that indifference to true holiness that has defiled it. On the other hand, if the seriousness of such action as is here commanded were seen, that it is not merely discipline, which word has a more general use, but judgment—the last act of the assembly in regard to a person who has proved himself to be unfit for Christian intercourse, it could not be treated in a light-hearted way, or meted out to those to whom it does not apply.

Chapter 10. presents another side of the truth. Our communication with one another is not the prominent thought here, but our identification with the Lord. In chapter 5. "among you," "your-selves" and "keeping company" occur, but here it is "the Lord," the cup of the Lord and the Lord's table. It is not here a question of the assembly clearing itself of an evil-doer when need arises, but the Lord's own jealousy as to what is due to Himself and in consequence His direct dealings with His own.

The Apostle begins by citing Israel as typical of the Christian position. They were all identified with Moses in the cloud and sea, and did all eat of the manna and drink of the spiritual Rock which was Christ. They were maintained by the bounty of the Lord, and yet they perished when they were unfaithful to their covenant with Him. They moved the Lord to jealousy by their conduct, and He did not call upon Moses or the congregation to judge them, but He did it Himself. Do we not get an example of this judgment of the Lord exercised in chapter 11. verses 29-32? "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep." Exception has been taken to this statement, "We cannot put away from the Lord's table and God won't," and the latter part of the statement is probably open to question, for those who were removed by the Lord's hand in death were removed from His table—which undoubtedly means identification with Himself, and participation, in common with all His members, in all the blessings that His death has secured for them here upon earth. We shall not have the Lord's table in heaven. It is in the midst of our enemies, and His that He has spread it for us.

Others are writing on the subject, and so we proceed no further, our object in these brief notes being, not to explain what the Lord's table is, but to show the difference between 1 Cor., chs. 5. and 10.

(Editor.)


The departed Christ shall come again! Shall come to satisfy the hearts which He Himself hath won. Who else can satisfy our hearts? None else but He can satisfy and heal a empty, stricken, broken heart.

He's gone away a place for us to furnish. But what is "place" to us were He not present there? Affection for His person doth make us yearn for Him alone. And if the place be loved it is because the Person's there. It is His home, His presence fills it. Person before Place! E'en kingdoms shall not Him displace. Himself, He filleth all.

When! oh, when shall nuptial joys be brought to full fruition? His love's activities shall bring His bride from desert land afar. He'll come again, receive her to Himself—His faithful promise—and end her wayworn pilgrimage. The rapture then shall be. That "blessed hope"—too early banished from her faithless heart, is now revived. He has not forgot. He comes at length to call His bride from earth. And through mid-air, all evil passed with Him the Father's house to enter. Then she'll behold His face and He will share with her—His helpmeet—all the glories that He will inherit, who Heir of all things is.
UPON what Scripture ground may the "nation" be invited to pray to God for His aid or intervention (or for thanksgiving) in the present or any other crisis?

It seems evident from the book of Jonah that God deals with nations and not merely with individuals. God is "Father" to His children. He is the "Preserver" or "Saviour" of all men (1 Tim. 4.10). He is also the "Governor" among the nations (Ps. 22.28) who have been set in their appointed spheres by Him (see Acts 17-26). It is also evident from the book of Jonah that when Nineveh took nationally the ground of repentance as commanded by their king God had regard to their prayer and action. To this extent, therefore, there seems to be scriptural warrant for a national turning to God in connection with His governmental dealings. We do not know of any scripture which lends support to the idea that by adopting "the Christian, religion" a nation may become "Christian" and therefore specially entitled to pray for God's aid. True faith, without which there is no true Christianity, is individual and not national.

Is a person having been baptised and professing Christianity on that account entitled to call upon God in time of stress, apart from repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Does God listen to His creatures as such apart from faith in Christ—either in so-called worship or in supplication?

These two questions are virtually one. Psalm 107, shows us how under stress of various kinds men do cry out to God and how in mercy He delivers them. Of this the redeemed of the Lord are special witness, and if they are wise men they discern God's lovingkindness in His intervention. It is also true that anyone who is baptised and professes Christianity thereby takes the place of calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22.16). Yet only repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ put the soul into right relations with God and render possible that intimate and confiding prayer which is the privilege of His children.

Evidently if men, whatever their professions may be, deliberately turn from God and cast His words behind them, He is silent to them (see Ps. 50.16-22). On the other hand, God evidently listens to the cry of the most unlikely and undeserving, as evidenced by the behaviour in this world of the One who said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He indeed proved Himself to be "kind to the unthankful and to the evil."

What is the scriptural view of the position of persons who have not definitely repented and accepted Christ as their Saviour—either ignorantly or designedly?

Many scriptures might be quoted as an answer to this, but none more comprehensive than Ephesians 2. 1-3 and verses 11 and 12, which deal with the Jew, with his outward position of privilege, as well as the poor outcast Gentile.

At public and so-called "united prayer meetings" it sometimes happens that apparently "good earnest Christian men" pray for blessings and certain things which appear contradictory to each other—how do you account for this?

When good Christian men pray contradictory prayers one accounts for it by the fact that so frequently even Christians are woefully deficient in their understanding of the will of God as expressed in Scripture, and so frequently their vision is blurred by the world without or the flesh within, and so communion with God is but little cultivated.

And at the same time in accounting for it thus one has a chastened spirit, conscious how frequently one has oneself prayed equally contradictory prayers in private if not in public. Acquaintance with the Word of God is necessary if we are to pray intelligently. And even then we do not know what we should pray for as we ought (Rom. 8.26). Yet we may make our requests known to God (Phil. 4.6). If united public prayer is made according to God, it will be as instructed by His Word and in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20.), and then all will be in harmony and without contradictions.
The Feasts of the Lord. No. 4.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Lev. 23. 1, 2).

The Feast of Tabernacles.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. . . . Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye shall gather in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths. when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord" (Lev. 23. 33-36, 39-44).

Millennial Blessing.

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4. 2).

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. . . . In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14. 16, 17, 20, 21).

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (Isa. 52.).

Remarks.—The fulfilment of this feast will be Israel's entrance into the rest that God prepared for them of old, but into which none could lead them but their true Prophet, Priest, and King. Then every word of promise and prophecy will be made good to them, not on the ground of the old covenant but on the ground of the new, when His law shall be written in their hearts, and they shall know Him who never forgot them through all their wanderings, who carried them in His heart and graved them upon His hands. With that people gathered at last under the healing wings of their Lord and King, and all the nations of the earth blessed in association with them under the Lord as universal monarch, wars shall cease, the curse be removed, creation rejoice, and the sabbath of the Lord be ushered in.
In Flesh, and under Law.

Romans 7. 18; Hebrews 11. 5; Romans 8. 10-19.

I NEED scarcely say to those who may read the following remarks, that we must get the truth of God from the revelation which He has made to us by means of the Holy Scriptures. Our own natural thoughts, even when they seem to be right, reasonable, and in agreement with that revelation, are useless, and more likely than not to lead us into a morass of error, from which we may never in this life find deliverance. The Word of God only is inerrant, and in it only is life, health, and blessing; and these are all there just because it is His Word, the revelation of Himself—Himself, I say, for "the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1 John 1. 1; 8. 25).

But in the reading and study of this priceless revelation, we require to remind our hearts of our dependence upon the One whose revelation it is for understanding of the sacred text. We need not fear to dig deep into its wondrous depths—we are rather exhorted to do so (Prov. 2. 1-9), and His Spirit is our Teacher (1 John 2. 27). For the understanding of the great thoughts of God we are not dependent upon our own natural ability; for the natural man, be he stupid or clever, cannot lay hold of them (1 Cor. 2. 14).

Then again, we require to be watchful that we do not mix up things that differ, and that we neither add to His words nor take away from them (Deut. 4. 2; Prov. 30. 6; Rev. 22. 18, 19). We must also see that we take good heed to the various dispensations, in which, and by means of which, the ways of God with fallen men are brought to light. If we approach the Word in a careless and profane manner, we are more likely to do harm to our souls than to do good (2 Peter 3. 16).

It is necessary also that we should have the utmost patience with one another, for in the apprehension of the mind of God we are all more or less defective. We are not required to endorse everything that pretends to be a ministry of the truth, for though the prophets may speak, two or three, the others have to judge (1 Cor. 14. 29); and if a man bring not the doctrine of Christ we must have nothing to do with him (2 John 10.), though we are to receive all those who do (3 John 5.-8.)

With these few, and, I think, necessary, remarks, I would turn the reader's attention to the scriptures at the head of this paper, seeking help from God that the truth may come before our souls with some measure of clearness. And I turn to them because they appear to some minds to be a little contradictory

"In flesh," and "in Spirit"; "under law," and "under grace," are contrasts found largely in the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. To be in flesh is to be on the footing upon which God placed man at the beginning, responsible to maintain himself in life and blessing with God by obedience. In fact, it is to be in the standing, relationship, and responsibility of a child of Adam, the state and condition of every man previous to conversion. In all past dispensations this was the way in which all men were viewed under the governmental dealings of God.

Now in Romans 7. 5 in the flesh is viewed as the believer's past state by nature; and in chapter 8. 9 we read: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Here two things are said concerning the believer in whom the Spirit of God dwells.—First: he is not in flesh. He is not on the line of the first and fallen head. Second: he is in Spirit. He has been born of the Spirit; and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," as truly as "that, which is born of the flesh is flesh."
scripture truth.

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(john 3. 6). The believer is a child of God, and though the necessity of new birth was not declared in the past dispensations, nor could it have been, yet from the beginning all who were in vital relations with God were so born.

That a man must be born again to be in blessing with God was just as true the moment the fall took place as it was when Nicodemus heard it from the lips of the Son of God, in the night of the proved alienation of Israel from Jehovah. But this great truth could not have been divulged while the trial of the fallen race was in progress, for had it been made known the trial of man must of necessity have closed, for to say a man must be born again is to declare the fallen sinner to be hopelessly lost, and if this be true of him it is vain keeping him longer under trial. This statement is only made when every means that could be used for the recovery of the sinner had been exhausted, and when he was found to be unmendably evil.

Every creature brings forth of its kind, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh. It is never spirit. It cannot be changed into something else. It minds the things of the flesh. It is enmity against God. It neither is, nor can be, subject to God's law, and therefore are we told: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 5-8). No man after that order either lives to God, loves Him, or can please Him.

A few other things are said of such, and that by the law, which was given to Israel as the measure of their obligations, the fulfilment of which entitled them to life upon earth (Lev. 18. 5). This law, which is holy, just, and good, declares of all under it that there is not one that doeth good or seeketh after God (Rom. 3. 10-19).

And yet in apparent contradiction of what we have in Romans 3. and 8, David, and surely he was under law, says to the Lord: "With my whole heart have I sought Thee"; and Enoch, though in the flesh, walked with God three hundred years, and before his translation had this testimony, "that he pleased God" (Heb. 11. 5).

Has the law then borne false witness? This cannot be: it is too just for that. And David was under it? Yes. And it says he did not seek God. No, it does not. Well, of them that are under it it does say: "There is none that seeketh after God." It seems to some minds that this was all the same as saying that David did not seek God, but it is not; nor is it the same thing to say that Enoch did not please God as to say that they that are in the flesh cannot please Him. For certainly David did seek the Lord, and Enoch did please God.

The apparent want of harmony in these scriptures is easily accounted for, if we keep in mind that man is viewed as in the flesh for the first four thousand years of his sinful history, and that he was tested under the various dispensations of God, in order that what was in his nature might be brought into evidence, before, as belonging to that order, he should be set aside in the judgment of the cross. Hence all were viewed as in the flesh during the past dispensations, and in addition to that all Israel were placed under law at Sinai. The law was but the measure of the responsibilities of a child of Adam.

Among men there were righteous and wicked, good and bad, children of God and children of Belial, but all were outwardly in the same position before God. Dispensationally all Israel were in the same relationship with Jehovah. The sons of Belial, who were, I suppose, the same morally as the children of the Devil in the New Testament, were God's people equally with men like David or Samuel. I say dispensationally, for it was not so vitally.

During the dispensations which were bringing to light the moral ruin of the old order, He was secretly working in His mighty grace, and producing a
generation that was a seed of God in the midst of a wilderness of briars and thorns. The first subject of this grace was Abel, whose righteous acts proved him to be born of God, for "everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2. 29). Ostensibly and dispensationally, as I have said, such were in no different relationship with God than others, but were they not vitally? They most surely were. But though they were sons they were under tutors and governors like everyone else of the same nation. Until the advent of the Son they had neither authority nor ability to take the place of sons, though sons they were (John 1. 12, 13; Gal. 4. 1-7).

Were they under law? Ostensibly they were; but not in their vital relationships with God, for if they had been held to law as a means of life they never would have reached it but would always have been under death, condemnation, and the curse (2 Cor. 3. 7-9; Gal. 3. 10). As far as I see, even though conscious of being in the favour of God, they knew nothing of the mighty work, which was wrought in their souls through the instrumentality of the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, by which they became children of God, but children of God they were, and under grace, though dispensationally children of men and under law.

But the trial of man being over the whole truth has come to light, and we are privileged to look back upon the operations of grace in past dispensations and witness with wondering and worshipping hearts its secret and sovereign workings in the midst of a lost and hopeless race of rebels against God. Now the truth is out, and men are told of the innate enmity of the flesh against God, and of its utterly rebellious disposition against His law.

We are told plainly that men must be born again; that the probation of flesh has come to an end; that God has begun afresh on the line of spirit; that He is setting up all things in His own power; that blessing is to lie no longer in the responsibility of the creature; that the whole universe of blessing is to subsist in Divine power; that even the angels who have not fallen are elect; that we have received the Spirit of God in order to be able to take the place of children; that we have passed out of darkness into light, out of death into life; that we are not in flesh, but in spirit; not under law, but under grace; that we know the Father; that our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; that our Saviour has by His death annulled death and him that has the power of it, the devil; that Christ has gone up on high, and has secured a place for us; that He is coming again to bring us into it.

These things could not have been known to saints in the past dispensations, for Christ had not come, the work of redemption had yet to be accomplished, and the Spirit was only in promise. But the true light having come and the Spirit given, and the Word of God complete, we can look back over the ages that are past as those that are better acquainted with the position of Old Testament saints than they themselves were. What infinite favour our God has bestowed upon us! May we truly appreciate the grace that has given to us a complete revelation of Himself, and that has also bestowed upon us the Holy Spirit, that we might understand the contents of that wondrous and divine revelation, and that we might come out down here as those that appreciate and exhibit the virtues of Him that has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"Do not preach on hell unless there are tears in your voice," said a godly minister. But does this mean never preach on hell at all? Was there ever a time when the terrors of the law, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the reality and awfulness of its punishment required greater emphasis than now?
"A Man of Sorrows."

The following poem is unique and deserves to be far more widely known than it is. The rich truths contained in the verses will form food for the soul and will lead to the praise and worship of Him whose path is pourtrayed in them.

Being in the well-known 7.6 measure the verses can be sung to a simple tune and voice the heart's delight in the Son of God who gave Himself for us.

Some scriptural references have been added in order to assist those who may wish to read the inspired records concerning the way of the Man of Sorrows depicted in thismetrical composition.

O EVER homeless Stranger!
Thus dearest Friend to me,
An outcast in a manger
That Thou mightst with us be.

Luke 2. 7.

How rightly rose the-praises
Of heaven, that wondrous night,
When shepherds hid their faces
In brightest angel light!


More just those acclamations,
Than when the glorious band
Chanted earth's deep foundations,
Just laid by God's right hand.

Job 38. 4-7.

Come now, and view that manger,
The Lord of Glory see,
A houseless, homeless Stranger
In this poor world, for thee—

1 Corinthians 2. 8.

"To God in the highest, glory,
And peace on earth," to find;
And learn that wondrous story,
"Good pleasure in mankind."


Oh, strange, yet fit beginning
Of all that life of woe
In which Thy grace was winning
Poor man his God to know!

Luke 1. 68; 77-79.

Bless'd Babe! who lowly liest
In manger-cradle there;
Descended from the highest
Our sorrows all to share.

Luke 1. 31-33.

Oh, suited now in nature
For Love's Divinest ways,
To make the fallen creature
The vessel of Thy praise.

1 Timothy 3. 16.

O Love! all thought surpassing!
That Thou shouldst with us be;
Nor yet in triumph passing,
But—human infancy.

Matthew 1. 23.

We cling to Thee in weakness,
The manger and the Cross;
We gaze upon Thy meekness
Through suffering, pain and loss;

Matthew 11. 29.

There see the Godhead glory
Shine through that human veil,
And willing, hear the story
Of love that's come to heal!

Matthew xiv. 33.

My soul in secret follows
The footsteps of His love;
I trace the Man of Sorrows
His boundless grace to prove.


A child in growth and stature,
Yet full of wisdom rare:
Sonship in conscious nature,
His words and ways declare.


Yet still, in meek submission,
His patient path He trod,
To wait His heavenly mission
Unknown to all but God.

Luke 2. 52.

But who, Thy path of service,
Thy steps removed from ill,
Thy patient love to serve us,
With human tongue can tell?

Psalms 106. 2.

'Midst sin and all corruption,
Where hatred did abound,
Thy path of true perfection
Was light on all around.

John 8. 58; 9. 7.
In scorn, neglect, reviling,
Thy patient grace stood fast,
Man's malice unavailing
To move Thy heart to haste.

O'er all, Thy perfect goodness
Rose blessedly Divine;
Poor hearts oppressed with sadness
Found ever rest in Thine!
Mark 7. 25-30.

The strong man in His armour
Thou mettest in Thy grace
Didst spoil the mighty charmer
Of our unhappy race.

Disease and death and demon,
All fled before Thy word,
As darkness, the dominion
Of day's returning lord!
Mark 5. 18, 29, 42.

The love that bore our burden
On the accursed tree,
Would give the heart its pardon
And set the sinner free.

Love, that made Thee a mourner
In this sad world of woe,
Made wretched man a sc sooner
Of grace that brought Thee low;
John 11. 35, 36: 12. 10

Still in Thee love's sweet savour
Shone forth in every deed,
And showed God's loving favour
To every soul in need.
Luke 7. 16.

I pause:—for, in Thy vision,
The day is hastening now,
When, for our lost condition,
Thy holy head shall bow.
Matthew 16. 21.

When, deep to deep still calling,
The waters reach Thy soul,
And, death and wrath appalling,
Then waves shall o'er Thee roll.
Psalms 42. 7.

O day of mightiest sorrow
Day of unfathomed grief!
When Thou shouldst taste the horror
Of wrath without relief:
Psalms 88. 7.

O day of man's dishonour!
When for Thy love supreme
He sought to mar Thine honour,
Thy glory turn to shame:
Psalms 109. 4, 5.

O day of our confusion!
When Satan's darkness lay,
In hatred and delusion,
On ruined nature's way.

Thou soughtest for compassion
Some heart Thy grief to know,
To watch Thine hour of passion,
For comforters in woe.
Matthew 26. 38.

No eye was found to pity,
No heart to bear Thy woe:
But shame, and scorn, and spitting;
None cared Thy Name to know.
Psalms 69. 20.

The pride of careless greatness
Could wash its hands of Thee:
Priests that should plead for weakness,
Must Thine accusers be!
Matthew 27. 12, 24.

Man's boasting love disowns Thee,
Thine own Thy danger flee;
A Judas only owns Thee,
That Thou mayst captive be.
Matthew 26. 47-56.

O man! How hast thou proved
What in thy heart is found;
By grace Divine unmoved,
By self in fetters bound!
Acts 13. 28.

Yet with all grief acquainted,
The Man of sorrows view
Unmoved, by ill untainted,
The path of grace pursue!
John 19. 17.

In death obedience yielding
To God His Father's will;
Love still its power is wielding
To meet all human ill.
Philippians 2. 8.
On him who had disowned Thee
Thine eye could look in love,
'Midst threats and taunts around Thee,
To tears of grace to move!
Luke 22. 61, 62.

What words of love and mercy
Flow from those lips of grace
For followers that desert Thee,
For sinners in disgrace!
Luke 23. 34.

The robber learned, beside Thee
Upon the cross of shame,
While taunts and jeers deride Thee,
The savour of Thy Name.

Then, finished all, in meekness
Thou to Thy Father's hand,
Perfect Thy strength in weakness,
Thy Spirit dost commend.
Luke 23. 46.

O Lord! Thy wondrous story
My inmost soul doth move:
I ponder o'er Thy glory,
Thy lonely path of love.
1 Timothy 3. 16.

But, O Divine Sojourner
'Midst man's unfathomed ill,
Love, that made Thee a mourner,
It is not man's to tell!
Mark 10. 32; 14. 34.

We worship, when we see Thee
In all Thy sorrowing path;
We long soon to be with Thee,
Who bore for us the wrath!
Revelation 1. 5, 6.

Come then, expected Saviour,
Thou Man of Sorrows, come!
Almighty, blest Deliverer!
And take us to Thee—home.
Revelation 22. 20.

Thou art Worthy.

"Worthy of all adoration
Is the Lamb that once was slain,"
Cry, in raptured exultation,
His redeemed from every nation;
Angel myriads join the strain;
Sounding from their sinless strings
Glory to the King of kings;
Harping, with their harps of gold,
Praises which never can be told.

Hallelujahs full and swelling
Rise around His throne of might.
All our highest laud excelling,
Holy and Immortal, dwelling
In the unapproached light,
He is worthy to receive
All that heaven and earth can give.
Blessing, honour, glory, might;
All are His by glorious right.

As the sound of many waters
Let the full Amen arise!
Hallelujah! Ceasing never,
Sounding through the great For Ever,
Linking all its harmonies;
Through eternities of bliss,
Lord, our raptures shall be this;
And our endless life shall be
One Amen of praise to Thee!

(F. R. H.)
"Things that Cannot be Shaken."

The division of our Bible into chapters sometimes spoils our apprehension of the connection of things, and an instance of this may be seen in the 12th and 13th chapters of Hebrews. Without the break we should read, "OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE. LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE." To the human conception of things there is here a contrast that is startling. The statements appear to be incongruous, contradictory, and mutually destructive. There seems to be no connection, agreement or sympathy between a consuming fire and brotherly love. But it is thus that the thoughts of the divine mind flow out to us, and the spiritual-minded believer will discern the blessed association, not of thought only, but, of the divine nature and the expression of it that exist here.

The closing statements of chapter 12 are most majestic, telling us that everything that is not of God—that is not founded upon what He is and is not upheld by His power shall be shaken and removed, so that there might be nothing forever that should rise up and oppose His good and acceptable will, and so bring discord and ruin into that new creation—that kingdom which cannot be moved.

But brotherly love belongs to that immovable kingdom. It is the nature of God which He has imparted to us finding its expression in our dealings with one another. "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." And love shall abide. Faith is good, enabling the one who has it to remove mountains. Hope is good, carrying the heart outside of present difficulties to the glorious prospect before us and making us sing in the gloom. But greater than all is Love. Love makes those who are moved by it forget themselves in the care and service of others; it finds a holy joy in self-sacrifice for God's sake.

This shall abide. All our self-seeking, our pride, the advantages we have gained for ourselves at the expense of others, all that hateful satisfaction that comes to the flesh in being thought better of than another, all that will be consumed, for it is not of God, but of the flesh, and our God is a consuming fire and will destroy everything in us and about us that is not in accordance with His own nature. Brotherly love is of His nature, so let brotherly love continue. C—O—N—T—I—N—U—E. (J. T. M.)

Christ and His Church.

Christ will never give up His thoughts about the church, and if we are acting on our thoughts, and He acts on His, He will make sad work with what we have set up.

If Christ begins to gather, He will scatter that which is not gathered in the power of unity with Himself.

Where Christ is the common object there will be a coalescing power. I find the church of God in a unity which attaches itself to Christ alone, as the sole centre of it.

The occupation of the church ought to be constant incessant reference to the Head (Christ). If its Head is not its first thought it cannot act for Him. This occupation will show itself in thinking of its Head, and filling itself into all the thoughts and affections of its Head.

We should seek that kind of communion with saints which living in spirit with the Head gives.

We should get all who hear to join in the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

(J. N. D.)
In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7. 37-39).

"RIVERS of living water!" We cannot lightly pass this by, for it is one of the most arresting and magnificent proposals that God has made to men. He does not speak of a river, but of RIVERS, and "rivers of LIVING WATER!" not flowing in only, but flowing out—flowing out into a barren, polluted, wretched, sin-burdened, and devil-oppressed world, and healing, comforting, uplifting, fertilizing wherever they flow. Flowing abundantly and continuously wherever the one is in whom they are, whether in the mansions of Mayfair or the slums of Shoreditch, among the peaceful hills and dales of favoured Briton, or the battle-torn fields of Flanders and France, in the far-off and demon-ridden lands where faithful souls labour to bring the heathen to the feet of Christ, and amid the pollutions of the flesh and empty world-attractions of the towns and cities of civilization; in the home, the office, the factory, the field and at sea; amid peace or war; in the gospel service and Sunday-school class, in life and testimony, day by day, and hour by hour—RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.

And to whom is the invitation given and the proposal made? TO ANY MAN WHO THIRSTS. To the one who feels that the world is bad and sighs for that which is good; to the one who has discovered that the church has failed both God and man and longs for that that faileth not; to the one who keenly feels that he is the greatest wreck of all whose folly and failure and feebleness for good weigh upon him like an unbearable load that makes his soul cry out in agony. To such the invitation is given, they all may come with their parched and fevered souls, and be transformed by coming into vessels over-flowing with blessing to others.

The unconverted man who has tasted nothing as yet but the brackish waters of the world's foul streams may come. The believer who has merely sipped at the living water, but has not drawn near to enter the fullness of joy that Christ gives may come. The backslider—most miserable of all men—who has known the joyful sound and lost its music in his wanderings amid the world's wild babel, to whom the sweet waters of life eternal are but a memory, and who lashes himself in secret for his treachery to Christ, and sighs for the brightness of those former days, may come. The discouraged servant, toiling all night fruitlessly, with heart depressed, life barren, and countenance sad, may come. The only qualification is thirst, and "IF ANY MAN THIRST," said the Son of God, "LET HIM COME UNTO ME AND DRINK."

COME UNTO ME. Search no longer in the depths of your own heart for the goodness that satisfies. Come unto Me. Cease to look to men for help. Come unto Me. Abandon for ever your hopes in the power and amiability of democracy. Come unto Me. Turn not to churches or religious ceremonies. Come unto Me. Depend not on famous evangelists, pastors and teachers. Come unto Me. Rest not in hearty meetings, Bible conferences, sound scriptural literature, or a correct ecclesiastical position. Come unto Me—UNTO ME—ME.

Are we tired of self and self-efforts? Are we sick at heart as "change and decay in all around we see"? Are our eyes weary with seeking good beneath the sun? Have our hopes been blighted
and our best aspirations withered? Do we groan and sigh at the failure of our pitiful efforts to bless others? Have we come to our wits' end, and do we cry, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, FOR THE LIVING GOD: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, WHERE IS THY GOD?"

Where is He? He is there, a lowly stranger in the midst of Israel's multitudes, on that last great day of the feast, crying, "Come unto Me" to every needy, thirsty soul—a stranger with gracious mien and outstretched hands and tear-filled eyes—a Nazarene, acquainted with grief, despised of the people, and yet—

"God manifest, God seen and heard, The heaven’s beloved One."

Behold Him as He uplifts His voice! He reads their misery in the faces of the multitude, He measures the boundless needs of their thirsty souls; He counts their tears, hears their sighs, and knows their disappointments, their heart-aches, and their sins. Their sorrows had made Him the man of sorrows, for He knew the cause of them, their sins would nail Him as a bleeding sacrifice to Calvary's tree. He sighs for them, weeps for them, and would die for them. They had forsaken God, the fountain of living water, and had hewn out for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns, that could hold no water—but He pities them, yearns for them, loves them and calls to them "COME UNTO ME AND DRINK."

Do we see what is involved in these words, which are more than an invitation. They were a call to those who heard them, and a call to us also, to forsake every fleshly hope, to smash every cherished idol, to lay all the glory of man in the dust where it properly belongs, to turn from it as being utterly void of profit, and to acknowledge that He alone can satisfy the cravings of the soul, and that He only has the right to do it, for HE IS GOD, He is THE WORD, the Revealer of the infinite blessedness of the Triune God, and His words are the divine invitation to sin-burdened and thirst-stricken wanderers from God—an invitation throbbing with a boundless compassion. But they are more than an invitation, they are a challenge also, a challenge to the creature to put the Creator to the test at last, and to prove that He, revealed in the fullness and blessedness of His nature in the person of His Only-Begotten, is infinitely better than the best he had known, and to discover at His feet that he might exchange His evil and misery for God's overflowing goodness.

But these words were more than an invitation and a challenge to men, they were the bursting forth of God's desires for men. Before His all-seeing eye all men, and all generations of men, appeared. He saw them, created as they had been to be filled into God's fullness, yet restless, thirsting, blind, and lost; wanderers in an arid desert without God and without hope; deceived by the devil and rebellious against God's holy will; hating Him in spite of His love and pressing on to an everlasting doom.

No temporal or material mercies, no matter how vast their multitude, could meet their need; they could only be saved from their present miseries and their future woe by the fullness of God reaching them in grace. And that this fullness might flow out to all men God sent His Son into the world, and He is the Fountain of the water of life; but that those waters might still flow forth in rivers He requires vessels, vessels that should first be filled with that fullness and then overflow in rivers to others.

This could only be as God Himself dwelt in the vessels and filled them with a constant satisfaction, and nothing short of this is the proposal. Consider the words afresh—"He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive:
for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

It is well to lay emphasis upon the fact that the fulfilment of this great word was dependent upon Jesus being glorified. He was to be taken up, as the man alive from the dead, to His Father's throne, to be there the life-giving Head, and this could not be until the great work of redemption was accomplished on the cross. At that cross the old life that could yield nothing either for God or man met its condemnation, "for God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). He has now taken up life in resurrection, and He imparts this life to all who come to Him. But not this alone; He gives to them the Holy Spirit. All who come to Him and drink are thereby put into contact with eternal power and eternal blessing, for they receive the Spirit of God who is the Eternal Spirit.

Oh, that the greatness of this might lay hold of us. In order that the life-giving rivers of grace might reach men God has put His own Spirit in those who believe in Jesus, and God dwells in them for the blessing of His unhappy and rebellious creatures. And this means that God's thoughts and compassions should find expression through them, that streams of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" should flow from them; that they should go about doing good as Jesus did, for God, who was with Him, is with them; that they should be witnesses to men, not only that Christ, the risen Man, is glorified in heaven, but that those who have come to Him have come to the fountain of the water of life and are fully satisfied, and in consequence think no longer of themselves but live for the blessing of others.

"But this spake He of the Spirit that they that believe on Him should receive."

Have we believed on Him? And if so are the rivers flowing forth from our satisfied souls—RIVERS OF LIVING WATER? Have we been transformed from thirsting, grasping, selfish, complaining sinners into sons of God, vessels overflowing with His goodness and blessing, meet for the Master's use in saving others?

God has need of such vessels as these, and that He might have them Jesus came and died and rose again and was glorified; and the world needs them, THE WORLD THAT GOD SO LOVED NEEDS THEM. Behold its sorrows and its sins, consider its wretchedness and bondage, think upon the darkness of its doom! Who can bless it but the God it knows not? From whence shall light and relief and deliverance and joy come to it but from God? It is the mission and responsibility and high and marvellous honour of the vessels in whom God dwells to carry God to it, and to be in the midst of it as RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. Are we this? And, if not, why? WHY?

We leave the consideration of this question to our readers, and will return to the subject, if the Lord will, in our next issue.

Just as Thou wilt!

Just as Thou wilt! Be all to me,
E'en when Thy hand smites heavily!
On brightest day or darkest night,
Whate'er is Thine is right.

Just as Thou wilt! Should anguish fierce
With scorpion stings my body pierce,
I'll praise Thee if on me Thou'lt shine
And whisper, "I am Thine."
The Spirit of Christ. No. 1.

THE Holy Spirit occupies a very special place in relation to Christians, distinct from anything set forth in Old Testament times or enjoyed by Old Testament saints; distinct from what was enjoyed by the disciples who accompanied with the Lord previous to His death, resurrection, and ascension, and distinct from what will be wrought in men (Israelites and Gentiles) after Christians are gone from the earth to the Lord; when the time will have come for the millennial reign of Christ, and its attendant glory and blessing.

We will reverently speak of His unique service in Christianity, and invite the reader's prayerful study and exercise of heart over the Scripture; that we may seek to answer to the Grace that God has shown to us, and to the position Christ has won for us, loyally and largely, till He come.

First of all, WHO IS THE SPIRIT?

We require to distinguish between the ordinary human spirit conferred on God's creature man in Genesis 2. 7, by the breath of God, and the Spirit of God who moved independently on the face of the waters before man was made, in Genesis 1. 2. The first constitutes man a responsible being before his Creator, destined to exist for ever; the second is a Divine Personality. They are very clearly separated in 1 Corinthians 2. 11. The spirit of man equips him for intelligence within the compass of his position as a man; the Spirit of God searches the deep things of God. We met a man not long ago who foolishly argued that, inasmuch as unconverted men had not the Spirit of God, each of them would cease to exist when he died. But when this passage was pointed out to him, he wisely bowed to the word which shows that every man has his own spirit whether he has the Spirit of God or not.

The Holy Ghost is a separate Personality in God. He is seen in conjunction with the names of the Father, and the Son, in Matthew 28. Christian baptism commits one to the confession of God as revealed by Christ, the full revelation of the One God being Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There are not two Gods, or three Gods, as ignorant objectors allege; but Three Personalities in One God. These Three ever subsisted in the Godhead; and with regard to the Holy Spirit, He is expressly called the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9. 14). Before the worlds were made, God is (Heb. 11. 3 and 6); but even when heaven and earth were created these material things were not capable of bringing to light all that God is. Moreover, though Enoch and Noah walked with God, and Abraham was called God's friend, and the Lord spake face to face unto Moses as a man speaketh unto his friend, their great intimacies did not bring to light the full truth. He was known to the patriarchs under His name of Almighty God, for the attribute of All-might pertains to the whole Godhead. Later, an advance was made when God especially linked His name of Jehovah with the nation of Israel (Exod. 6. 2, 3), for eternal existence and unchangeable glory (which are implied in that name) belong equally to the whole Godhead. Yet amid all the glories unfolded by the prophets, the Godhead secret was never fully disclosed until in the fullness of time Christ came. When it was no longer a question of the creation of worlds, or of the power that could sustain faith and reward it, as in Old Testament times, but rather of making purgation for sin and of revealing all that God is, the appearance of the Son of God in a concrete human form, apart from sin, necessarily brought to light His relations with the other Personalities in the Trinity. Christianity therefore is based upon the knowledge of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
But once we have light as to Him we can see how large a part the Spirit played in the history of the world in times that are past. In creation He is the first Personality distinguished by Name (Gen. 1. 3), and is there seen in connection with the ordering of the earth for man. In Job 26. 13, He is found garnishing the heavens. See also Isaiah 40. 13. The formation of man is attributed to Him in Job 33. 4. He operated in a special way in all the writers and in all the writings of the Scripture (2 Sam. 23. 2; 1 Chron. 28. 12; Neh. 9. 30; 1 Peter 1. 10–11; 2 Peter 1. 21; Heb. 3. 7; Heb. 9. 8; Heb. 10. 15). He imparted special wisdom to men, understanding, knowledge, skill (Exod. 31.; Neh. 9. 20); peculiar and temporary energy and power (Balaam, Num. 24. 2; Othniel, Judges 3. 10; Gideon, Judges 6. 34; Jephthah, Judges 11. 29; Samson, Judges 13. 25, etc.; Saul, 1 Sam. 10. 6, 10, etc.

He is spoken of DIRECTLY and PERSONALLY, as in Genesis 1. 3; Matthew 3. 16, etc.; John 7. 39; Acts 8. 39; 13. 2; 16. 6, 7; Romans 8.; 1 Corinthians 12.; Revelation 22. 17.

He is spoken of SYMBOLICALLY, under the idea of Seven Spirits, in Revelation 1., 3., 4., 5. Compare Isaiah 11. 2. Thus also Christ is spoken of symbolically as a Lamb having seven horns and seven eyes.

He is spoken of TYPICALLY, as Oil, for anointing, etc. Exodus 33. 22–33. Compare Acts 10. 38 and 1 Samuel 16. 13. And as Wind, or Breath (Ezekiel 37. 1–10). See verse 14.

He is spoken of CHARACTERISTICALLY, as the Spirit of Grace (Zech. 12. 10; Heb. 10. 29), of Truth (John 14. 17, etc.), of Holiness (Rom. 1. 4. So called everywhere the Holy Ghost), of Life (Rom. 8. 2), of Christ (Rom. 8. 9, etc.), of Sonship or adoption (Rom. 8. 15), of God’s Son (Gal. 4. 6), of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1. 7), and of glory and of God (1 Peter 4. 14).

He is spoken of PROPHETICALLY, in Isaiah 44. 3, where it is foretold that He will be poured out on Jacob’s seed through the sovereign will and mercy of God; in Ezekiel 11. 19, and 36. 26, in contrast with their former idolatry and uncleanness, and their captivity in heathen lands; also in Joel 2. 28, where Jehovah declares His purpose to bring all flesh, i.e. Gentile as well as Jew, under the Spirit's power. This will be connected with the future deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, when God shall save His remnant of the Jews; though the Apostle Peter indicates a partial fulfilment of it in Acts 2.

Lastly, He is said to give character to gift (Rom. 1. 11); the mind, life, and disposition of saints generally as such (Rom. 8.).

" " certain godly believers in contrast with certain carnally minded believers (1 Cor. 2. 15; 1 Cor. 3. 1.; 1 Cor. 14. 37; Gal. 6. 1).

" " the part taken by saints in Christian assemblies, and among their fellow-Christians (1 Cor. 12.).

" " the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15. 44).

" " the whole of our blessings (Eph. 1. 3).

" " our songs (Eph. 5. 19).

" " the house of which we form constituent parts, and our sacrifices (1 Peter 2. 5).
"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 3. 13, 14.)

A RUNNER fleet sped o'er the way!
"One thing I do," they heard him say;
"Yon shining goal I must attain!
While I this vital breath retain—
One thing I do."

They saw a friend beside him run,
Then turn aside, and only one
Kept on the path: his eager tread
And earnest bearing plainly said,
"One thing I do."

No backward look to view the road
Left far behind, gave he, but trode
In haste the upward way before;
His voice rang sweet o'er hill and moor,—
"One thing I do."

"Stay, Paul, thy fathers knew the truth;
Gamaliel trained thy springing youth;
Return to Moses! Christ is dead!"
Like cornet clear his answer said,
"One thing I do."

Forward he pressed! they marked his track,
Framed Jewish plots to turn him back,
By slander, persecution, sword;
Still he proclaimed in work and word,
"One thing I do."

Through darkening night and brightening day,
He lingered not along the way:
Storm-clouds may frown, the sun may smile,
Exulting, sounds that voice the while,
"One thing I do."

Hark! Cæsar's friends join in the cry;
"Stop! stop this dauntless enemy!"
Bound in a cell, they heard him sing
Praise in the night,—"With thanksgiving,
One thing I do."

None could his spirit bind; upward
It rose to where his well-loved Lord
Had gone; echoed the prison tower,—
"That I may know His rising power,—
One thing I do."

The calling high which beams before
Cheers on his steps where torrents roar;
"The excellence of Christ," said he,
"Fills my glad heart with melody,—
One thing I do."
"I have not yet attained!" he cried
As swift he scaled the mountain side;
"Nor yet have apprehended all
For which I heard the Saviour's call,—
One thing I do."

"Not perfected am I, but Christ,
My risen Lord, in glory waits;
And that He might become my gain
I'm running still, nor yet in vain
One thing I do."

With stones beset; cast out as dead;
The watchers saw him lift his head;
They gently tended to his need;
They caught his whisper, "On I speed,
One thing I do."

Well meaning friends to cool his zest
Attempt, but when he forward pressed
They meekly said, "God's will be done";
Responded he,—"I onward run,
One thing I do."

That figure lone on yon steep way,
They see, through tears, pass far away;
His form fades from the straining eye,
His voice still sounds through air and sky—
"One thing I do."

The lion saw, the nations heard;
He showed the path, he spake the word,
He kept the faith and won the prize;
His stirring message never dies,—
"One thing I do."

The Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18.

(T. R. Weston),

The departed Christ shall come again! His faithful Word—which cannot fail—has promised so. The dead in Christ shall rise, and those who yet remain, changed in a moment, shall join the heavenly scenes—the Marriage feast. Sorrow endures in the night; joy comes with morning light. The earthly path now o'er, no broken hearts, no partings more; "For ever WITH THE LORD," will satisfy for aye the heart that He has won. What instant change from scenes of desolation! No crying more, nor tears, nor riven hearts, nor base betrayals, nor earthly toil; the sweat of face for ever wiped away. And NOW, for ever with the Lord. Reached is the longed-for haven, where storm and tempest never come! And hope is turned to sight and we behold our Lord. What blissful visions break upon the soul! Christ is all, and in all; no other hope can intervene; intruders enter not; but one eternal NOW—to be with HIM our hearts have learned to love. All dangers, pitfalls, snares, spots, wrinkles gone, we join the triumph throng, with Jesus ever blest. His bride upon His throne SHALL REIGN WITH HIM FOR AYE!
Counting our Blessings.

When a sinner comes to the Lord Jesus Christ he is not only saved and forgiven, but it is as if a bag full of coins is put into his hands, with the assurance that all is his. He does not know the extent of his wealth. He cannot tell whether the bag is full of copper coins or gold, but he begins to count. He pulls out the sovereigns one by one, and reckons up the extent of his wealth.

In the same way, it is as if we Christians have had a bag full not of sovereigns but of blessings given to us. And in order to know how richly we have been blest, we need to investigate the extent of our spiritual wealth.

I remember once calling upon an old lady, her favourite hymn was “Count your blessings.”

I said, “Have you ever tried to count your blessings?” This was a new thought to her. I said, “Shall we make a start? I have a pencil and a piece of paper in my pocket. You tell me your blessings as they come to your mind, and I will jot them down, and we will reckon up, and see how many there are.” She thought that would be an excellent plan. I got out my pencil. Well, she said, “I am seventy, and I have never had to wear a pair of spectacles.” So I put down “Seventy, and good eyesight,” as the first.

Then she said, “This little house is my own. I have no rent to pay for it. My husband died some years ago and left me this little cot to live in.” So I put down “Nice little cottage; no rent to pay.” Then she said, “I have got such a good lad. He is married now, but he does not forget his poor old mother, and he sends me a little help every week.” Then she told me one or two other things. She had got a little sum of money in the Bank, and she had got some friends and various comforts. I put them all down. Then said, “Mrs.

So-and-So, you imagine that we have been counting up your blessings, but as a matter of fact we have been counting your mercies, not your blessings. You have not told me a single blessing yet.”

She said, “What is the difference?” I replied, “Mercies are things that we need as long as we are in the world, and God gives them, not only to His children, but to all His creatures. He makes His rain to come on the fields of the unconverted man just as truly as upon the fields of the one who is His child. But when we go to heaven we shall not need these mercies. We shall leave them behind; but the blessings we shall never leave behind. On the contrary, we shall go on to a fuller and larger enjoyment of them. Now shall we begin again, and count your blessings?”

I relate the incident because multitudes of Christians never seem to rise beyond the old lady’s estimate of what blessing is; their thoughts dwell entirely upon their temporal comforts and they measure God’s favour to them according to the multitude and quality of these. In this article we shall endeavour to lift our thoughts above these things and to count up some of our blessings, and see how rich we are.

Let us take, to help us in this counting, one word, the word HATH, and ring the changes on that. I should be surprised if among my readers there are not some who if they had the opportunity to tell us how they got assurance of salvation, would say that it was through that word “hath” that their doubts and misgivings disappeared, and they became assured that everlasting life was theirs.

We might put everlasting life in the list of blessings, but it is in other connections that I invite the reader to consider this word.
FORGIVEN.

Look at the last verse of Ephesians 4:
"Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Observe that it does not say we are to be kind to one another and tender-hearted, forgiving one another in order that God may forgive us, but that we are to maintain this attitude towards others because God hath, for Christ's sake, forgiven us. Put that, the forgiveness of sins, down in your list of blessings as blessing No. I.

But I must not take too much for granted. Would you think it too elementary a question if I were to ask if you could put your finger on that verse and say, "God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven me"? Some there are who would hesitate, and perhaps say, "I fear not, for I feel so miserable at times." Others might reply: "Yes, certainly, for I feel most happy." Now I venture to think that they who speak like this have much yet to learn.

Now I watch as he goes along the street. By and by a constable taps him on the shoulder, and says, "I know you. You were convicted of such and such an offence the other day. You have no right to be walking about the streets like a free man. Come back to the gaol with me." "Oh," says the man, "I think you are right. I am sure I should feel much happier if I were really pardoned. I do not feel quite like what a pardoned man ought to feel. I am afraid after all I have been under a delusion, and I will go back with you to the gaol." "Oh, you say, "Foolish man! Why does he not put his hand into his pocket, pull out his pardon, and say, 'Look here, officer, that is my right to be here as a free man'? Ah, why indeed?

Now watch the second man. So happy is he that he gives a skip for sheer joy every three steps he takes. He is whistling as he pursues his way. Presently he too comes face to face with a constable, who turns upon him a look of recognition. He says, "You have no business here; you should be in prison. Come with me." "Oh," he says, "officer, don't you see me clapping my hands? Don't you hear me whistling? Is not this happiness of mine sufficient evidence of my right to be at liberty?" "No," replies the officer, "that is no evidence to me. Come with me." Is not No. 2, in spite of his happiness, just as foolish as No. 1? Why does he not pull out his pardon from his pocket, and say, "Look here, officer, here is the evidence of my right to be here a free man?" You see the forcibleness of that. Whether the man is downcast or happy has nothing to do with the matter in question, which is, "Has the man received a pardon or not?" I am not discounting happy feelings, nor am I putting a premium on doleful feelings, but I say that neither have anything to do with the great question of whether a man has received a pardon or not.

What I should want to know is this, has there been a moment when you have knelt at the Saviour's feet to receive the forgiveness of your sins, and can you say, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven ME?" In a word, can you put down on your list this first great blessing, the forgiveness of sins, as being really yours?

CHosen.

Now come to 2 Thessalonians 2. 13: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." This, the choice of God, is another great blessing. You say perhaps, "I thought I was saved through my choice of the
Scripture Truth.

Saviour.” Did I not sing on that memorable night of my conversion:

“O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour, and my God”?

Have I not often sung:

“And my immortal choice is made,
Christ for me”?

Yes, it is true that we, by divine grace, have chosen the Saviour, but long ages back there was God’s choice of us.

This is a tremendous comfort on days when we meet with failure. How it lifts the heart to be able to look up and say, “O, God, I am making terrible discoveries as to myself, my weakness, my sinfulness, but Thou didst know from the beginning just what I should turn out to be, and knowing it all Thou didst yet set Thy choice upon me, and Thou dost never go back on Thy choice.” It is like having a solid rock beneath one’s feet, to fall back thus on God’s immutable choice of us.

But God did not save you and me in the dark! He knew all about us. He let His holy searchlight in upon our hearts, and all the twistings and turnings of our lives were open before Him, yet, knowing it all, He chose us, saved us and blessed us. What a blessing that is: “God’s choice of us.”

MADE MEET, DELIVERED, and TRANSLATED.

Now turn to Colossians 1. 12:—

“Giving thanks unto the Father who HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Here we have a lovely cluster of three “haths.” First, “He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

I was staying in a house not very long ago where there was a young lady employed as a kind of help. There was to be a gospel meeting that evening, and this young lady was hurrying through her household work in order to be in time for it. As we were starting for the meeting hall, she ran to the passage where her hat and coat were hanging, and put them on to join the rest of us. The lady of the house said, “Oh, you cannot come to the meeting in that old hat.” “But,” said the young lady, “the lights at the back of the hall are not very good. I shall sit just inside the door, and nobody will notice that I have got an old hat on.” She felt quite fit for a place where the light was dim, though not for the brilliantly lighted end of the hall. But God has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of saints in the light of His own presence, where the smallest defect would at once be manifested. He has made us so perfectly fit for the realms of glory that even in the light of His own presence not one blot or blemish will remain to be exposed. Thank God for that, and remember that it is always true of us. It is just as true on the dark days as on the bright, and that our meetness for heaven does not depend on whether we are on the mountain-top or in the dark valley. It depends upon what God has done. God HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Not only that, but He HATH delivered us from the power that held us in bondage, and HATH translated us, in order that we might be governed by His dear Son, and be under His control, ruled by the One who loves us. It is like this. Imagine a little boy in the slums of London. His mother is dead. His father is a drunkard, and gives the poor boy nothing but kicks and curses. One day his case is brought to the notice of a gentleman who has ample means and a kind heart, who determines to do his best to help him. What is the first thing to be done? Look at the poor little chap! Dirt covers his face and hands. His hair is one tangled mass. His clothes are nothing but rags, and his feet have not got a scrap of leather
The first thing is that he must
be made fit. He must be washed, must
have his hair cut and trimmed, must
have new clothes and new boots. That
is the first thing.

Then there is the question of his
drunken father. Suppose the gentleman
were to adopt him, the boy's father
might turn up any day and claim the
lad, and the law of the land would sup-
port his claim. In view of this the father
is sent for, and in consideration of a
certain sum of money he is induced to
sign a paper giving up his rights over
the boy. He is now delivered from
that authority that once kept him in
bondage and kicked him and maltreated
him.

This matter being settled, another
question presents itself. Is this child of
the slums to be left there? No, he is
to be taken away from those surround-
ings to the other side of the city,
henceforward to live in the house of
that kind gentleman who has been his
benefactor. He is going to live under
his authority now. In a word, he is
translated from his former surround-
ings, to be brought up on entirely
different principles.

But in what capacity is he going to be
kept in that gentleman's house? Is he
to be kitchen boy, and clean the knives
and boots? No. The fact is that the
gentleman is going to have him in his
home as his son, to bring him up as if
he were his own born son. You say,
'Is there anything like this happens to
the Christian? Yes; God having made
us meet for heaven, having delivered
us from the power of darkness, having
translated us into the kingdom of his
dear Son, brings us into acceptance in
that Beloved one, setting us in the same
relationship in which He stands.

Let us look at a verse that tells us
this, Ephesians i. 6: "To the praise of
the glory of His grace, wherein He
HATH (here you have the golden word
again) made us accepted in the Beloved." Christ is the Beloved. To be accepted in
Him means to be put in His place. He is
the Son of His Father's love, dwelling in
all the affections of the Father, and we
have been made accepted before God in
Him.

But there remains one other thing.
To refer again to our illustration, there
is something that the gentleman could
not do for the adopted boy. He cannot
give him the spirit of a son. He may in
process of time get to feel like a gentle-
man's son, but at first his previous life
will have its effect upon him, and he will
be unaccustomed to his surroundings.
He will feel, as we sometimes say, like a
fish out of water. He will feel unsuited
to that new and comfortable place, so
different from the slums where he spent
his early days. Now what it is not
possible for the gentleman to do for
that boy, God has done for us. Read
Galatians 4. 6: "Because ye are sons,
God HATH sent forth the Spirit of His
Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba,
Father.'" For what purpose has God
done this? That having the Spirit of
God's dear Son we may be able to take
up that relationship, and have all the
joy that belongs to it, and feel perfectly
at home and happy in it. Thank God
for this! How many blessings have we
counted? God hath forgiven us, hath
chosen us, hath made us meet for
heaven, hath delivered us from the power
of darkness, hath translated us into the
kingdom of His dear Son, hath made us
accepted in the Beloved, hath sent
the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.
What abundant cause we have for
gratitude and thanksgiving to God!
With what new force and meaning we
may sing:

"Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one;
And it will surprise you,
What the Lord hath done."
The Purpose of God.

If we are to "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," and "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine"; and if we are to serve God acceptably and withstand the seductions of the world, we must know what the purpose of God is. Moreover, His purpose for the glory of Christ ought to attract and deeply interest all who love Him, and that such might be helped in the understanding of it we reproduce these papers by the late J. N. Darby.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1. 9, 10).

INTRODUCTION.

THE good pleasure of the Godhead was that all its fullness should dwell and manifest itself in Christ.

Such was the purpose of God, a purpose full of blessing. The way in which God is about to manifest that purpose, and in which we are associated with its blessings, is infinitely interesting to us.

Only a small part of that purpose is here treated of, the outward part, so to speak, a part which nevertheless is none the less interesting.

It was designedly that God was pleased to accomplish it in a visible way, in order that that purpose might be revealed to us by means of positive truths, which, while bringing the Christian into fellowship with God, who is their source, preserve him—weak creature that he is—from substituting the wanderings of his own imagination for the holy manifestations which God has given unto us of Himself.

The subject we are treating is contained in the prayer of the Apostle Paul, which we find at the end of Ephesians 1. This subject finds a still deeper source (to which we have alluded) in what is announced to us at the end of Ephesians 3., and we cannot truly enjoy the subject treated in Ephesians 1., without having felt in some measure the power of Ephesians 3.

For the rest, in communicating what follows, I only respond in weakness to the desires of a few persons, and I am confident that God will deign to make up for what is lacking.

THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS THE RESPECTIVE CENTRES OF THE HEAVENLY GLORY AND OF THE EARTHLY GLORY IN CHRIST.

Two great objects are presented to our contemplation by the prophecies and testimonies of the Scriptures, which refer to the millennium: on the one hand, the church and its glory in Christ; on the other, the Jews and the glory which they are to possess as a nation redeemed by Christ. It is the heavenly people and the earthly people. The Son Himself, who is the image and glory of God, will be their common centre, and the sun which will enlighten them both; and although the place where His glory dwells in the church be the heavens, where He has "set a tabernacle for the sun" (Ps. 19. 4), the nations will walk in the light thereof (Rev. 21. 24). It will be manifested on the earth, and the earth will enjoy its blessings. When all is accomplished God will be all in all. The tabernacle of God will be with men, not coming down, so to speak, but come down from heaven. (See description of the eternal condition of things, Rev. 21. 1-8.)

All these things, and the way in which they will have their accomplishment, are revealed in detail in the Scriptures.
Although the church and the people of Israel are each respectively the centres of the heavenly glory and of the earthly glory, in their connection with Christ, and although they cast on each other a mutual brightness of blessedness and joy, yet each of them has a sphere which is proper to itself, and in which all things are subordinate to it. With respect to the church, angels, principalities, and powers, with all that belongs to heaven—the domain of its glory; with respect to the people of Israel, the nations of the earth.

We will confine ourselves here to the history and condition of the church, on the one hand, and to those of the people of Israel, on the other.

"In the beginning God created," the Old Testament tells us.

"In the beginning was the Word," says the New, proclaiming the foundation of a higher glory and more durable than that of the first creation, and on which was to rest the restoration of the latter, when ruined by the weakness of man and by sin.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When they came forth from the hand of the Creator, all His works were "very good." Sin appeared, and they were marred. (Comp. Col. 1. 20, with Eph. 2. 10.) For a moment, God rested, so to speak, in them; but that rest came to an end. The Scriptures say but little as to the evil which sullied the heavens: all that we know is, that there were angels who fell. But it was on the earth and among men that the divine and wonderful work of redemption was to be displayed; and this subject is revealed to us in all its fullness.

**THE REST OF GOD IN THE NEW CREATION**

**BY MEANS OF THE LAST ADAM.**

The rest of God, after the first creation, was short. The rest of man with God passed away like a morning-dream. But the blessing of God was not to pass away in the same manner. That which was transient, on account of the weakness of the first Adam, was to be restored on an infinitely more excellent footing by the display of the might and power of the Last Adam; the will of God being to head up in Him all things which are in the heavens and upon the earth (Eph. 1. 10).

**CHRIST THE HEIR—THE CHURCH JOINT-HEIR WITH HIM, THROUGH RESURRECTION.**

It is on this gathering together of all things unto Christ and in Christ, as their Head (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις), that depends the character and the substance of the hope of the church, until God be all in all. In this point of view, Scripture speaks of Christ manifested, as being Heir of all these things, and of the church as being joint-heir with Him. This is, as it were, the formal character which is attributed to Him with regard to all things; that we may understand what is our place with Him. Thus it is written, that God has appointed Christ "heir of all things" (Heb. 1. 2); that, in Him, "we have obtained an inheritance" (ἐκληρώθημεν, Eph. 1. 11); that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8. 17).

This glorious title of Christ—the Heir—has a still more glorious origin. He is "the firstborn of every creature, for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth . . . and for Him" (Col. 1. 15, 16).

The church, the children of God, are therefore joint-heirs with Christ. How are they such? It is this which we are about to develop.

Christ receives the inheritance in His character of man, of risen man, once our companion in sufferings because of sin, and then the Head, the root and spring of all blessing.

We must first remark that the first Adam, "the figure of Him that was to
come," is a type and figure of the Last Adam of whom we are speaking. He is referred to in this respect in Ephesians 5. 30, 31.

Before His manifestation, the Last Adam is, as it were, hidden, as the first Adam was buried in sleep (figure of Christ in death); Eve, who prefigures the church, is taken from his side, and God presents her to him as the helpmeet for him, to be his companion in the government and the inheritance of all things given to him of God in paradise.

Thus Christ, who is God as well as man, presents the church to Himself, when He awakes in His glory, that it may share that glory with Him and that dominion which He already possesses in title and by the gift of God: "And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17. 22).

Adam and Eve, taken collectively, are called Adam, as if they were but one (Gen. 1. 27; 5. 2), although, in a certain sense, Eve was inferior to her husband, and had come after him. So it is with Christ and the church, who are but one mystical body.

This type, familiar to those who read the Scriptures, presents, in a most simple way, all the forms of the reality prefigured, with this exception, that the Last Adam, being "the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 47), is also the Head and Lord of the heavenly things.

**ALL THINGS PUT UNDER THE FEET OF MAN.**

Let us now consider the passages which speak of the dominion of man, and of the union of the church with Christ in that dominion. The association with Christ, into which the church is brought, we must remember, is more blessed than the dominion which flows from it. It clearly results, from the terms in which they are worded, that their accomplishment has not yet taken place. All these passages rest on Psalm 8. There the Holy Ghost says, "Thou hast ... crowned him" (man, the Son of man) "with glory and honour, ... thou hast put all things under his feet"; then He tells us (Heb. 2. 7, 8, 9) that this is not seen as yet, but that Jesus has been "crowned with glory and honour," that He might be pointed out to the church as the one who, as man, is to have all things put under His feet. Meanwhile, and until the purposes of God are accomplished, until the enemies of Christ, who hold the power in unrighteousness, are made to be His footstool—in a word, during the period of the present dispensation—Christ is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high; He sits, as having overcome, at the right hand of God the Father. It is thus that He will grant to him that overcometh, to sit on His own throne (Rev. 3. 21), when He takes possession of it and reigns.

**THE CHURCH UNITED TO CHRIST ITS HEAD.**

Ephesians 1. 17, 2. 7, shows us the church united to Christ in all these circumstances, according to the working of the might by which Christ was raised from the dead; chapter 2. 7 points out the cause, the glorious motive of it. In chapter 1. 22 we find again the quotation of Psalm 8.: "And hath put all things under His feet." The apostle adds: "And gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Thus, therefore, the church is united to Christ, as a body of which He is the Head, and under whose feet God has put all things. "Christ is head over all things to the church, which is His body." As to this character, it is as having been raised from the dead that He possesses it, as the passage itself clearly establishes.

(To be continued.)
The Old Man, the New Man, and the Flesh.

A GOOD deal of confusion seems to exist in the minds of believers regarding the true significance of the terms, "The Old Man," "The New Man," and "The Flesh," and I have thought it might be profitable to direct the attention of the saints of God to the way in which these terms are presented in Scripture. The fact that they are very much in use amongst us makes it imperative that we should have right thoughts about them, lest we be found building up a system of error in connection with them. It is only in subjection to God's Revelation that we can get our preconceived notions, which are always errant, displaced by His soul-saving truth.

Everything is now leavened in Christendom, and the thoughts of the best instructed are very imperfect, so that none of us can boast of being the people with whom wisdom shall die, still God in His grace has been pleased to give us a little light, and we should be thankful to Him for every ray He has been disposed to send into our souls, and we should seek His grace that we may make good use of the light we have got, for only then shall we be able confidently to ask for more. Let us look in the first place at what is said regarding the old man.

THE OLD MAN.

We get the term three times in Scripture (Rom. 6. 6; Col. 3. 9; Eph. 4. 22), and always in the writings of Paul. He is the only writer that speaks in a direct way of either the old man or the new, and the reason of that is, I have no doubt, because he is used of God to go down to the very root of man's ruin, and the way in which in the cross our whole fallen and corrupt condition has been dealt with, and the glory of the new order in Christ, in a way that has been given to none other.

The first mention we get of the old man is in Romans 6. 6, and there we read: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin should be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." We know that God has not only dealt with our sins in the cross of His Son, but He has dealt with the man that committed the sins, our old man. There the root is reached. It is not only that the fruit of the tree has come under the judgment of God, the tree itself has been hewn down.

And the object is, that the body of sin might be destroyed, having nothing to work upon, for it cannot influence a dead man: and this is just the meaning of crucifixion. When our Lord spoke of His being lifted up, the Holy Spirit said: "This He said, signifying what death He should die" (John 12. 33). Our old man is gone in the judgment of the cross. But it is with Christ we have died, for it was with us that God was dealing in judgment in the death of Christ, and this truth is ministered to us in order that we may be brought under the power of it, and claim that freedom from sin that belongs to a dead man. We are now in the life of Christ, and are privileged to account true of us that which is true of Him, and that is 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; and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." And this great truth we are to apply to ourselves, and to reckon that what is true of Him is true of us—dead to sin, and alive to God, for we are in Him.

In Ephesians 4. 22 we are said to have put off the old man. This is done in the hour in which we turn to Christ. We turn from one man to another, from ourselves to Christ, and thus have discarded as utterly unprofitable all that we were as children of Adam. Whether we have been intelligent as to this or
whether we have not, it is the meaning of our act. The Spirit gives His estimate of the value of our faith in Christ. It is the same in Colossians 3:9. In the cross of Christ the old man has come to His end in the judgment of God, and is no longer in any relationship with Him whatever. The old man is just what Adam and his descendants are. For four thousand years that man was on his trial, and he has been proven to be unmendably corrupt, but the cross is the end of him in the judgment of God, and believers have put him off, as well as the deeds that characterized him, and have put on the new man.

THE NEW MAN.

It is the *New* Man that has made the man after the flesh *old*. This man, the man after the flesh, occupied the ground, as I have intimated, for four thousand years. During that time he could not have been spoken of as the old man, for the man after the Spirit, the new man, had not come into view. But now the old has passed away, and the new has come to pass, and never again is the old man to be associated with the people of God: they have put on the new, and the beautiful characteristics of the new, which came to light in the life of the meek and lowly Jesus down here, are to be exhibited in His people.

In Colossians the new man is said to be "*renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him.*" This "*renewed*" is something wholly new, and which had never previously existed, renewed in the full knowledge of God, made to know Him in His very nature, for the nature of the new man is Divine. "*God is love,*" and "*love is of God.*" Everyone therefore that "*loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*" (1 John 4). And this is "*after the image of Him that created Him.*" The Creator is Christ, to Him all creation owes its existence in Colossians. The new man is after the prototype of Christ.

In Ephesians the new man is said to be after God, and "*created in righteousness and true holiness.*" "*After God*" fits in with the character of the epistle, for in Ephesians everything is said to proceed from God, as in Colossians. The creation of the new man is in contrast to the creation of the old man Adam. The latter was created in innocence, though from that happy state he very quickly fell; but the former is created in those qualities that characterize God Himself. God is the model here as Christ is the model in Colossians. The life and nature of God and of Christ is the life and nature of the new man. And in putting on Christ, the new man is put on: and Christ is put on when His gospel is embraced (Gal. 3. 27).

THE FLESH.

The flesh is viewed in two ways in Scripture. In the first place it is what the body is (Gen. 6. 3, 13); "*The life I now live in the flesh*" (Gal. 2. 20); "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh*" (John 3. 6). Another way in which it is viewed is in its fallen and corrupt condition, in which dwells no good thing (Rom. 7. 18). Now when we are told: "*Ye are not in the flesh,*" the meaning is that the spring and fountain of our life does not lie in the flesh, as it once did when of the old order (Rom. 7. 5), in the standing, state, and responsibilities of a mere child of Adam, all our activities springing from a corrupt life within, the corrupt life of fallen, sinful flesh. But to be in the flesh in the sense of Galatians 2. 20 is to be in the body, but the Apostle was energized, not by the will of the flesh, but by faith in the Son of God. The flesh in its corrupt state has been defined as "*the body with a will in it,*" and I take this as a fairly correct definition.

But though the old man has been terminated in the judgment of the cross, and the believer has put him off, and is done with him, we have still the flesh to trouble us. We are not *in it*, but we cannot say it is not *in us*. We are made
very conscious of its presence, and if we are not watchful it will very soon lead us into the practice of sin. Our own natural sinful wills will be found acting through our members, and failure and sorrow will result.

But for the flesh we have the cross, and they that are Christ's are said to have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5. 24). This cannot be otherwise, for in accepting Christ we have acknowledged the justice of the judgment passed upon all that we were in His cross, and in that sense even the Galatians had crucified the flesh, though they were found going back to it through the influence of false teachers.

By these few remarks I have sought to bring before the reader the way in which these terms are viewed in the Word of God, being perfectly assured that we cannot improve on the manner in which God has taken to teach us His mind. He has effected for us a wonderful deliverance, and He has also been at great pains to bring the truth of that deliverance before our souls, and He would have us receive it in the way in which He has made it known to us. He has, in addition to the unfolding of this deliverance, given to us His Holy Spirit, in order that we may be able to understand and avail ourselves of the deliverance, so as to be able to live to Him and to serve Him for the little while in which He has left us in a world that is in rebellion against Him, and in the midst of a corrupt profession that is on the verge of apostasy. May we seek grace to be free from every hindrance, and wholly devoted to His service.

**Love and Unity.**

What desires that divine love might express itself in practical unity must have throbbed in the apostle's heart when he begged the Philippian brethren by the consolations of Christ, and the comfort of love and the fellowship of the Spirit to "be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, one mind." Later in the epistle he reverts to the subject, evidently one which was burdening his mind. Abandoning generalities, he refers to the feud between two sisters in the assembly at Philippi: "I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche." Note the gracious tenderness of his pointed words, as he entreats the two variants to "be of the same mind in the Lord."

Into the details of the feud the apostle does not go. He does not indicate where he judged that Euodias was right and Syntyche wrong, or where Syntyche had acted in accord with divine principle, while Euodias had failed to do so. Each one, no doubt, could state where the other had trespassed, and where she herself had felt compelled to make a stand. "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness" (Prov. 20. 6). Paul would give no encouragement to this kind of thing. It was enough for him that in continuing their disagreement both were acting contrary to the great cardinal truth of our oneness in Christ, and both were violating that greatest of all divine principles, the very badge of discipleship: love. For are we not exhorted to let fervent charity among ourselves take precedence over all other matters, however important?

"It is an HONOUR for a man to cease from strife," says the inspired page. And in the same sentence the man who will by his continual meddling keep the fires of contention from being quenched, is dubbed a fool (Prov. 20. 3).
Precious Stones of Scripture.

The Sapphire.

“They saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were the work of transparent sapphire, and as it were the body of heaven for clearness” (Ex. 24. 10).

“A throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone” (Ezek. 1. 26).

“The first foundation jasper, the second sapphire” (Rev. 21. 19).

The sapphire stone has been singled out by the Spirit of God as a symbol which He uses beyond all others. No other precious stone is spoken of so often in God’s Word. It must therefore have some very special significance.

The beautiful blue lustre of the sapphire stone is well known. It is transparent. The diamond alone surpasses it in preciousness. In the wall of the glorious city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the sapphire is the second foundation. This fact, coupled with its soft blue hue, has caused it to be spoken of as a symbol of what is heavenly. When we examine its use in the Scriptures, however, we find that this interpretation is scarcely satisfactory.

Wherever we turn in the various parts of the Word, we find the lovely lustre of the sapphire. In the law, in the prophets, in the poetical books, and in the New Testament, we discover its soft blue radiance. If we examine the main gatherings together in the Bible of precious stones, in Job 28. 5, 16; Exodus 28. and 39.; Ezekiel 28., and Revelation 21., the sapphire is always present, filling a place of distinction. And even if we look at that smaller group, of the earthly city’s glory, we find it there (Isa. 54. 11). In creation, grace, government, and glory—heavenly and earthly—it is seen. Beneath the feet of the God of Israel, at Sinai, there appeared a work like transparent sapphire (Ex. 24. 10). Above the crystal-like expanse over the glorious cherubim there was seen a throne like a sapphire stone by Ezekiel (1. 26 and 10. 1). The princes of Zion appeared like a sapphire (Lam. 4. 7). Finally, in the description of the Beloved, in the Song of Songs, it finds a place which will help us to discover its true significance (5. 14). The above twelve scriptures, where alone the sapphire is named in the Bible, show us the universal use that is made of this striking symbol by the Spirit of God.

When the metropolis of the earth is established in righteousness and splendour, according to God, in a coming day, we are told that her foundations shall be laid with sapphires (Isa. 54. 11). It is clearly a symbol of earthly glory there. But in Exodus 24. 10, Ezekiel 1. 26, and Revelation 21. 19, it symbolizes divine, regnant, and also heavenly glory. In the heavenly Jerusalem the second foundation is sapphire! Is there then a contradiction in the use of the sapphire symbol? That could not be in the writings of the Spirit of God. All is harmonious there, even if at first we do not see it. We must seek the explanation of the difficulty in Him who is God’s answer to all man’s questions.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the antitype of the one who was rejected by his brethren; He is the true Joseph—Zaphnath-paaneah—the Revealer of secrets (Gen. 41. 45); for so Pharaoh named Joseph in his place of exaltation. It is in the beautiful description of the Beloved in the Song of Songs that we find the use of the sapphire stone that provides us with the needed explanation (5. 14). King David’s Son and Lord is here typified. This is the anointed One! Transparent, shining sapphires are about Him! The stones of soft blue beauty overlay the hidden energies of this beloved One! In one Person we find then the centering up, in one harmonious whole, the vast and varied glories of which our Scriptures speak: “In the Beloved, in whom we
have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace; which He has caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself for the ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES; TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST, THE THINGS IN THE HEAVENS AND THE THINGS UPON THE EARTH " (Eph. 1. 6-10, N.T.).

For this full and far-reaching administration, all upon the earth, as well as all things in the heavens, are centred in the anointed One—in our Lord Jesus Christ. In plain words, it is universal! Not simply world-wide, not only heavenly! but universal. Here then we have the blessed symbolic significance of the sapphire of beautiful blue brilliance. If there is one colour more than another that might be spoken of as the universal colour, it is blue. How precious it is then to see in its twelve connections in the Word, and in the universal symbolic use that the Spirit makes of it, that Christ's glory is in view, in His universal administration; in that in which the assembly is associated with Him—the twelve-gate city—the bride, the Lamb's wife. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it " (Rev. 22, 3); and the second foundation is sapphire.

"Then let Him come in glory,
Who comes His saints to raise,
And perfect all the story
Of wonder, love, and praise."

Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

(Studies in the Psalms—Fifth Book.

Psalms 149-150.

According to Delitzsch, this Psalm has the distinction of having been most disastrously misused by both Catholics and Protestants. "It was by means of this Psalm," we are told, "that Caspar Scipio roused and inflamed the Roman Catholic Princes to the Thirty Years War." It was by means of this Psalm that in the Protestant community Thomas Munzer fanned the flame of the war of the Peasants." This is not mentioned as a matter of historical interest, but to emphasize the importance of rightly dividing the word of truth (vers. 6-9) given by the Spirit of God to encourage His people to hold the land of their inheritance against their inveterate enemies who surrounded them, and quite out of place in true Christian conflict, which we are expressly told is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers which constitute Satan's hosts in the heavenly places, where our blessings and union with Christ really are (Eph. 1. and 6.). In this conflict our weapons are not a two-edged sword for the slaughter of earthly foes, but are of an entirely spiritual character to enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Other Old Testament scriptures plainly inform us that in the setting up of the future kingdom of the Son of man, use will be made of the re-gathered nation of Israel to overcome certain of the hostile forces, which oppose the purpose of God to bless His people in the holy land (see Isa. II, 14, Jer. 51. 20-23, Obad. 18., Micah 5. 6, Zech. 12. 8). Hence we see the propriety of the words of our Psalm; "to execute upon them the judgment written." A consideration of the passages cited will make it plain that if the Maccabean victories referred to in Daniel 11. 32, 34 were a partial fulfilment of these prophecies, they by no means exhausted them, and their full accomplishment will yet take place in the time of crisis, when the kingdom is established.

This glorious event demands "a new song," of which we have had mention before in Psalms 33., 40., 96., 98., 144., also in Isaiah 42., and this praise is rendered not in the heights or depths of God's creation, as in the previous Psalm,
but in the assembly of His saints. Who those saints are verse 2 informs us, they are the people of Israel and the children of Zion, who have at last received their rightful King. In them, as the Spirit would often assure us, the Lord takes pleasure, and in opposition to natural thoughts it is the meek He beautifies with salvation; it is that character which adorns the garment (Isa. 61. 10). This might seem out of harmony with the latter part of the Psalm, but it is well to remember, until the King comes upon the scene in warrior character, His followers share His rejection and have part in the sufferings of His earthly days (Rev. 13. 10). Accordingly we find it is those who are morally like Him who receive the kingdom, as we are assured in the beatitudes of Matthew 5.

To appreciate the connection of “salvation” and “glory” in verses 4, 5, we may refer to Psalm 85. 9, of which our Psalm seems an answer. In place of “exult in glory,” we may translate “because of glory,” for it has re-entered the land according to Ezekiel 43, so that the place of rest is the place of songs of joy (compare Ps. 4. 4 and 16. 7).

PSALM 150. What more suitable conclusion to this series of inspired writings could be found than one in which the praise of God is called for from a reconciled creation, “Let everything that hath breath praise Jah!” The varied exercises of those in whom the Spirit has wrought have been given before in wonderful detail, from the agonies of doubt and unbelief, to what is found here, the unhindered praise of the blessed God, Who has made Himself known in His ways with the children of men and especially with Israel, the nation of His choice.

The sphere of praise in this Psalm is the sanctuary of God. Doubtless the reference is to the temple at Jerusalem, but also the firmament of His power, thus giving evidence that in the time of the kingdom, heaven and earth will no longer be separated by sin, but united in this glorious anthem to the great Creator. A similar association of thought is found in the closing verses of Psalm 68. We may gather from Revelation 21. 10 that the firmament will be peopled, during the reign of Christ, by the saints who are privileged to form the bride, and from thence while praise is rendered to God, government is administered to men. And now at last the various instruments of music once used to divert the inhabitants of the cities of Cain’s world (Gen. 4. 21), and again employed to give an evil glamour to the idolatry of Chaldea (Dan. 3. 5–7), are properly dedicated to the worship of the true God, and thus form the accompaniment to the voices of the entire animated creation in the praise of the Most High. This concludes our studies in the Books of the Psalter, in which the main purpose has been to help the Christian in an intelligent use of this precious portion of God’s Word, so that on the one hand he should not lose the sense of his heavenly relationships, because they are not found in the Psalms, and, on the other hand, he should profit by the governmental ways of God which continue irrespective of dispensations.

“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.”

“The Wrath to Come.”

Men are yielding to and choosing their own delusions. The full truth is distasteful and dreaded. Men are comforting themselves with the dream that, after all, things are not so bad; that, if there are things to be regretted, the remedy is at hand. For now there are so many ways of helping the poor, such delightful minglings of the rich with them, such promising unions which invite all men to come together and join, spite of their little differences, for the great object of social advancement, the improvement of Christendom, and the regeneration of the world. But all this is founded on the miserable delusion which ignores and denies that God’s wrath is to be filled up and poured out upon Christendom. It is impossible that Christians, who realize that such judgments are near, could lend themselves to schemes which assume the very reverse. Christ alone is the power of God to set things right. When He comes, and not before, the tide of evil will be stemmed and Satan bound. (W.K.)
Answers to Correspondents.

Old Testament Types and Foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Correspondent in China writes, "Your paper has often helped me. You witness faithfully against permitting human surmise and human reason to supplant or add to the Scriptures...but are you not contravening this by such statements as in the April, 1917, issue. 'Psalm 16 portrays Christ.' Is not this, at least possibly, surmise? Again in the same issue in paper on the Tabernacle, the blue, scarlet and fine twined linen and various other materials of which the Tabernacle was made are said to represent various aspects of Christ, this is surely human supposition. Think of this, and if so led give us your thoughts."

Our esteemed correspondent is right in saying that we set our faces against the intrusion of human surmise and reason in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Owning, as we do, that these Scriptures are the Word of God, inspired by His Holy Spirit, the very words being, "not words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Cor. 2:13), we feel that only the deepest reverence and subjection of spirit, and dependence upon the Holy Ghost's guidance should mark us as we read the sacred page and seek to draw from its inexhaustible treasures "the things that are freely given to us of God." God has one purpose in all that is written in His Word, and that purpose is the glory of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and we need great distrust of the human mind when reading the Word, for it must, if left to itself, because of its very nature, misread God's purpose; but at the same time we may with the greatest confidence rely upon the Holy Ghost, for He has been given to us that we might know the things that are written.

Now in regard to the question raised by our correspondent, we know, for the Lord Himself has shown us, that Moses, the Psalms and the prophets all spoke of Him (Luke 24:24-27). That is, the whole of that system of worship, and every part of it introduced by Moses had Christ as its subject; it was all simply a shadow of good things to come, and all those good things abide and have come into evidence for us in Himself; the Spirit of Christ spake in the Psalmist, revealing for us the soul-experience of the Lord as He lived His life of a dependent man upon earth, as well as telling us of His glories; the prophets also took up the theme, for through them the "Spirit of Christ that was in them did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

The 16th Psalm, to which our correspondent refers, stands out especially as one of those Psalms that pourray the Lord for us, for in his great sermon in Acts 2, Peter expressly said as he quoted from it, "David speaketh not of himself, but being a prophet he spake of Christ and His resurrection (vers. 25-31).

As to the various and varied materials of which the tabernacle was made, we ought to search out the meaning of these things. Moses was not left to construct it according to his own thoughts, for the minutest details were given to him by God when he was in the mount. And what he had to make on earth was according to the pattern that God showed him in heaven. We may be sure that it all speaks of God's glory in Christ, and the materials chosen by God out of the things that He had created, the character of which He knew perfectly, were chosen to indicate to us the manifold perfections and glories of the work and person of Christ of whom the whole Book speaks. And in these things the subject, spiritual mind may find rich treasure and sustaining food.

In John 1:14 we read that the Word —who was God and the full expression of God—tabernacled among us, as the word should be, an interesting and helpful consideration in this connection.

"From such withdraw thyself."

Stroud.—The instruction given to Timothy in Paul's Epistles to him as to withdrawing himself from certain persons (see 1 Tim. 6:5; and 2 Tim. 3:5) referred to his individual intercourse with such as are there described. In the first instance he had to withdraw from any who, while professing the name of Christ, denied His words and the doctrine which is according to godliness; in the second instance
he had to turn away from those who had the form of godliness but who denied the power that true godliness exercises over the conduct. Obedience to the word in these matters, on the part of all who would be faithful to the Lord is just as imperative to-day, for evil doctrine spreads like leaven and evil communications corrupt good manners. Doctrine and practice are closely allied, and as to these things each one must keep himself pure.

The Christian and Socialism and Trade Unionism.

STOWMARKET.—You are right, as one who owns the Lordship of Christ, in standing aloof from Socialism and the Trades Union propaganda, and especially from the former, for it is anti-Christian in its drift. It aims at putting the world right without reference to God and the rights of Christ. Its principles are based upon the delusion that man has in himself goodness enough and power enough to do this, and it denies the truth of God as to man’s irredeemable condition, and the necessity of the new birth by the Holy Ghost and redemption by the blood of Jesus. It will end in more sorrow for those nations that are afflicted by it than they have ever known.

Trades Unionism, for you, would be an unequal yoke of which 2 Corinthians 6. 14-18 speaks. But if you have faith to stand aside from these things be careful how you press your standard upon others. Remember that men who do not know God cannot walk by faith in Him, and so cannot understand your point of view, and they have nothing better than that which they are pursuing. What they need is the knowledge of God, and this you cannot impart to them by discussing with them the merits or demerits of their programme, but by setting before them in life and witness the gospel of God. If you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, they are more likely to be won for Christ than by any argument you can present against their unions and societies. “Be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3. 2). Let your yieldingness be known to all men (Phil. 4. 5). “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12. 18).

"Your children . . . are holy” (1 Cor. 7. 14).

STOCKPORT.—The sanctification, or holiness, spoken of in this verse is entirely outward. It is a question of access to the privileges that the parent enjoys, such as attendance at the gatherings of the saints, hearing the word ministered, being under the influence of Christian society, and seeing the results of grace of God in others. The children are not to be counted unfit for these privileges, and this is in contrast to what obtained under the law. If an Israelite married a Gentile he was defiled and drawn away into the abominations of heathendom, for there was no power in the legal system to hold him; and he had to put away his wife and children as unclean (see Ezra 10. 3). But here comes out the superiority of grace over law, grace does not only hold the believing parent, but it opens the door for the children to come under its power also, and it makes the believer a means of blessing to the household, for it says to the believing wife, “How knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt not save thy husband”; and to the believing husband, “How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt not save thy wife.”

This should greatly encourage a believing parent in bringing the children into contact with Christian privileges, it is their right, and God expects that they shall be where they may hear His word and where His grace may reach them. We need not add, that apart from that work of grace in their souls they remain unsaved and all the more responsible because of the privileges they have access to.

"Sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer” (1 Tim. 4. 1-5).

This verse refers to the provisions of the faithful Creator to meet the needs of man, and especially of marriage and meats. The unconverted man takes up these things without reference to the God who gives them and uses them in independence of Him, and so degrades himself and them. But the one who knows God, who has heard His word and is subject to it, knows that they come
rom God. He learns the goodness and care of his God in them, he is instructed in the Word as to their use, and they become the cause of intercourse with God in prayer and thanksgiving. So that they are not treated as common things in which God has no place, but He is acknowledged in them; we learn His goodness and He gets our praise, and that in which He ever delights—interruption with man—His creature. Thus are they sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Correspondence.  

The Lord’s Table.

On the principle of “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the rest judge” (1 Cor. 14, 29), we publish the following letters and notes, only remarking that all must be tested by the Scriptures.

Beloved Brother,—... As to 1 Corinthians 10. and 11. In the former we read of “the Lord’s cup,” and of “the Lord’s supper”; in the latter of “the Lord’s supper.” There is a distinct connection between all three doubtless; but in chapter 10. warning is given that grave inconsistency with drinking and eating provokes God’s displeasure; in chapter 11. the order for the actual eating the Lord’s supper in assembly is in view. It is "prescribed" from verse 17. The serious consequences of eating unworthily is not overlooked, however, as verses 29–32 show; but it is the state in which we eat that is spoken of, rather than that of the daily behaviour of the eaters as we have in chapter 10. In both cases the Lord Himself deals with us in punishment or discipline. It is not a question of assembly dealing.

We are told, “The Lord shall judge His people” (Heb. 10. 30). This must be remembered. Where there is a carnal state, such as existed at Corinth, there is a predilection for raising unnecessary cases for judgment (see 1 Cor. 6. 7), instead of suffering a personal wrong. There are cases, and the word is clear as to these, where assembly action is insisted upon; but that is not in view here.

The whole path of those who partake of the Lord’s cup and the Lord’s table is in view in chapter 10. The high honour of communion with His death calls for a consistent walk. Israel is given as an illustration. They all ate and drank of the same “spiritual” provision, but their grave misconduct provoked God’s dis-

The devil is a subtle foe, and if he fails to keep men regardless of God’s claims in these things, he will next introduce doctrines of demons, in which these things are forbidden as being degrading to men, giving thereby a false sanctity to the flesh, and dishonouring God by despising His creatures, which marriage and meats are; and robbing also those who are forbidden them, by this doctrine, of the evidence of God’s goodness to them in them, and Him of the thanksgiving which is His due in regard to them.

pleasure. Lust, idolatry, pleasure seeking, fornication, murmuring, and other evil things were indulged in. God punished them accordingly; and "these things happened to them as types,” and are recorded for our admonition (11), lest those who drink and eat now should seek communion in evil things and "provoke the Lord to jealousy" (22). He punished Israel, and He is not slack to-day. The question is asked, "Are we stronger than He?"

Consistency on the part of those who enjoy communion is in view, and also the Lord’s own dealings with inconsistency such as is named,—not the assembly’s dealings.

From verse 23, however, the “liberty” which is ours, consistent with conscience, is indicated. Those who belong to the Lord know that "the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof." All things are to be done to God’s glory, and others are to be considered. No occasion of stumbling is to be given to either of the three broad circles;—the Jews, the Greeks, or the assembly of God (32); the first being connected with the altar, and the last with the Lord’s table, while the table of demons had to do with the others.

The apostle used his freedom to seek not his own profit, but that of others, that "they might be saved" (33). He pleased all in all things to that end. Salvation and not stumbling was his object.

With love in Christ Jesus.

Ever yours in Him,

H. J. Vine.
DEAR BROTHER,—I am fully persuaded that on every occasion where the judgment of 1 Corinthians 5. is properly carried out according to God the person so dealt with is “put away” from all Christian privileges and society, and that he is put back into the world where Satan reigns. The failure of the assembly to respond to this judgment of evil in nowise affects the nature of that judgment according to God. Israel didn’t judge rightly when they condemned the righteous and justified the wicked, nor when the Lord bade them “judge righteous judgment.” It wasn’t righteous judgment to “smite the judge on the cheek,” and release Barabbas instead of Jesus, and so on and so on. But none of these enormities affected the true judgment of God, which they were responsible to maintain and didn’t, but “when judgment shall return to righteousness all the upright in heart shall follow it.” No amount of failure in the assembly can alter the judgment ordered in 1 Corinthians 5. to be executed by the assembly with the authority of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His power, which abide as a constant factor above and independent of all human failure. Neither the authority nor the power for that act were inherent in the apostle. They were both only the Lord’s: His name, His power: and they were effectual then, and are so abidingly.

They were delegated to the apostle, and again to the assembly, as we find in Matthew 16. 19 and 18. 18–20. But they belonged to neither; and both the authority and power of action (ἐξουσία and δύναμις) are immanent in the Lord, who assures them of the vitality of their action, despite their weakness, “For where two or three are gathered together unto My name there am I in the midst of them.”

In 1 Corinthians 5. Paul urges the judgment of evil on the unwilling consciences of the Corinthians. He might have done it Himself, as he says in 1 Timothy 1. 20; but that would not be THEIR doing it—THEIR clearing themselves (2 Cor. 7. 7–12). They must do it—the assembly must do it—and as “the assembly” won’t do it, has not done it, and will not do it, the faithful, who “hold fast His Word and do not deny His name,” will do it, even if they were but two or three; and He is with them to sanction their act and ratify it in heaven (Matt. 18.).

Every act of judgment so passed according to God, is according to His word: and every one so dealt with is “put away” from the “within” where God is in blessing and where the Lord’s table is found, to “the without” where God Himself judges, and not the assembly, and where Satan has his sway. The unfaithfulness of the assembly and her failure to carry this out in nowise affects the nature of the judgment which remains according to the judgment of the apostle (1 Cor. 5. 4, 5).

Yours affectionately,

E. CROSS.

The Loan Repaid.

“LEND me thy boat,” the Master kindly said
To Simon, wearied with unfruitful toil.
He lent it gladly, asking but the smile
Of Him, who had not where to lay His head.
But Jesus knows our need of daily bread
And will be no man’s debtor. If awhile
He uses Simon’s boat, in Kingly style
He will repay, a hundredfold instead.

And Peter’s Lord, as yesterday the same,
Walking, though now unseen, among His own,
Still condescends to ask from each a Loan.
Oh, humble toiler, when He calls thy name,
Lend Him thy all! The Master ne’er forgets
Exhausted fishermen, or empty boats.
Devotion to Christ.

Devotedness to Christ is, at once, the first duty and the highest privilege of the Christian—yours, my dear fellow-believer, and mine. It is our duty when we think of our indebtedness to Him, and our privilege in view of the honour which such devotion entails. There is none like it. Christ and the Christian—the pardoned, the justified, the reconciled to God, the son and heir, the member of the body, part of the bride of the Lamb—all this wealth of blessing, this divinely-given freedom from the claims of law, the power of sin and Satan, and the dread fear of death and judgment—all this is, through boundless grace, ours now and for ever, at the cost, however, of that which He underwent for us on the cross of Calvary.

That cost was absolute, the ransom complete, the redemption meritorious; so that, on our part, no addition can be made thereto. We are liberated!

Hence, if we speak of duty, it is not that of the slave, nor of the hired servant, nor of one who seeks, by its fulfilment, a place in divine favour or relationship. All that is settled. Grace is our perfect standing-ground before God; sonship is our privilege and joy.

The blessed Lord gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purity unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (Titus 2. 14).

Mark these words. Consider the gift in its immensity, not only of all that He had, but of that which He was—Himself—with the marvellous end in view—our redemption from all iniquity, together with the present effect of our purification unto Himself a peculiar people (whom He could claim on that ground as "His own") and who should be "zealous of good works."

"His own"—peculiarly and absolutely and for ever His own, over whom there should be no rival claim, redep-

( J. Wilson Smith ).

They are His, and He is theirs.

But who is He that paid such a price for this possession?

He is the Son of God in the glory of deity, and Son of Man in the truth of perfect and sinless manhood. It is He who presented Himself in patient grace for the acceptance of men, only, alas, to be set at nought and crucified; but to be "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and, in actual manhood, to take His place on high as Lord and Christ, the once dead but now living glorious Lord and Head—full of grace and power as also of sympathy and unchanging love. He is theirs—He is ours, but we too are His. To Him, and to no other, do we belong. He is as truly our Lord as He is our Saviour. Having saved us He claims us peculiarly—that is, as "His own." Let us, oh! let us realize this—we are His own.

It is seldom, I think, that His claim upon us as Lord is apprehended at the moment of conversion. The soul, at that glad instant, is rather in the happy experience of the kiss, the robe, and sandals, and the unexpected welcome to a full forgiveness and the Father's house. He exclaims, "My Beloved is mine!" His joy flows from that which he has consciously received. He sings of the "happy day"; but presently, and gradually, he learns that his own personal joy and blessing are not everything. He has been saved indeed, but saved that he "should not henceforth live unto himself, but unto Him who died for him and rose again." The risen Saviour has become his Lord and Master. His "henceforth" is therefore to be marked not only by the joy of salvation but by the obedience of discipleship. He is to devote himself to the Christ who died for him, and who lives on high in all the authority of
Lord. "I am my Beloved's" is the further frank acknowledgment and confession.

What a mark is left on the life that owns Christ's lordship! How vastly that lordship, when humbly accepted and retained (when recovered too, if lost) affects and influences, divinely, those who prove it. I would urge all who read these pages to learn in practical power, ever more fully, the supreme authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. It lies at the bottom of the Christian life. Its practical value, in all true testimony, whether individual, personal, collective or corporate, whether in the assembly or in private life, whether in view of Satan or of man, anywhere, everywhere, the first, deepest, truest breathing of the Christian's bosom should be the name of the Lord Jesus. Every tongue shall yet confess that "He is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Thrice happy they who, to-day, when that name is refused and derided, seek faithfully to confess it before God and man and devil.

Oh, for souls consecrated to Christ, devoting themselves and their all to Him—the rejected but soon-coming Lord—instead of wasting their time and strength and golden opportunities in self-interest and the ten thousand follies of this "Vanity Fair," only to discover, at the close, that the one chance they had to "live unto Him" was flung selfishly away—never to be recovered again. The loss shall be theirs indeed, but it must be His as well.

Remember that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5. 10).

May each of us carry this solemn and searching word into the presence of God and get under its mighty and most salutary influence.

"In nothing be anxious" (Phil. 4. 6, R.V.).

WHAT DOES YOUR ANXIETY DO? IT DOES NOT EMPTY TO-MORROW OF ITS SORROW; BUT IT EMPTIES TO-DAY OF ITS STRENGTH.

"God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50. 20).

"God meant it unto good." What seems a needless sting Is sent to draw the wounded heart closer to Him, to cling.

"God meant it unto good." No second cause I see, For 'tis my God appoints each day, and plans my life for me.

"Nevertheless, afterward" (Hebrews 12. 11).

There is an "afterward," sad heart, for you, for me; Oh, let its light shine on the toilsome road, And brighten all the paths—which lead to God.

For in that glorious "afterward" is recompense For all the bitter tears shed on life's way, And knowing this—we should take heart to-day.
Followers of Paul;

Or the True Marks of a Servant of Christ.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11. 1).
"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. 3. 17).
"I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. 4. 16).
"Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1. 6).
"To make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us" (2 Thess. 3. 9).

The above quotations from the inspired letters of Paul seem at first sight startling as we place them alongside his fiery denunciation of party spirit when he rebuked the Corinthian assembly in the memorable words, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1. 13).

But a careful review of the situation will lead us to the conclusion that to follow Paul is just the way to be free from party spirit and aims.

It may be urged, Why follow Paul? Why not follow the Lord? Are we not told that He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps?

But it is just as Paul followed Christ we are to be followers or imitators of him, and it is in the following of Christ that Paul gives us the example. Never for one moment would Paul take our gaze off Christ, and if in his life Christ could be seen and magnified that were the object of his life. As he could say, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1. 21).

There is, in truth, a special reason why God should raise up a pattern saint and servant, whose teaching and example should influence us. When the blessed Lord lived His wonderful life on the earth He was "God . . . manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 13). He made God fully known. None could do that but He. It is an axiom that only God could reveal God. No mere man, however exalted, could do that.

But as the result of His death and resurrection a new and wondrous spiritual system came into existence, having for its Head Christ in glory and having for its subsistence on the earth the power of the Holy Spirit. For this system to come into operation Christ must be in glory, and if the effect of it, the right relation to and practice of it, are to be exhibited it must be by some individual on the earth, and this the Spirit of God found in a marked way in Paul. Paul was not the exclusive vessel of this, for he associates others with himself, but he was a special vessel of the Spirit.

We propose to follow our inquiry as to what are the true marks of a servant of Christ on three lines:

(1) Personal Devotedness to Christ.
(2) The Formative Power of the truth.
(3) Zeal in Service.

There is no doubt that the church has arrived at the Laodicean stage of lukewarmness. The difficulties of pursuing true service are very serious. The depressing influence of universal indifference to the claims of Christ upon the servant's sympathies and zeal is apt to chill.

It is well to be clear that what lies at the root of all intelligence and zeal is

(1) Personal Devotedness to Christ.

In Paul we witness how Christ could inspire this. Converted suddenly and in a miraculous way the whole current of a powerful will was set in an entirely new course. Not only was he converted when the light above the brightness of the sun struck him down on the
Damascus road, but the Person who arrested his madness and illumined his darkness became the absorbing Object of his heart's adoration. It was the revelation of a glorious Person, so absolutely opposed in all His thoughts and ways and glories to the tawdry glory and sordid aims of the world that had rejected Him that captivated Paul's heart.

The power and impetus of this was seen in the beginning of his career in that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20). This was maintained throughout his career as a servant of Christ. Neither perils by land or sea, of the city or the wilderness, of robbers, of false brethren, stripes, stonings, nor shipwrecks were sufficient to turn him aside from his path of service.

Brethren, do we know anything of such zeal? Never was there a day when zeal was more needed. Are we to be overcome by the palpable depressing indifference, or is zeal, fed by the adoring homage of hearts which are captivated by Christ, to give us to break through and conquer.

And if the apostle began well how magnificent was his finish. Hear him in prison; all in Asia had forsaken him, his best work already showed signs of decay, his prophetic soul knew that grievous wolves would enter the flock and work destruction. Yet the person of Christ commanded his homage as at the beginning of his career. He says: "My earnest expectation and my hope [is] that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death" (Phil. 1. 20). Again: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Again: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 8, 14).

Though the step of Paul the aged might grow feeble, and the eye lose its lustre, and the outward man perish, yet the stride of the spiritual man was more vigorous than ever as the light of victory filled his eye, and the end of his course and the grasping of the glorious prize were at hand.

How truly encouraging to the feeblest and most obscure servant of Christ, brother or sister, to trace the power of Christ in the vessel. If we cannot emulate Paul's gifts we can his devotedness.

(2) The Formative Power of the Truth.

Devotedness and intelligence go together. In natural things as in spiritual this is so. Who knows more about a man than his devoted wife? Devotedness made Mary sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His word. Did not her devotedness lead her to a deeper knowledge of Himself?

We repeat that devotedness leads to intelligence.

In the case of the apostle he displayed a masterly knowledge of the Old Testament Scripture and was used of God in the inspired writing of the major part of the New Testament, especially in bringing out the full truth of the gospel and of the church.

Though doubtless the truth of justification by faith is implied in the writings of Peter and John, yet we owe to the Apostle Paul the clear teaching of this glorious truth. Without a full knowledge of the gospel there can be no liberty in service. Moreover, a full gospel has a formative power. It brings with it the knowledge of being brought to God, which indeed Peter teaches. It brings with it a judgment of this world and of the flesh. How little the knowledge of all this characterizes Christians generally. Else we should find Christians refusing to meddle with the
politics of the world, or taking up with the Galatian heresy of putting themselves under law.

Romans is the great gospel-teaching epistle, yet at the end of it we have two verses that give us the double ministry of the apostle, and surely he was formed first by what he taught. "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scripture of the prophets, according to the commandments of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." (Rom. 16. 25, 26).

This double ministry was that of the gospel and of the church.

If the truth of a full gospel is formative, that of the church is none less so.

Again it is a question of affections leading to intelligence. If once the servants of Christ grasps that the church is the dearest object of the heart of Christ it will form his own soul and give colour to his ministry.

It is wonderful to see how the Apostle Paul even in his conversion received the first hint of the wonderful truth as to Christ, the exalted Head in heaven, and His members here on earth, forming one body.

When he was converted on that Damascus road he heard the voice of the glorious Head in heaven, saying, "Why persecutest thou ME?" (Acts 9. 4). The Lord might have said, "Why persecutest thou My people?" and that would have been wonderful, but in saying, "Why persecutest thou ME?" He indicated the wonderful truth of the Head and the body, kept secret since the world began. Then the Lord raised up Paul to be the instrument of the revelation of this wonderful truth. How a true knowledge of it would put warmth and earnestness into the ministry of it on the part of the Lord's servants. We can heartily commend to all who serve Christ the study of this great truth and what flows from it—order in the assembly of God—as seen in the Pauline epistles.

(3) Zeal in Service.

We find no faltering in Paul's zeal from start to finish of his wonderful career.

The Acts of the Apostles closes remarkably with the description of him in his own hired house in Rome—a prisoner, aged, broken down, at the end of his career, yet "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28. 31).

May all who serve our Lord Jesus Christ find Him worthy of all our energy and devotedness as long as He leaves us down here.

Never was a day calling for it in greater measure. As we find indifference in the world and lukewarmness in the church increasing may each servant of Christ be found more devoted than ever, and let us remember that the Lord's coming draws nigh.

In conclusion, let us impress upon our readers that Paul as a man stands for nothing on these lines. It is only as the Spirit of God formed him that we can gain encouragement and direction in our own service. What he ministered for our help was not of himself, but of the Spirit, and what is worthy of imitation in Paul is only what is of Christ in him.

Yet we have the record of his "doctrine and manner of life" placed before us, and we should miss much precious encouragement and help were we to say in even the slightest degree that we are not to follow Paul. Read the scriptures that head this paper. Weigh them over. But understand that in truly following Paul we are following Christ and not Paul, save as he followed Christ, and in so doing are well delivered from the spirit that says, "I am of Paul."
"Rivers of Living Water." No. 2.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7. 37-39).

It was on the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus made this great proclamation. The first seven days of that feast foreshadowed worldwide peace and prosperity for men under His beneficent dominance as the Sun of Righteousness. Of this period of blessing many glowing and soul-stirring prophecies had been spoken, but He could not at that time fulfil these sure words, for though He was ready the people were not. They did not want the blessing in God's way, and they would not have God's Son, though He was the only One through whom it could come to them. They hated Him and were seeking to kill Him, so that He was going back again to His Father who sent Him (ver. 33), and that day of blessing for the earth was in consequence to be postponed.

Now there were those who had followed Him expecting that He would immediately fulfil His ancient promises to Israel and the earth, and were they to be disappointed? Were the hopes that had been raised in their breasts to be shattered? No. He proposed to give them something better.

The last great day of the feast was the eighth day, and that eighth day was a Sabbath. It foreshadowed God's eternal rest, when heaven should come down to earth, and when the two should no longer be separated but united in the joy of the manifestation of the fullness of God. It was on that day that Jesus lifted up His voice, and that which He offered to any man that thirsted exceeded the highest expectations of those who had followed Him. Earthly blessings are great, if He gives them, but this is greater: it is not earthly but heavenly, not material but spiritual, not temporal but eternal. And so the rejection of Him by Israel which seemed to be an overwhelming calamity was turned into a triumph of divine goodness. And the eighth day of the feast which stood outside man's sin and its consequences became the platform from which He announced God's intention to put those who believed in Jesus into living contact with heavenly and eternal fullness and power, whilst earthly blessing was withheld because of Israel's rejection of Christ.

The blessing announced was of an entirely new order, having its source and centre in a risen Christ, exalted in heaven above every principality and power. From Him in the heavenly and eternal throne, that can know neither change nor decay, there was to come into this changing and storm-tossed world the heavenly and eternal Spirit to dwell in every one who should believe in Jesus, and He would bring the power and blessing of eternity into their lives and make them vessels overflowing with the goodness of God in a world of thirsting men. And this has come to pass; THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS NOW IN ALL WHO HAVE BELIEVED UPON THE GLORIFIED CHRIST. How wonderful is this thought! How intimate is the contact into which it puts us with God! No earthly relationship can illustrate it, for none of us can impart his spirit to another no matter how dearly loved. But this is what God has done, and just as a man's spirit controls him and expresses itself in his looks and words and works, so God by His Spirit would control us and express His thoughts for man's blessing actively through us. The believer is in the world for this
purpose, He is to be the channel of God's goodness and grace to men, the divinely given description of this most blessed presence is, "Out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER." He is to be satisfied himself first, to find every desire of his soul met in Christ and then to overflow for others.

We must not dismiss this proposal as a magnificent impossibility, as we would the unsubstantial product of an ecstatic brain, for the Speaker is THE WORD, the Omnificent Creator, made flesh in order to bring the fullness of God to men, and every word of His lips is the pure gold of absolute truth. And He is able to fulfil His own word. We may not have realized this flowing out of blessing from hearts fully satisfied ourselves; we may not have seen these waters flowing out of any other whom we know—dwell not on that, past failure in ourselves and failure in our fellows does not and cannot alter the truth of this great word. There it stands for us in its stupendous simplicity, describing for us the results of contact with Christ glorified in heaven, and challenging us to put it to the test. It lies within the reach of all, and we may take the words to the Speaker of them, and tell Him that we have not realized the truth of them yet, but that we believe He means us to do so, and then seek out the hindrances to their fulfilment in our lives.

We are turned back to the Scriptures, by these words of the Lord, for help as to their meaning, for He said, "AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID." But we shall not find what part of the Scripture says this by looking up the marginal references in our Bible or by consulting a concordance; indeed, the exact words are not to be found in the Old Testament at all, but many scriptures contain the thought, and if we put some of these together we shall surely discover the true and blessed meaning of the Lord's words.

We will take three scriptures which shall speak to us: (1) of the transforming of our own lives; (2) of the outflow from those lives which have been made fit for the Spirit indwelling; (3) of how the waters may be kept flowing continuously in spite of all external conditions. These scriptures have in view first of all earthly and material refreshment and blessing, but they contain in them the deeper and spiritual thought, and with this we will occupy ourselves.

Isaiah 35. tells us that "in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert and the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water." We learn from this beautiful chapter that "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing." But how shall this great result be brought about, and what is the cause of this blessing and fruitfulness? One sentence supplies the answer: "THEY SHALL SEE THE GLORY OF THE LORD, AND THE EXCELLENCY OF OUR GOD." Now mark well that the outflowing waters of the Lord's promise in John 7. are connected with His glory; and do we see His glory? "WE SEE JESUS, WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR" (Heb. 2. 9). "BUT WE ALL, LOOKING ON THE GLORY OF THE LORD WITH UNVEILED FACE, ARE TRANSFORMED ACCORDING TO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS BY THE LORD THE SPIRIT" (2 Cor. 3. 18, N.T.). Here is the first great secret of these outflowing waters. As we are by the Spirit beholding the glory of the Lord where He is we become like Him where He is not. Our barren lives change their character and become fresh and fruitful, according to the transforming power of the Holy Ghost who dwells in
us. And we must be transformed ourselves first if we are to have any part in transforming others.

EZEKIEL 47. tells of a wonderful river, that, flowing in ever-increasing volume, carries healing and fertility into barren regions. But from whence does the river come and wherein lies its power for good? It comes from the sanctuary, from the temple of God, and that is the secret of its virtue. That we can understand, for if God is the blessed God that which flows from His temple must be blessing. Yes, that must be so. But, "KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU" (I Cor. 3. 16). The prayerful consideration of that statement will impress us as no comments on it can with the practical holiness that becomes all of whom it is true; of the great responsibility that rests upon them as being God's vessels in the world, His dwelling, and yet of the all-sufficiency of the Holy Spirit within to preserve them according to God's own thought.

ZECHARIAH 14. 8, 9, tells of living waters going out from Jerusalem, in summer and in winter. These waters are not dried by summer heat or bound by winter frosts, they are superior to all external conditions and flow out unrestrained and continuously. But what is it that gives them the character of independence of all creature circumstances, and from whence do they flow? Their source is the city where the kingship of the One Lord is owned, the city where His throne is, and here lies the secret of the continuous outflowing. JESUS IS LORD! And this must not be with us in profession only but in reality. There must be obedience to His will. This is the outcome of and is coupled with believing in Him. We cannot contribute to others except we believe in Him and are in obedience to His commandments.

We need only quote the Lord's own words in order to give point and emphasis to this.

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him " (John 14. 21, 23). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you " (John 15. 10, 11, 12). "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 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. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us " (I John 3. 22, 23, 24).

It is by the Spirit's power that we behold the glory of the Lord.

It is by the Spirit's presence that we are the temple of God.

It is by the Spirit's promptings that we call Jesus Lord.

And because of the Spirit that dwells in us we are to be in the world as RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. This is the normal condition of believers in the world, and if it is not our condition we have either never entered into the true power of Christianity or else we have fallen from it, and in either case deep exercise of soul before God and searchings of heart should be ours until we discover the cause.
The Lamb of God.

"Redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

In these words the Spirit of God carries us back into eternity to open the wonderful story of the Lamb. Christ, as the Lamb of God, was no afterthought with God, He "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." And no sooner had sin come into the world than the story of the Lamb was taken up in time. Abel, though dead these thousand years, still speaks of the necessity of the sacrifice of the Lamb. In offering to God the firstlings of his flock he reveals that first great truth, which every poor sinner coming to God must learn, that "without shedding of blood is no remission."

Abraham continues the story of the Lamb in that great scene in which his faith was proved (Gen. 22.). God says as it were, "I am going to bring into display the faith which I have long known to be in Abraham's heart. He has been justified before Me by faith, he shall now be justified by works which shall prove the reality of his faith in Me" (James 2.21). Surely never man was tested like Abraham: Job was tested with the loss of children, possessions and health, but Abraham's test was deeper. Job was required to submit to a loss; Abraham was required to make a sacrifice. One was passive submission, the other active obedience. And how great the demand: "Take now thy son"; and yet deeper the sword pierces his soul, for it must be "thine only son"; and deeper still, for it must be "Isaac," the one on whom all the promises depend; and yet deepest of all, for it must be one "whom thou lovest."

But there was more in this great scene than the testing of Abraham's faith. Precious as that was, there was something still more precious, more instructive, important, and soul-moving. Wrapt up in this story is the far greater story of the Father and the Son, of God and the Lamb, of Christ and the cross. Abel tells us there must be a lamb for a burnt offering; Isaac raises the question, "WHERE IS THE LAMB?" And Abraham gives the only possible answer, "GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING." No lamb of man's providing could avail to meet the holiness of God or the sin of man. God must provide the Lamb, and, says Abraham, "God will provide Himself a Lamb."

Moses next takes up the story of the Lamb. He tells the character of the One who alone can meet the claims of God. The Lamb of God's providing will be a holy spotless victim, a lamb "without blemish" (Exod. 12.5).

Isaiah completes the Old Testament story of the Lamb. He tells us the manner in which God's Lamb must accomplish his work. He must be an unresisting, willing victim, for, says the prophet, "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53.7).

Passing to the New Testament we leave shadows and types and prophecies behind and find ourselves in the presence of the One who is the very image of the shadows. John the Baptist opens the story of the Lamb, as recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. Abraham looking forward had said, "Thine only son," so now we hear the Spirit of God declaring Jesus to be "THE ONLY
the child in the midst of Hi'S hands and feet; slain.'

Begotten Son' (r8). Had Abraham to offer up Isaac, the child of promise? so Jesus is declared to be "THE CHRIST," the One in whom all the promises are yea and amen (41): and lastly did Abraham hear those words, "Take now thy son . . . whom thou lovest"? so Jesus is presented as the "SON WHICH IS IN THE BOSON OF THE FATHER" (r8).

If John answers to Abraham and presents before us the Lamb in His humiliation, Philip and Peter answer to Moses and Isaiah and present the Lamb in His sufferings. Philip finds the eunuch reading Isaiah's great prophecy, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearsers, so openeth he not his mouth," and beginning at the same scripture he "preached Jesus" (Acts 8). Peter reminds us that we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1. 19).

The Apostle John in the fifth chapter of Revelation continues the story of the Lamb, presenting before us the Lamb in His glories. Leaving earth behind John is carried in spirit into heaven, and there he beholds in the right hand of God a book of judgment, but also of blessings reached through judgment. But who can open the book? And if none can open the book how can the judgments take their course? How can the blessings be reached? How can the evil be set aside and the kingdom glories be established? "Who is worthy to open the book?" is the question addressed to the assembled hosts of heaven. Searching through all the myriads of the redeemed John could find "no man in heaven" worthy to open the book. Many great saints were there, Enoch who walked with God, and Abraham who talked with God, Moses who was buried by God, and Elijah who was caught up by God—all are there, but none are worthy to open the book. And then John searches through earth, but if he can find no man in heaven, little wonder that he can find no man on earth, and still less that he finds no one under the earth that is worthy to open the book or to look thereon. Thereupon John falls to weeping. But weeping will not do for heaven. On earth weeping may endure for a night, in hell weeping will endure for eternity, but in heaven "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying." John is the only man that ever wept in heaven, and though he wept much he was not allowed to weep long. He hears one of the elders saying, "Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book." And John, who had been so busy looking through heaven and earth, and under the earth, that he had quite overlooked the throne, now turns to the throne expecting to see the all-prevailing Lion, and "1o in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." The Lion that prevails is the Lamb that was slain.

On earth John had heard the words, "Behold the Lamb of God." He had followed the Lamb in His humiliation. He had stood at the foot of the cross and been a witness of the Lamb in His sufferings. He had seen Him when men pierced His hands and feet at the place of the three crosses, "where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side one and Jesus in the midst"; he had seen Jesus as the risen Man on the evening of the resurrection day when Jesus came and "stood in the midst" and showed His disciples the wound marks in His hands and feet; and now, transported to heaven, thronged with the vast host of the redeemed, and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels—in the very centre of heavenly glory—he sees "in the midst of the throne . . . a Lamb as it had been slain." He sees the Lamb in His glories—JESUS with the wound marks in His hands and feet, the only Man in all that eternal glory who will bear any trace of the sorrows of time.
And as John gazes with adoring wonder, he hears the great host of the redeemed break forth into song—the new song—the song of the Lamb, saying, "THOU ART WORTHY TO TAKE THE BOOK, AND TO OPEN THE SEALS THEREOF: FOR THOU WAST SLAIN, AND Hast REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, AND NATION."

The angels cannot sing this song, neither can they keep silent when it is sung, and so John hears a fresh burst of praise in which all heaven joins—the living creatures, the blood-bought saints, the "innumerable company of angels"—all join as with a loud voice they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

But earth cannot remain silent when heaven is telling the glories of the Lamb, and so there falls upon John's ears a fresh burst of praise. This time all created beings in heaven and earth join in one great anthem of praise to God and the Lamb, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The four living creatures add their "Amen" to this threefold burst of praise, and the blood-bought saints, with hearts filled to overflowing "fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever."

But in the course of the book of the Revelation further glories of the Lamb pass before us. The scene now changes from heaven to earth and we are permitted to see the Lamb in His power and in His wrath, executing judgment. As He had redeemed His saints by blood, so now He redeems the inheritance by power. It is the Lamb that opens the seals and with judgment takes its course (6. x); it is before the wrath of the Lamb the nations cry out in terror (6. 16); and it is against the Lamb that the nations, under the leadership of the beast, make war only to be overcome, and to discover that the Lamb of God, the One they had despised and nailed to a cross, and crowned with a crown of thorns,—is the Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17. 14).

But once again the scene changes from earth to heaven, and in chapter nineteen we are permitted to see fresh glories of the Lamb. On earth that vile system which had so long borne the name of the Lamb, and so long denied the character of the Lamb, has at last been judged, and heaven rejoices over its destruction. But the destruction of the false professing church on earth makes way for the presentation to Christ in glory of the true church. The judgment of the great whore leads to the marriage of the Lamb. In this great scene there passes before us the bride, the Lamb's wife (19. 7 and 21. 9), the marriage of the Lamb (7), and the supper of the Lamb (9). The bride presents the church as the object of Christ's intimate love. As such He loved it and gave Himself for it. As such He has in tender love nourished it and cherished it all the days of the wilderness journey. Weak, failing, persecuted, scattered and broken as the church may be, yet never has it ceased to be the object of His love and affection. Through flood and flame and persecution Christ has brought His bride, ever having in view the great day of the marriage of the Lamb; for espousals, however sweet to the affections, will not satisfy the heart. The intimacy of love between the bride and the Lamb is precious, but love is not content without the possession of its loved object. And while the bride speaks indeed of love, the marriage speaks of the possession of the object of love. Says the Apostle, "I have espoused you to one husband": but with what end in view? "That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 2). The espousals have in view the presentation—the day of the marriage of the Lamb. The love that has borne with the church in its wilderness journey, that has sanctified and cleansed it, has held on its way in
view of the marriage of the Lamb. Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end, and that end, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

And when the marriage takes place the supper will begin. If the bride speaks of the intimacy of love, and the marriage of the possession of the object of love, the supper of the Lamb proclaims the delight and joy with which heaven will celebrate the marriage of the Lamb.

One more scene remains and earth again takes up the tale to tell these further glories of the Lamb. In heaven we have seen the marriage of the Lamb; but the Lamb is not content to possess His bride, He will display His bride before the world. John is carried to a great and high mountain to see the bride, the Lamb's wife, but what he actually sees is "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." A symbol, surely, of the church displayed in glory, but above all, the glory of the Lamb displayed in the church, for above and beyond the glories of the city John sees the glories of the Lamb. He tells of its jasper walls great and high, he speaks of its gates of pearls, the streets of gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones—and all this is exceedingly beautiful, but we ask, "Is this all?" And John as it were answers back, "Oh, no, I can tell you more, I can tell you the things that are not there, I saw no temple, no sun, no moon, no candle, no night, no evil, and no curse." And again we say this is very blessed, but is there nothing more? "Indeed there is," John seems to say, "for in the midst of all the glories, and above all the glories of this celestial city, I saw the Lamb. The One well known to us in the days of His pilgrim journey, the One who walked with us, and talked with us, who dwelt among us full of grace and truth, who shared with us our poverty, who bore with us in our weakness, and wept with us in our sorrows, the One who loved us and gave Himself for us—this is the One I saw in the midst of the city—the Lamb of God, "And the Lamb is the light thereof." How indeed would the gold and the pearls and the precious stones display their beauty apart from the light? "The Lamb is the light thereof."

The glories of the city may captivate our minds, the absence of all evil will surely satisfy the conscience, but the presence of the Lamb will alone satisfy our affections, and make every saint at home in the midst of these transcendent glories. We shall see the glories of the city, we shall see the river of life and the tree of life, but above all we shall see the Lamb, we shall "see His face," and His name shall be in our foreheads. May the transforming power of the story of the Lamb be manifest in our lives even now.

"The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace—
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand:
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

The Way of Power.

LIVE in the Word and in the love and infinite faithfulness of the Lord Jesus that it unfolds for us. Even though it is slow, and with many a stumble, the faith that always thanks Him—not for experiences, but for the Word on which it can rely—goes on from strength to strength, still increasing in the blessed assurance that God Himself will perfect His work in us.
The Body and Blood of Christ.

In these three scriptures we have the most solemn and yet the most blessed subject that we could possibly be called upon to consider set before us; for what more solemn subject could be presented to us for our meditation than the bloodshedding and death of our Lord? and yet what more blessed, for in this has been fully manifested that love of Christ that has been truly said to surpass knowledge? Greater love, the Lord Himself hath said, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; and though those few disciples to whom He said these words were His friends, in the day in which He laid down His life for them, we can say: “When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,” and though it may be, and it is, to the imagination of the creature utterly overwhelming in its might and majesty, it is nevertheless true that when there was nothing in our hearts toward Him but hatred, not even the shame, the gibbet, the curse, the wrath, the abandonment of God, could quench the love that burned in His heart toward us. When our hearts are touched by this they are touched by the very infinitude of God, for God is love.

In the Supper of our Lord we have set before us the celebration of this unspeakable love of Christ by His beloved saints. It is not here the inauguration of this holy ordinance, for we find in the Gospels that the Lord gave it to the disciples before He suffered, and here the Apostle reminds the saints at Corinth that he had already delivered it to them. Here it is the indoctrination of the saints into the true meaning, import, and character of the holy feast, which if ever they had understood they had at this time entirely forgotten. Through the allowance of the fleshly mind they had become divided up into sects and parties, much like what we have in the professing church to-day, and each of these separate parties ate the Supper by themselves. It was now their own supper, for it had lost the character of the Lord’s. This the Apostle seeks to correct, and makes known to them that the reason sickness and death were so prevalent among them was on account of the disgraceful way in which they had conducted themselves at this sacred ordinance.

He introduces the subject by reminding them that it was introduced by the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed, and one can well understand how the reference to this awful exhibition of base ingratitude, by one that had dipped with our Lord in the same dish, must have pierced like a sharp arrow the conscience of the Corinthians, who had been giving a loose rein to the flesh which through Judas struck with venomed fang such a traitorous blow at the meek and lowly Saviour of the world.

The best education that God could bestow upon fallen man had from the beginning been bestowed upon the fallen race, but something even beyond the ministry of the Word, and dispensational privileges, had been bestowed upon Judas, for he had been the companion of God manifest in flesh for a period of three whole years, and had been entrusted with a ministry of grace beyond all that had previously been given to the greatest of the Prophets. And yet for thirty pieces of silver he sold his Divine Master to His enemies, and those that sought His life. But such is the flesh in every one of us, and to this the Corinthians were found giving a very loose rein.

Judas goes out into the night, the slave of his accursed avarice, the betrayer of infinite Love, the tool of the devil. How loathsome to every upright
mind is such heartless treachery, and yet in the school of God shall each of us find wrapped up within his own skin the elements of the betrayer. We are all ready enough to proclaim our horror of the betrayer of Jesus, but when we have learned what we really are we shall abhor ourselves. Such treachery witnessed from the battlements of heaven might well make the celestial hierarchy shudder, but to find this treachery in our own hearts is unspeakably appalling.

It was when the traitor was manifested, and when he went out in the darkness of the night to do his deed of darkness, that the Lord Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

What was there now to wait for? There was no mending of the flesh, no softening of the human heart, no reconciling of the carnal mind. The judgment that had long hung over the rebel race must now be executed. If executed on the creature he is lost for ever. This would mean the triumph of the devil, the dishonour of God, the loss of His creature, the eternal destruction and utter misery of the whole human race.

"This is My body, which is broken for you." The floodgates of the love of Christ are thrown wide open. What Judas was doing at that moment, what Peter would do before the cock crew, what the others would do consequent upon the outrage in Gethsemane, hinders not in the least the outflow of that shoreless and fathomless ocean of love that swelled in the heart of the Saviour, and tore its living and triumphant way through every barrier that rose up against it, until the bitter chalice of Divine judgment was to the very dregs exhausted, and the blackness and the darkness and the wrath and the for-
partake of it are by that means identified with that which it represents. In eating that which was offered to idols the heathen had fellowship with demons, for the things that were offered by them were offered to demons. The priests in the economy of law in partaking of the sacrifices were in fellowship with Jehovah, for to Him the sacrifices were offered. In partaking of the bread and cup we have fellowship with Christ. This is the import of the act.

The cup represents the blood of Christ, and the bread the body; but in the mind of the Apostle it is not this only that he calls our attention to, but our partaking of these things: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?" Though the loaf is in the first instance the body of Christ—His own body, in partaking of it we are identified with it; and then verse 17 tells us that "we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. This verse affirms that we are one body by the fact that we all partake of that one loaf, but verse 16 tells us that that body is the body of Christ. In chapter xi. the cup and the bread are definitely said to be the blood and body of the Lord; here it is not so, for the cup is the fellowship of His blood, and the bread is the fellowship of His body. We must not attempt to make Scripture say what it does not say.

Then he says: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons." Now here I think he is speaking of that which is represented by the cup, being vitally identified with the death of our Lord, and my reason for saying so is that he says no person can drink of both. He does not say, Ye should not; but, ye cannot. It is impossible to be vitally and intelligently identified with Christ in His death, and identified with the demon to whom the sacrifice is offered.

Next He says: "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons." When He speaks of the table He has before His mind that which is represented by both bread and cup, for it takes both to express the infinite wealth of blessing that is presented before our eyes by these means. The Table is prepared before us in the wilderness. Nothing more could be placed upon it that would add anything to the richness of this boundless preparation that He has made for those who love Him. With this we cannot be identified, if we are partakers of the table of demons. To attempt to unite them is to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and to defy His power.

It has been said that jealousy is inconsistent with love. But this is an entire mistake. Where there is the tendency to be unfaithful, the least movement in that direction, the determination to preserve the beloved object at all cost from evil must surely be aroused. In such circumstances where no jealousy is there is no love. He will not allow any attempt on the part of His people to connect His Table with the table of demons, and Himself with the demon. In chapter xi. we see what stern measures He takes to guard the Supper from desecration, and in this chapter we see He will not allow Himself to be associated with demons.

APPROPRIATION.

In John 6. we have that which 1 Corinthians 10. 11 speaks of presented in a still different aspect. In the epistles to the Corinthians it is the body and blood of our Lord, but in John 6. it is the flesh and blood. Possibly the reason of this is that in Corinthians the death of our Lord is viewed more in a sacrificial way, and in John's Gospel as the food of our souls: for life we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

From the moment man came under death on account of sin there was no way of deliverance for him except through death. It is not only that man is a sinner and amenable to the judgment
of God, but if he is to be in right relations with God he must have another life than that which he received from Adam. In the life of flesh he cannot live to God, for it is in its nature enmity against Him. In John 5. this life is presented on the line of the sovereignty of God: the Father and the Son quicken whom they will; but in chapter 6. it is presented on the line of our appropriation: we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood that we may have eternal life.

That Christ died that we might live is a most blessed truth; but to say that He died that we might live in the life derived from Adam would be to turn that truth into a most mischievous falsehood, for, as I have said, the very nature of that life is enmity against God, and it cannot be altered. And the way in which we are to avail ourselves of this life that is in Christ and to which neither sin nor death can ever be attached is set before us in this chapter.

The Jews boasted that their fathers had eaten manna in the desert, but the Lord reminds them that this did not render them immune from death: "Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead." But He was the Bread come down from heaven, "that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Moreover this bread was His flesh, which He would give, not for the Jews only, but for the life of the world. He was the Bread of life, but to be eaten His blood must be separated from His body.

Sin brought death into the world, and from the day it came in it dominated the whole human race. And death alone can remove the sin that brought it in. No one but the Lamb of God can remove sin. He alone can take it away. But He must die to do this. In His death it has received its judgment, and in the appropriation of His death, the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood, I die to the sin that dominated me, and to the evil life that was dominated by it, and in the life of the One who died for me I live to God. And there is no other way of life: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Now that death has come in we must feed upon it for deliverance from it, for only in the life we derive from Christ can we live to God.

"Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life." He has this life in present possession, and with the certainty of being perfected in glory: "I will raise him up at the last day." And not only this but such a one "dwelleth in me, and I in Him "; for to be in His life is to be in Himself, and to have Him dwelling in us.

He had to die in order to be appropriated by us, for apart from His dying He could not have come within the reach of our appropriation; and not only this, but we, having accepted Him in death, are now privileged to feed upon Himself: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." His death is ours, and in eating His flesh and drinking His blood we eat and drink death to our whole old sinful condition, and in eating Himself we claim as our own that beautiful life of His that was developed down here in this scene of contrariety; and the beautiful characteristics that were so fully the delight of the Father's heart, and which are so excellent in our eyes, tell us what a glorious life it was.

How glad we should be to be privileged to celebrate that love that surpasses knowledge, and to eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Him who died for us, and thus brought His love to light. And how careful we should be not to provoke Him to jealousy by putting Him on a level with idols, of which there are many in that which professes His name on earth. May we also know better what it is to make His death our own, and may we be filled with the infinite delight that springs from the knowledge that that meek, holy, lowly, heavenly life is ours in our relationships with the Father and the Son, and with one another.
The Epistle of Christ.

While the church remains on earth, she is responsible for the glory of her absent Head down here—not as under law of course; but the church is responsible to represent the glory of Him who has redeemed it. It is to be a light in the midst of the darkness, "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called you into His marvellous light. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." The word is "epistle" not "epistles." It is one body. One transcript of Christ. The church was set as Christ's epistle of commendation to all men, that in it men might read and see the power of redemption, and the character of Him, its Head, who is out of sight, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, and forming it to be the visible witness of its invisible Head. Its responsibility is, that the life of the Head in heaven should be manifested on the earth in power.

The world ought to see, practically, perfect holiness and perfect love in the church; for we are made partakers of God's holiness, and we are the objects of His infinite and perfect love. The church ought to have but one constant position and service on the earth, that of manifesting to the world what it draws from its living Head in heaven.

The church never knew Christ after the flesh; the only Christ the church knows is the Christ that the world rejected, and is now in heaven; and therefore the church should be in entire abstraction from the world, to manifest what its Head is. And thus the church should be Christ's epistle of commendation. Note the force of the word "epistle." The world ought to see what Christ is in you, as the law was seen written on the tables of stone, a living epistle, "known and read of all men."

And the character of our walk will be greatly deepened, according to the extent we are realizing what His grace has done for us, and has called us to.

J. N. D.

The Lord will not give up His original thought in regard to the church. Its failure has not caused Him to lower the standard, and all true recovery is recovery to that which was in the beginning. Moreover recovery is individual. To have the truth recovered in power to our souls individually, is what we should seek, to have restored to us afresh Christ's own thought as to His church, then will our walk and ways and testimony to the truth be effective in others.

A Song of Praise.

"When Christ . . . shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."
"When He shall appear we shall be like Him."

O God our Father! can it be,
That we in glory shall appear
With Thine own Son, and like Him be,
And His own glorious image bear?

O God! what dignity and grace,
Far, far, beyond all human ken,
A destiny so vast, so great,
Purposed by Thee, for sons of men.

Yet in Thy word it is revealed,
Thy Spirit makes Thy counsel known,
Lifting our hearts this world above,
Lighting our pathway to the throne.

Before the world itself was formed,
This blessing was decreed by Thee,
Made known in time, by Thine own Son,
All Thy redeemed shall with Him be.

O fadeless joy! O love supreme!
O undimmed glory bright and fair!
Unbounded by time's fleeting days,
With God's own Son for ever there!

Our tiny hearts burst forth with praise,
In presence of such love divine;
O God our Father! nought are we,
'Tis Thy great love has made us Thine.
THE Lord's words to Nicodemus in John 3. show clearly that the first or old natural birth does not furnish material suitable for the kingdom of God, and will not do for Him. He speaks of the necessity for a new birth. "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not merely that he will not be found in it; he is positively unable to see it apart from a new Spirit-birth. The "anew" shows that no training or environment can affect the old nature so as to produce what is required, i.e. power to "see" (ver. 3), and power to "enter" the kingdom of God (ver. 5). The Lord uses three terms: (a) born anew (vv. 3, 7); (b) born of water and of Spirit (ver. 5); and (c) born of the Spirit (vv. 6, 8). The first nullifies our natural estate as born in the ordinary course of generation; the second indicates the agencies used to produce the new; and the third shows the lineage, and the character imparted.

(a) As to the person, he must be born anew. Born duke or democrat, no antecedent history counts. No blue blood found in, nor blue ribbon found on, the natural man averts the necessity spoken of; no red cross benefits conferred, nor red flag prospects sought after, can secure this radical change; no Jewish ordinance nor Christian rite can effect it. Simon Magus was baptized, but was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity; the dying thief was never baptized, yet was found in Paradise with the Lord. Whatever place baptism has in the Christian economy, and however near its doctrine comes (Rom. 6.) to the same repudiation of the old life derived by natural generation, it is not the theme here in the beginning of John 3. Baptism teaches the judgment of the old standing of man after the flesh; new birth is the commencement of another line altogether.

(b) The Lord evidently uses the term water to Nicodemus because the Jewish Scriptures of which he was the teacher (ver. 10, N.T.) spoke in this language of the coming blessing of the Jew. Isaiah 44. 3 says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon their offspring." This will be the preliminary to their saying by and by, "I am the Lord's." The need of the Israelite will be met, and the need of the land supplied, by the same hand, and by the fulfilment of the written prophecies relating to both; the Spirit conferred, and the blessing given in a national way to Jacob in the Holy Land. Then again the prophet in Ezekiel 36. 25, 26 says: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, etc. etc." This again is connected with the regeneration of Israel, of which the thirty-seventh chapter is a further illustration. All this Nicodemus knew in the letter of it, but had not apprehended its meaning. It was not the application of cold water to the body in bathing which was meant by the prophet, when he spoke of cleansing away their filthiness and their idols; still less was it any incantation of a priest with so-called holy water, which never produces moral or radical change. Every Jew knows, and every reader of Scripture ought to know, that a young man cleanses his way by taking heed thereto according to God's Word (Psalm 119. 9). It is God's Word which, when applied by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit, produces a new birth and a new way of looking at things, God's way. It conveys God's estimate of things, it permits of our estimating good and evil as they affect God. Until a man has his eyes opened in this new way, he can
never see the kingdom of God. He can see how things affect himself, or how they affect his fellow-men. He can fight against oppression, or combat drunkenness, or legislate against slavery, and gambling, and theft, and adultery, and murder. He can see the evil of such ways and aim at their restriction for his own comfort or from compassion to others. He can as a man in the world pity the poor, the sick, the wounded, the bereaved, and most earnestly seek to alleviate the misery he finds around him. He can be courageous in battle, and patriotic in sentiment, and even enthusiastic in religion; and yet lack this "sine quâ non," this one thing which is not only needful but vital, not needful only but imperative: "Ye MUST be born again."

The Spirit then uses the word of God in producing the new birth. Whatever sentiments and affections and capacities lie in a man naturally, they are accounted null, and are negatived by this sweeping change. So far as the new birth is concerned, it removes nothing and changes nothing of what was communicated at the old birth; it teaches by implication that it is God's intention to do away with the old, but in itself it does not do away with it. It does not furnish atonement, nor a judicial standing in righteousness before God, nor does it in the least of and by itself determine the character of a man's blessing; it is not a measure of any man's blessing, but rather what must precede every positive blessing in all dispensations. Whoever in the Old Testament times was the subject of Divine delivering mercy in a spiritual sense, was born again; so in this age; so in the millennial age yet to come. Men must be born of water and of (the) Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.

The word of God thus, used by the Spirit of God, imparts a totally new direction to a man's heart, and perceptive faculties, and will, and becomes the new standard by which he learns to estimate everything. Like Asaph, if ever he is tempted to judge of things according to a fleshly mind, he is delivered from its conclusions by getting into God's presence and receiving God's thoughts (Psalm 73.). In personal affliction, instead of judging God by his circumstances, he learns to perceive with Job the end of the Lord (James 5. 11). In famine, and war, and pestilence; in domestic and national adversity, he discerns the discipline of the Lord; in affairs of a private or of a public nature he is governed by the fear of God. Failure and sin instead of driving him to despair like Judas, drive him to confession and restoration like David. But in all this a man might be, as the eunuch of Acts 8. probably was, and as Cornelius in Acts 10. certainly was, still a seeker after God's salvation; born again, and destined for blessing and eternal life, but not yet, in the Christian sense of the word, saved (Acts 11. 13, 14).

(c) Our Lord also teaches us that just as really as at the first birth that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so in this new birth that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The man who has been led to bow to God truly has not merely changed his opinion, as a Jew or a heathen might embrace Christianity, but partakes in the sight of God of a new spiritual nature after the essential character of the parentage if I may so say, characterized by spiritual instincts, affections, and desires. It is when we perceive this fact that we can begin to trace things to their sources, what emanates from the flesh and what from the spirit. This is so even when, as yet, the subject of this divine work has not learnt how peace and deliverance come. A chapter like Romans 7. becomes painfully real. The seventh of Romans never fails to touch us,—to touch our hearts, I mean—even long after we have found peace and deliverance; but for those who enjoy deliverance it is rather like retracing our experience than miserably living it through.

Will the reader, in conclusion, compare with John 3. 5, the eighteenth verse of James 1., and the twenty-second and third verses of 1 Peter 1.
The Purpose of God. No. 2.

We have seen that Christ is Heir, in title, as being Creator of all things—all things having been made by Him and for Him, as the Son; and also because He has been established such in the purpose of God. So that, in the way of promise, all the promises find their centre in Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16).

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us (2 Cor. 1:20). Thus Christ is the Heir, the Seed, to whom the promise was made.

CHRIST REIGNS AS THE RISEN MAN.

As to the way in which these things are accomplished other passages present it to us.

CHRIST AS HEIR RECEIVES THE INHERITANCE IN THE WAY OF PROMISE.

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THE REJECTION BY THE NATURAL SEED GIVES OCCASION FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SEED INTO THE HEAVENLY PLACES AS JOINT-HEIRS.

As regards this earth, the people of Israel, the seed according to the flesh, were, of all mankind, in the best position to receive the Lord, in a world that knew Him not; in coming unto them, "He came unto his own" (John 1:11). That people possessed the law, the promises, the covenants, the oracles of God; it was in their midst that, according to the promise, the Lord was to come, and that He actually came (Rom. 9:4, 5). It was this people which, in the midst of a lost world, possessed, through their relationship with God, the sabbath—that sign which was to remind them of the hope of Jehovah's rest. But when the Messiah appeared, although His coming was in perfect harmony with the predictions of their

Christ, in His character of risen man, reigns therefore over a kingdom which He will deliver up, that God may be all in all. All this administration, and this human dominion, which is brought out in Psalm 8, comes to an end, that the glory of God, simply, may be universal.

* God, but not Christ, considered under the aspect of His mediatorial character. It is not said "that the Father may be all in all"; because, although Christ delivers up the kingdom as Man-mediator, He is none the less God over all things, blessed eternally with the Father and the Holy Ghost.
own prophets, the Jews did not receive Him. It is true, they said, and this rightly, "This is the heir"; but as they hated Him, they added, "Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12.7). Thus vanished the last hope of God's rest upon the earth. After all that had come to pass, God had yet been pleased to send His own Son; but this trial served to complete the evidence that man is absolutely without any resource, and that "every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Ps. 39.5).

But that only opened the way for a dispensation far more admirable, far more glorious. The earth and the people of Israel as a nation were set aside for a time; although "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The design which was hidden in God for ages past was about to be revealed (that is, the gathering together into one body, and in Christ, the remnant of the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles, in order to bring them into the heavenly places). The companion and bride of the One who had been rejected, but who is risen—the church—is gathered from among all nations, while her Bridegroom is seated at the right hand of God; and she will shine forth in the same glory as Himself, when He shall appear (Col. 3.4; 1 John 3.2).

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST PARTAKES OF HIS RISEN LIFE.

Christ, in His character of Seed of Abraham, is the Heir of the promises. If He had taken possession of this inheritance during His life here below, He would have possessed it for Himself alone. In fact, after He had manifested His glory as Son of God by the resurrection of Lazarus, and as King of the Jews by His entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks came also to seek Him, He said that the hour was come when (in spite of the rejection of the promised Seed by the Jews) the Son of Man should be glorified; but, as the Lord immediately adds, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12.1-24).

It was as risen that Christ was to enter into the possession of the inheritance with the church, which is the ear that sprung from Christ, the grain of wheat cast into the tomb—the church henceforth perfectly justified. Thus Christ inherits the promises, not as having come in the flesh on earth, but as risen. He inherits them, after having done all that was necessary for the redemption of the church, and in the power of that life which He has taken again, of which He makes His bride to partake. The result of this union is, that the souls which form the church, when they are born of the Holy Ghost, are considered as risen with Him. In a word, Christ is Heir, in His character of risen Man, the risen Head of the church.

Paul, in Galatians 3.17, speaks of the confirmation of the promise, made to Christ, and what He says perfectly agrees with what we have just been saying. Moreover, the apostle is quoting Genesis 22.18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." In these words we find indeed that the promise, made to Abraham in chapter 12. and referring to the blessing of the nations, is confirmed to the seed of the patriarch, after that seed had been restored to him in a figure of resurrection. (Heb. 11.19).

Thus we have seen how the Scripture establishes, under divers aspects, this blessed truth, that the church is redeemed to be united to Jesus, in order that, when He takes possession of His inheritance, He may have a companion meet for Him, to be associated with Him in all things, and perfectly like unto her glorified Bridegroom.

For the complete fulfilment of these things, it was necessary, not only that the church should be redeemed, but also that Christ should go to prepare a place for her.

(To be continued.)
"Come unto Me.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(Matthew 11. 28.)

HOW many of us will for ever thank God for the day, or night, when we listened in an altogether new way to this golden text. Burdened with the load of guilt, our conscience accusing us; realizing that the judgment of God lay upon us and that a lost eternity was before us, feeling helpless and hopeless, these precious words fell like music upon our ears. We were able to say in the words of the immortal hymn of the beloved Horatius Bonar:

"I came to Jesus as I was, Weary and worn and sad; I found in Him a resting-place, And He has made me glad."

Our load was gone; our conscience was at rest, and our heart was happy.

Our text refers, however, not simply to a solitary act of coming. In it the Lord sets Himself before us as the one in whom abiding rest is to be found, rest at all times, in all circumstances, at every change and crisis in our lives. WE HAVE COME IN OUR SINS, but that was the beginning and not the end; we may still come and come again to Him.

From Matthew 14. 12–13 we learn how He would have us COME IN OUR SORROW.

The disciples of John had lost their Master. Herod in his wickedness had beheaded John;

"And his" (John’s) "disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."

Comparing this scripture with Mark 6. 29–31 it seems a fair inference that to them, as well as to His own disciples, the Lord Jesus said:

"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile."

In other words, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." As He poured into their wounded spirits the healing balm of His divine consolation, we can understand what rest would be theirs.

To-day there are tens of thousands of bleeding, broken hearts. It may be, dear fellow-believer, you are in deep sorrow. By this devastating war you have been bereaved of a loved one. The light of your life has been extinguished, and your hopes have been blasted. The kind sympathy of friends avails little. You are tossed about with fears and doubts, and you feel as if you had nothing now to live for. To you the Lord Jesus says: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He is the same sympathizing Jesus that He was when here in lowly grace, for:

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8, R.V.).

He who comforted those stricken disciples, who said to the widow of Nain, and to Jairus: "Weep not"; who Himself wept with the sorrowing sisters of Bethany, and who will one day wipe the tear from every eye, waits now to impart to you that calm repose that is the portion of all those who come unto Him. "And when He giveth quietness who then can make trouble."

We are also invited to COME IN OUR SERVICE.

It would seem that coincident with the arrival of John’s disciples came the disciples of the Lord. They had returned from a mission that had presumably been eminently successful. There may have been a measure of excitement, and to them the Lord said:

"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Mark 6. 31).

Away from the sights and sounds, the attractions and distractions of earth; "Come unto Me, and I will
Scripture Truth.

Soon we shall hear Him say:

"Rise up, My Love, My fair one, and come away" (Song of Solomon 2.10-13).

The journey completed, the night of sorrow ended, the service for Him here finished, the combat with the enemy closed, we shall hear His welcome voice bidding us "Come." Whither shall we come, dear Lord? To heaven, with its pearly gates, its gold-paved street, its harps and crowns? Yes. But heaven without Christ were no heaven at all. Will He not say as He summons us to that great meeting on the glory cloud, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest?" Throughout a glad eternity, in the Father's house, in the likeness of our adorable Lord, we shall joy in God's presence; we shall revel in the Saviour's love; we shall explore more and more of the immeasurable wealth of blessing into which we have been introduced, and we shall ceaselessly praise Him through whom it has all come. To be with Him; to see His face; to hear His voice; to have a truer sense of His worthiness; to be in the warm atmosphere of His love; this, this will be rest.

Thank God we have come to Him, and the sin-question has been settled; may we come to Him in our sorrow; in our service, in every circumstance of our daily life, and may we be ever listening for His call:

"Arise, My Love, My fair one, and come away."

From the Top of the Rocks. (Numbers 23-25)

Yet amongst that very people were Calebs and Joshuas who had foote~ patiently and without murmur, every step of the long journey from the Sea to the River. They had not defiled their garments and were precious to the holy eye that assuredly saw them from His eyrie! And, thank God, all got safe to land!

(J. W. S.)
Notes on Psalm 145.

THIS is the last of the acrostic Psalms, as also the last of those ascribed to David, and may be read as an appropriate supplement to his last words, as given in 2 Samuel 23. (though of course not written afterwards), when the Spirit of Jehovah pointed out to him another King, One who should rule over men righteously, and in the fear of God; whose coming should be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds. The aged king looks back over his long and chequered career, and acknowledges his house has not been so willing with God, but in Psalm 145. he describes the character of that better kingdom, in his declared purpose to praise "My God, the King," desiring that his worship should be as lasting as the kingdom itself (vers. 1, 2, 13). God being the King addressed indicates that the kingdom is of greater extent than Messiah's kingdom, as given in Psalm 2. In Psalm 45. as God He has an eternal kingdom, as another has written, "The Messiah may have an earthly throne (which also is not taken from Him, but which ceases by His taking possession of an eternal throne), but He has a throne which is for ever and ever" (Synopsis, Vol. 5, p. 235). Our Psalm then is the praise of Messiah in the Kingdom of God, or perhaps the utterance of His spirit in the Prince mentioned in Ezekiel 46. 2, for clearly it is prophetic of the coming kingdom.

It is divided into three sections, the first, verses 1–7, celebrates the magnificence of the new kingdom, as in verse 5, "The splendour of the glory of Thy majesty," but its subjects, while they rightly speak of "the power of Thy terrible acts," can tell another side, "They shall utter the memory of Thy great goodness." This last character introduces the second section, verses 8–13, in which the graciousness of the rule is described, in words recalling the revelation to Moses in Exodus 34. 6, yet power is not lacking to bring to pass mighty acts, of which the saints can testify, to make known to the sons of men "the glory of the splendour of His kingdom" (vers. 11, 12).

The effect of this combination of goodness and power is beautifully exhibited in the last section, which shows how the influence of the throne pervades every circumstance and condition of life. ALL those who have fallen into trouble are upheld, ALL those bowed down in sorrow are raised up. If the eyes of ALL wait on the King, none are disappointed, the desire of EVERY living thing is satisfied, for ALL His ways are righteous, and ALL His works are gracious. ALL that call upon Him find Him near to help, but in this case a condition is added, that the call must be in truth. All who love Him are preserved, "but ALL the wicked will He destroy." Finally He will be so universally known that ALL flesh will bless His holy name for ever and ever. It is impossible to refrain from contrasting what is here set forth with the kingdoms of men, as we know them, in which either the subjects are irritated by needless severities, or righteousness is lacking to deal with evil, the results of such rule are manifested in complaints instead of praises. In the present time of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, there is a power, too, which makes all things work together for good on behalf of those who love God and are the called according to His purpose; on this power faith can always count.

Come, Lord Jesus! Thou art coming, in that dawn-light hope we dwell, Now, though shadows still lie heavy where the night dews thickly fell; The fair radiance of that morning never thought or tongue can tell.
Recovery.

"BACKSLIDER!" What an ugly word is this! So ugly that it is usually reserved by us for those who have openly and flagrantly turned back to the world from Christ, but the fact is that the great bulk of Christians are backsliders. Every one of us who ever knew a day of truer single-eyed devotion to Christ than he knows now is a backslider. And that is the reason why spiritual life languishes and the witness for Christ is so dull and feeble, and the need of recovery so insistent.

The church left her first love very early in her history and she has not returned to it. For a while she remained active in service, zealous for sound doctrine, and most rigid as to what she thought were right principles, but the spring of all was wanting, and as the searching eyes of her slighted but faithful Lover penetrated the fair exterior He had to say, "I HAVE AGAINST THEE THAT THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE." O, solemn indictment! most terrible charge for that true Lover to make against the choice of His heart! Did that charge bring the hot blush of shame to the face of the dishonoured church? We cannot say. It may be that some consciences stirred uneasily, and some hearts sighed for the joys that had departed, and some may have sought the feet of Jesus with true repentance. But the bulk passed heedlessly on, caring less and still less for Christ, and giving more and still more room for the world, the flesh and the devil in their councils and hearts, until now, in these awful days, just before the end of her history on earth, she has bolted and barred her doors, and Christ, who died to redeem her, stands outside. Thus did the sacred word foretell the faithless story, and thus has the church fulfilled it to the letter (Rev. 2. and 3).

But stay, it is not our purpose to dwell upon the church's infidelity to her heavenly Bridegroom—we might do that and leave our own lives unaffected—we want, if the Holy Spirit will graciously use our words, to press home upon us all the question as to how we stand in regard to Him to-day. The failure of the church is no excuse for the failure of the individual, and every Christian heart that is not wholly for Christ is a backslidden and unfaithful heart, and must face Him as to this either now or at His judgment seat.

He is coming! Coming quickly! But how shall we say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," if He is not first in our affections? He is coming! Coming quickly! But how shall we greet Him with gladness if we have also slighted Him; and if the world and its honours, or self and its desires have been more to us than the sound of His voice and the experience of His love? Awake, O careless heart, to His claims. REMEMBER FROM WHENCE THOU ART FALLEN, AND REPENT. He has not changed. Blessed be His name!

"O Lord, alas, what weakness within myself I find;
No infant's changing pleasure is like my wandering mind.

"And yet Thy love's unchanging, and doth recall my heart
To joy in all its brightness—the peace its beams impart.

"And sweet 'tis to discover, if clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed ETERNAL LOVER, towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.

"O guard my soul, Lord Jesus, abiding still with Thee;
And if I wander, teach me soon back to Thee to flee."
The Fons Puellarum and its Lesson.

(H. P. Barker).

IN the days of long, long ago, when the Rome of ancient story and song was rising into fame, there flowed, close to the site of the Forum, a little brooklet. Known as the Fons Puellarum (or "Maidens' Fountain"), it sang merrily as it burst from the bosom of the earth and danced on its sunlit way to the yellow Tiber.

Centuries passed. The Rome of Romulus and the Seven Kings had become the iron Republic that filled the earth with the tramp of armed men. The Republic had, in its turn, become the imperial Rome of the Cæsars. And the little Fons Puellarum had disappeared. Had it not been celebrated in the poets' songs its very existence would have been forgotten. The debris of the changing years had completely covered it up and concealed it from view.

Further centuries rolled by. Spoilers filled the once proud city with ruthless and repeated violence. The accumulated rubbish was piled ton upon ton over the site where once the Fons Puellarum sparkled beneath the Italian sky.

At last the time arrived when, under the kings of modern Italy, the reminiscences of the ancient city were revived. Excavations were made on the historic sites, and the walls of long-buried buildings again saw the light of day.

A party of workmen were employed on the site of the old Roman Forum. By degrees the accumulations of the centuries were cleared away. Deeper and deeper sank spade and pickaxe, till one morning, at the stroke of a labourer's pick, there sprang into the air with a murmur of joy, a jet of clear crystal water. The Fons Puellarum again!

Such indeed it was. And to-day the visitor to the city of the Tiber may stand beside that famous brooklet, may see it dancing and sparkling as in the ancient years, may hear it gurgling and singing as in the days of long ago, as it skips on its way amid fragrance and sunlight and music to the sea, its ancient melody restored, its ancient ministry revived.

O little Fons Puellarum, what a teacher of lessons thou art to the children of thy Creator! Some of them, filled with song and holy melody in the days of their spiritual youth, mourn those things as mere memories to-day! Their language is that of the Psalmist: "I call to remembrance my song in the night." That song that made even the darkness of night glow with the brightness of heaven has faded into the dim distance of the past, leaving a memory—only a memory!

The once flowing fountain of joy has become choked up with the accumulating rubbish of this world: the cares of life, or, maybe, the deceitfulness of riches.

But, Christian, take courage! The fountain may flow again! It may yet well up, and sparkle, and sing! He who was its source has not changed! His touch has still its ancient power! No word from Him can fruitless fall!

Take your spade and pick and dig. In the name of Him who loves you and whose you are, dig! Throw out in big shovelfuls the world's rubbish that has spoiled your life. Do not spare yourself. Cry mightily to the Lord for His help, and see Him come for your deliverance. See Him "restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten," so that you may once again "be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God."

We live in a solemn time. The sands of time are sinking. The deep shadows of evening are falling across the rapidly ending pages of the world's history. How shall we spend our last days on the earth? Shall not our heart-cry be:

"O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel; For some are sick and some are sad, And some have never loved Thee well, And some have lost the love they had."

"Thy touch has still its ancient power. No word from Thee can fruitless fall: Hear in this solemn evening hour, And in Thy mercy HEAL US ALL!"
The Spring of all Devotion to Christ.

It is surely one most sorrowful indication of the low and backslidden condition of the majority of the children of God that devotion to Christ should be spoken of as something to marvel at and to praise. It is undoubtedly beautiful, and must yield sweet fragrance to the Father whose beloved Son Christ is, but that it should call for special comment on our part when it shows itself only proves that it is sadly exceptional, and clearly demonstrates the need of recovery.

We speak of the wonderful character of the devotion of Paul the Apostle when he laid all his glory in the dust as dross, and counted all that in which he might have boasted as a burden of which he was well rid that he might have Christ for his gain, but was it really wonderful when in the same breath with which he tells us of his own renunciation he also tells of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord? Notice how he speaks of Him, not as “the” Lord, nor “our” Lord, but as “MY LORD.” Let the heart who knows the Saviour linger there for a while and then answer, “Would it not have been wonderful if he had acted otherwise? Would it be wonderful if a woman abandoned a torn and filthy garment for a costly robe adorned with gold and gems? Then how can it have been wonderful on the Apostle’s part to discard his own righteousness and be found IN HIM, having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith?”

We marvel at Paul rejoiceing that Paul had gone from his thoughts, crucified with Christ, so that he no longer lived for Paul, for Christ had displaced him, in every sphere of life in which he moved, but why should we marvel when he tells us at once that the One who now enthralled him and controlled him wholly was “THE SON OF GOD WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME”? (Gal. 2. 20).

Let us draw near and stand by this servant of Christ and put ourselves into his words, each for himself, and we marvel no more at his selfless life.

Why should we wonder that Paul laboured that whether living or dead he might be acceptable to his Lord (2 Cor. 5. 9, N.T.). He would not have us to wonder at it at all, and hastens to tell us that “THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US.” It would seem as though the marvel crept into his mind, that it could be a marvel to any that he should so labour when he adds, “We thus judge that if One died for all then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but UNTO HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN.”

In all these passages in which Paul speaks of his own devotion to Christ it is as though he stretched out his hands to the saints to whom he wrote, and to us also, and cried—Do not marvel that I wholly love my Lord; if you had seen Him as I have seen Him you would love Him wholly too! If He had come to you as He came to me, when I lay broken and dumb at His feet in my sinfulness, and folded me—worthless as I was, and chief of sinners in my hatred of Him—warmly to His heart, you could not forget Him. If you knew His mighty embrace as I do, and if your life bathed itself in that love that is “too vast to comprehend,” you would cease to marvel at me; instead you would marvel that any heart on earth could hold back from Him, and any lip remain silent before Him. And you would weep in your astonishment, that any having tasted of His preciousness should have another thought of self or turn again from Him to the base and beggarly world!

Strange that we should think it a matter for praise that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word, the wonder is
that Martha could keep away from that sacred spot. We do not wonder that men delight to listen to exquisite music, or that the heart of the maiden thrills at the voice of her true lover, and that when he is near she has neither eyes nor ears for any but he. Then why should we wonder that the voice of Jesus was sweet to Mary. In His voice there is heaven's own music, and when He speaks it is from the heart of eternal love. If we look at Jesus as Mary saw Him, and know Him as she knew Him, we shall cease to wonder that she broke her alabaster box and poured its costly treasure on His feet. We shall take our place with her and do likewise, for He will fill our vision and possess our hearts. And the frowns of sisters and the condemnation of disciples who think themselves more practical and wiser than we will not disturb us as we wonder and worship in the presence of unspeakable preciousness.

"My beloved is white and ruddy, the chieuest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Song of Solomon 5. 16).

If the purpose of heart that made Paul what he was and the devotion of heart that made Mary so acceptable to the Lord are in any measure to mark us, we must transfer our thoughts from them to Him, and from self to Him. In this only is true recovery, and it is worth our while to do so. As with the Bride in Solomon's Song. So now. What Christ is in His own exceeding grace and loveliness must command the heart; if this is refused Him all else, whether service, doctrine, or maintenance of true principles, is valueless to Him.

break our alabaster boxes there and pour out our adoration before Thee. And it is here that our souls are recovered from their wanderings. Here we learn our nothingness and Thine exceeding worth. Here in Thy presence we grieve that our hearts should ever have a selfish thought, that any rival could dispute Thy right to fill our lives. Here we cast ourselves upon Thy pardoning mercy, and here would yield ourselves afresh to Thee.

"Let Thy love, Lord, like a fether Bind our wandering hearts to Thee.'

And Thou art risen from the dead. The grave could not hold Thee. The glory of the Father raised Thee, and Thou hast lifted us from our degradation and sin and hast joined us to Thyself in all Thy own acceptance before Thy Father and God. We no longer cower in terror in the presence of death, but we triumph in Thy triumphs, Thou Victor o'er the grave! Thou hast breathed into us a new life, the first and mightiest impulse of which is FIRST LOVE TO THEE. Recover us fully to Thee, O Lord, is our humble prayer to Thee.
The Spirit of Christ. No. 3.

(W. H. Westcott).

The Springing Fountain and the Spreading Rivers.

[In considering the way of Recovery when departure has come in, we cannot overlook the place that the Holy Spirit has in the life and progress of God's children. Apart from Him they have no life at all, can have no intelligence in the things of God, and can make no growth in divine things. If the Holy Spirit is grieved, within the believer the joy of salvation is lost, and all power for testimony and service is gone, and there can be no restoration, no recovery except by the work of the Holy Spirit within the heart.

To the Corinthian assembly, which was a backslidden assembly, the apostle wrote, "WHAT? KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU, WHICH YE HAVE OF GOD, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE" (1 Cor. 6, 19, 20). And if the fact of the Holy Ghost's indwelling is pressed upon us to arrest us in our wanderings from God, the great objects for which He indwells us should not be less effective. Thence we commend to the consideration of our readers the following paper, which treats on some of those reasons for His indwelling. It is familiar ground, but of the utmost importance to us if we are to know the fullness and joy of Christianity. But let us face the matter before God, before whose eyes all things are naked and open. We cannot hide from Him those secret things that choke the channels and hinder the waters from freely flowing. And it may be that before they flow again from some of us tears of repentance must flow in His presence.—Ed.]

The Springing Fountain.

In John 4., the Lord spoke of supplying the one who asked of Him with living water, which should be in him, a fountain (N.T.) of water springing up into everlasting life. I believe that all will understand this to refer to the Holy Spirit, especially when we come to read John 7, 38, 39. But it is evident that the Lord presents a new phase of the Holy Spirit's service different from the new birth spoken of in chapter 3. Birth lies at the commencement of life; but this is the living itself.

1. It is descriptive of a joy based upon the knowledge of God as a Giver of blessing, not a demander of righteousness as under the law. It speaks thus of God as known in Christ, not as at Sinai; of the gospel in its great essential of grace (John 4, 10).

2. It offers the satisfaction of every want, and the charging of the soul with such a pressure of blessing that, far from casting the soul downward, depressed and defeated and miserable, it urges it upward to boundless enjoyment, in freedom from every earthly drag, satisfied and happy in the knowledge of God (ver. 14). And this, mark, is not the exception proposed among those who drink it is the "whosoever" that drinks for whom it is all available.

3. It fits the renewed soul, blessed in its relations with God, and with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit, to become a worshipper. Not indeed at "this mountain," nor yet "at Jerusalem," for the whole order of material things was to give place to worship "in spirit and in truth." But the new kind of blessing put the renewed soul in such a position that it would hear the Father's Name; and learn the mode of the Father's grace, —God revealed now as Father, and seeking such to worship Him (ver. 23). The Holy Ghost leads to this worship, not according to the rubrics of man, nor even according to the ritual imposed so wisely and graciously in the Old Testament as typical of what was to come (but destined to disappear in Christ); but according to the holy liberty designed for all "true worshippers." It is a new kind in which the externals of religion are eclipsed and displaced by what is deeply inwrought by the Spirit, and is produced by the enjoyment and realisation of the truth (ver. 24). It puts
the worshipper, moreover, into present touch with the Christ of God as God's new Centre, through whom the whole of God's wondrous revelation of Himself is made, and in whom all the perplexities as well as the needs of the awakened soul are for ever resolved (vv. 25, 26. Compare 2 Chron. 9. 1–12).

All this, so feebly explained and so briefly summed up, the Holy Spirit is prepared to do with every Christian, and is given for that very purpose. Does it not strike the reader that somehow we miss, and have missed, much of the joy and power that the Holy Ghost would bring into our lives, if only we would make room for Him? Shall we make it a daily prayer that God may give us to be filled with the Spirit? It will be our privilege to examine later some of the details of His service, as well as to endeavour to detect some of the hindrances to His gracious work.

The Spreading Rivers.

Finally, in John 7: 37–39, the Lord makes a statement which seems designed to arrest people by its magnificence. The occasion of its utterance enhances its grandeur. It was not spoken at a time when everyone was reminded of conspicuous failure, or convinced of the weariness of a hollow show. It was the Feast of Tabernacles (vv. 2, 14), the period above all periods in the Jewish Calendar when the nation was called upon to rejoice. It was the great Harvest Thanksgiving, when every heart was supposed to be brimful of joy and of gratitude to the great Giver of earthly good. It was the time when the fruits of the land had been gathered in, and when all Israel dwelt at Jerusalem in booths, in the national confession of God's great favour to them; of the deliverance from Egypt effected for them; and of the bounties His hand had lavished on them in the Holy Land (Lev. 23. 33–43). It was earth's most favoured nation in earth's most favoured day; and the hour when, for once, had they but known Him, Jehovah Himself was there in their midst, healing, teaching, blessing. And more; where day succeeded day in accumulating joy, this was the last day, the great day of the feast. Where every day was great this was the greatest, when man might be presumed to have reached the acme of human happiness.

Was it possible that there, and at that time, one could have an unsatisfied heart, and long for a deeper communion than that best of festivals could afford?

The murmurs among the Jews, their marvel at the words of Jesus, their cavil over His works, their speculations as to who He was, the presence of officers from the Pharisees and chief priests sent to arrest Him, the strange and awful language used of the Lord as to His disappearance from their midst, and their hopeless search for Him subsequently when it would be impossible to find Him,—all of which are referred to in the chapter,—had made this mysterious Visitor the centre of the vast throng, the theme of every tongue. It was when thus in their midst that Jesus looked over the people whom the best of earthly blessings had left ignorant of the Blesser who was amongst them; and, knowing how unsatisfying it is to have the grandest religious celebration without a heart-knowledge of Himself, said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Oh, how many there are amid cathedral splendours and gorgeous religious festivals, weary and sick at heart, to whom one moment's contact with the Holy Son of God would mean ten thousand times more than all the song and vestments, the ornate building and the fragrant incense, and the crowd of so-called worshippers.

But Jesus offers the most wonderful thing to crown any and every personal blessing. We can truly say that in coming to Him our thirst is quenched, our personal need met. This He pledges indeed (ver. 37). But He does more. He propounds a fullness of blessing from Himself of such sort that, instead of depending upon plentiful harvests, and congenial circumstances, and wondrous
Abiding in Christ.

Abiding in Christ, what does it secure? Peace, perfect peace; rest, constant rest; answers to all our prayers; victory over all our foes; pure, holy living; ever-increasing fruitfulness. All, all these, are the glad outcome of abiding in Christ.

"The Lord is risen."

"Risen—that one word, if we hold it fast, changes all things, conquers death, dries tears, calms grief, widens our outlook, makes earth the nursery and heaven our home.

"As becometh Saints" (Eph. 5. 3).

"As becometh saints." Beautiful expression! It gives in one touch the deportment, behaviour, and rule of the Christian life, as something suited to the character of saints. It applies to everything we do and say in our home and conversation. All must be "as becometh saints."

How precious it is—even if we are not at the full height of our calling—to have an object set before our hearts, which delivers us from this world and from the influences which hide God from us.
Recovery of Zeal in the Lord’s Service.

From a Letter.

"I KNOW what you mean by 'passion for souls,' for it once flamed in my heart, and made me forgetful of myself, my comfort, and my worldly interests. It kept me on the streets often until midnight, speaking to any one who would listen to the story of redeeming love, made me spend my spare time telling that same story in the crowded markets, lodging-houses and slums of the towns, and out to the quiet villages in the country; then across the seas to the regions beyond. It affected my attitude towards every acquaintance, and, indeed, towards every person I met. I viewed them, not according to their worldly possessions, intellectual attainments, or social position, but as never-dying souls who might be won as priceless gems for the Saviour’s crown, and I felt that this was my supreme responsibility and business with regard to them,

"There may have been with all this zeal much of human enthusiasm, that is not to be regretted since it was placed at the disposal of our Lord and Master; but with advancing years has come a growing prudence, which, while it whispers 'Take courage,' loudly counsels 'Take care,' and I fear that this prudence has grown out of all proportion to the early zeal, so that instead of the zeal being rightly directed, and so concentrated and made more effective there has been a damping down of the fire which can neither be simulated nor worked up by human effort.

"The question is, how, when this zeal is lost, can it be recovered? and in what does it really consist when it is there so that it may be carefully cherished?"

While considering the questions of the recovery of lost zeal and of the prevailing powerlessness in service raised in the foregoing letter the following paper, "IM-POTENT FOLK," reached us from Dr. NORTHCOTE DECK in the far-away Solomon Island. It is so descriptive of present conditions amongst Christians, and searching to the conscience, that we gladly put it before our readers. We would remark that it is an application of that wonderful incident in John 5, and not the exact interpretation of it.

"Impotent folk . . . waiting" (John 5.3).

HERE are words underlined in many Bibles; may God underline them too in many hearts!

It was at BETHESDA. It must have been a motley gathering that thronged its famous pool. From East and West they came; from North and South; rich and poor, old and young, from all came some. There was indeed only one passport to the pool; that passport was their common need; it was their hope of healing from some malady, deformity, or weakness. Yet in the precincts of that porch we find, alas, a picture of many of Christ’s church today. For notice, each decrepit one who sheltered round the pool had life. The dead you must seek further. We too, who own Christ’s sway, have life. Once we were dead in sins, but now in Christ we have been "made alive." Here then we see a picture of the Christian; and though it is tragical, it is still true that in this portrait gallery of the pool, we shall see, only too surely, many a likeness to ourselves.

For read the pathetic list of such as sought the pool, and see how clearly we are included. In the multitude there were many:

(1) BLIND (ver. 3). We read of two whose eyes were "holden" for half an hour. Yet many, alas, have "holden
eyes” for half a lifetime. Many eyes, indeed, are only really opened at their exit from this world of opportunities for service. Such are born again, yet blind; blind to the spiritual world; all too unconscious of the Master’s call. They are living in the present and for the present; buying no gold tried in the fire; winning no souls; doing no service for the King of kings. “Blind” to their eternal interests.

(2) HALT, or LAME. How many Christians walk with a limp. They go through life with some obvious deformity of character that emasculates their witness, and makes their testimony of none effect. For how a limp betrays its presence! Indeed, nothing singles out a man when passing in a throng more quickly than his lameness; and the whole world has eyes to see! OH, THE LIMPING ARMY OF GOD THAT SHOULD BE LEAPING! Is there no limp in your life, no failing that spoils your service, that betrays your weakness, that causes constant defeat and disgrace, and shame upon the Master’s Name,

(3) WITHERED, dried up. Here too truly is familiar ground. How dry we get even in God’s service unless constantly and freshly anointed with the oil of the Holy Ghost; so dry that we often become veritable fossils, holding the truth, yet the truth not holding us, till we personify the dryness of a dead orthodoxy!

(4) IMPOTENT, not able. This is the most descriptive, the most pathetic of all. We run our schools, we teach our classes, we preach our sermons, we carry on our missions, we wear ourselves out with “much serving”; too often we accomplish—almost nothing. Can you not look back on such service for God, that, in spite of utmost endeavour, and greatest pains, and brightest hopes, has yet been almost fruitless? Yet He has ordained that we should bear “much fruit.” The secret is simple. We are like the savage who bends his bow, and with the same human energy that he bends his bow, just so far does the arrow fly, to fall far short of the mark. What quivers full of such arrows we have shot in God’s service. How zealous we have been, how hard we have toiled, how meagre has been the result! Because? Because we have been impotent, because we have not drawn upon the resources of God, but have gone forward in fleshly energy, which in the Spiritual realm is worse than useless.

Yet at Pentecost the Christian’s armament was changed, so to speak, from arrows to cartridges. On that day God placed the dynamic power of the Holy Ghost at the disposal of the simplest, most humble believer. Thus our only qualification needs to be, not “a strong right arm” to bend the bow of the flesh, not a dominating personality to impress the mind of man, while leaving his spirit untouched, but a sanctified finger to press the trigger of faith, and thus by a simple act of obedience to release fresh that power so blessedly manifested at Pentecost.

Now a “great multitude” was there. Many may have found consolation in the fact that others were worse than themselves. A man with a palsied hand might so look down upon another with a loathsome spare. How practised we get in thus excusing our failings, in finding motes in other eyes. How willing we are to apply to someone else the message that God has meant for us. Truly the cry of the sinking ship—“Every man for himself”—needs to be sounded to Christians. For our first business is to apply God’s message to our own hearts and consciences.

And that is just what the Saviour did here, for, leaving the multitude to fade into the background, He focuses all notice and attention upon one “certain man” (ver. 5). That certain man is not your neighbour but YOU. And now for a moment reckon that there are only two in the world, yourself and your Saviour. For such a “certain man” what was the Saviour’s chief concern?
Was it his malady, his suffering, the length of his illness? No, none of these. The one thing important was his WILLINGNESS TO BE WELL. "Wilt thou be made whole?" is the Saviour's surprising question. Such is still the one thing needful, often the one thing lacking. For many professing Christians to-day are like professional cripples, unwilling to be well. Yet before God will exercise His healing transforming power, there needs to be a waiting expectant attitude, a longing to be whole. All else is easy. For length of illness or of sin is no obstacle. For to Him to whom a thousand years is as one day, this man's thirty-eight years of sickness, his chronic condition, was no difficulty.

"When Jesus . . . knew that he had now been A LONG TIME in that case," can you hear Him saying sadly: "Ah, that is too long. It is too late. The disease is chronic, and can't be changed. It is your character. It is YOU." Ah, never the Son of Man spake like that! Such a belief is but the seduction of Satan, who while he accuses us to God, is bent on excusing us to ourselves. No. Thirty-eight years, or thirty-eight minutes is just the same to the Saviour. However long that kink in your character, that besetting sin, that powerless life has lasted, what seems inevitable to you is not impossible to God. Test this impregnable couplet, which applies to all things that are the will of God:

"All power is given unto Me."

"All things are possible to him that believeth."

Here is your assurance of present deliverance.

In such an incurable case what means could avail? This man was waiting for a stirring of the waters. That is a common practice with Christians to-day, to wait for a stirring up. Yet like the ripples in a pool, how quickly such an experience subsides. More is needed. This man got more. He got a personal interview with the Saviour. It changed his life and sent him on his way rejoicing.

To-day, in a sense, the Saviour has gone. Having finished His work, He has "sat down at the right hand of God." But He has sent Another. He has delegated the work to the Comforter. Thus, to-day, the contact with God must be made through the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to manifest and exalt the Saviour in our hearts. He is now the Executive of the Godhead. His personality looms so large in the counsels of the early church that the record of their doings has been truly called "The Acts of the Holy Ghost."

Yet the Holy Ghost has become largely ignored, unnoticed, and unknown to the church to-day. We have known OF Him, but we have not KNOWN Him. He abides for ever in the heart of every true believer. Too often His work of revealing the Saviour is hampered, for He is only on the threshold when He should be filling the life. He should be in the living room, to control all daily conduct; in the sleeping room, to purify the secret thoughts; in the prophet's chamber, to give point and power to our prayers. He should be consulted too in the counting house, that our testimony be not tarnished. He would share with each his daily toil and joy. And as tastes differ, even so, in us His temples, there will be many things we cling to which will grieve Him, and if we are to know the Lord's healing, brought to us by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, all such must go. The Lord must be supreme, and the Holy Ghost is in us to make Him so, then He can impart to us that power so essential for daily joy and victory and service. The Lord may be enthroned by a single definite act of submission and faith. Then, daily must the Holy Ghost, who has taken charge of us for Him, be recognized and obeyed.

Now take a last look at this man,
walking and leaping and praising God. (Those are not the words of the text, but they are true of every one thus freed and healed.) The man has now a trophy on his shoulder, his bed. The very emblem of his weakness has now become the clearest evidence of his abounding health THIS IS PROPHETIC. Even so, though it may mean time and repeated failures, the Holy Ghost can take the infirmity or sin which is overcoming you, and spoiling your testimony, to make it the most convincing proof of His power to heal and keep. It has been done for multitudes. It may be done for you. This man lamented that others had stepped down before him. Even so, while we hesitate and hold back many have stepped out in faith, have been filled with the Holy Ghost, and have gone on their way into God’s blessed service, rejoicing. WILT THOU TOO BE MADE WHOLE?

Zeal Recovered and Maintained.

“LOST zeal,” like first love left, can only be regained by repentance, and the “damping down” of its fire be removed by full confession to the Lord of the damping cause, together with the riddance of the “beds” or the “bushels” that have, alas, been allowed to obscure the light. This, though humbling and painful, can easily be done in the power of the Spirit of God, and the spiritual energy of “former days” be enjoyed in those of “old age.” “Paul the aged” was as zealous as Paul when bearing his wonderful testimony on Mars Hill at Athens, only his mode of exhibiting that zeal may have differed. So in Peter: “When thou shalt be old another shall gird thee.” When young “he went whither he would”; but, at times, wings have to be clipped, so that the flight of the dove may be controlled. Thus the fire is directed by the Master’s hand, and the passionate zeal of the servant receives the impress of His subduing and formative will. The zeal abides, but the method is modified. What more lovely than the thorough consecration of youth and manhood to the most strenuous, fearless, and outspoken witness to the gospel and the salvation of souls—by the help of God? or what more truly becoming, “when strength faileth,” and powers of mind, and voice, and feet decay, than the maintenace, though less publicly, of a genuine, hearty and unsimulated zeal in prayer for blessing, and in sympathy and fellowship with the glorious gospel, and with its beloved and honoured messengers, which is of equal importance to the heart of God as is the church itself to that of Christ? It is the enjoyment, all through life, of “the love of Christ” that enables us to retain and cherish zeal for His interests (2 Cor. 5. 14).

“The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5. 8).

A lamp in the night, a song in time of sorrow,
A great, glad hope which faith can ever borrow,
To gild the passing day with the glory of the morrow,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

A call of command, like trumpet clearly sounding
To make us bold when evil is surrounding,
To stir the sluggish heart and to keep in grace abounding,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.
The first essential for every true preacher of the gospel is absolute conviction. This was true of the prince of preachers—the Apostle Paul. In his second letter to the saints of Corinth (Chaps. 4-5.13.) he cites Psalm 114.10: "I believed and therefore have I spoken"; and immediately adds, "We also believe, and therefore speak." In chapter 5, we see how this affected his preachings. Verse 11, "KNOWING therefore the terror of the Lord, we PERSUADE men." Verse 14, "The love of Christ CONSTRAINETH us." The result of being impelled by "the terror of the Lord" on the one hand, and constrained by "the love of Christ" on the other hand is seen in the touching words of verse 20:

"Now then we are AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, as though GOD DID BESEECH YOU by us: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD be ye reconciled to God."

There is in this undoubtedly more than "a simple and clear statement of the gospel," there is a consuming desire for the souls of men; and this is a sine qua non for every soul-winner. We have only to refer to the Acts of the Apostles—the preacher's handbook—to see how this marked the great Apostle. Look at Acts 14.1. Paul and Barnabas visited Iconium, and went into the synagogue of the Jews. Be it observed in passing, they went, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, wherever they could get souls—and they "SO SPAKE that A GREAT MULTITUDE both of the Jews and also of the Greeks BELIEVED." In Acts 26. we find that when Paul stood before Agrippa and that august assembly, he "stretched forth the hand" (ver. 1); he "so spake" that Festus exclaimed, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (ver. 24). And as Agrippa said—whether ironically or seriously—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (ver. 28), we can imagine the impassioned tones in which Paul replied: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (ver. 29). His was evidently no mere academic treatise given out in a take-it-or-want-it style. Even when he reasoned with an individual, he did it in such a way that that individual trembled (Acts 24.25).

Is it possible to speak of the great, grand, and solemn verities without being moved to the very depths of our being? If we are not moved can we expect our hearers to be moved? Was it not the sight of the tears that streamed down Whitfield's face that caused tears to flow down the coal-begrimed faces of his hearers? The Preacher's work is to win souls for Christ. For this there must be agony when pleading with God for men, and burning zeal when pleading with men for God. Shall we ask God for a fresh vision of Calvary? That in the light of it we may learn His estimate of the value of a soul; we may get a fresh sense of His incomparable love, an increased appreciation of the preciousness of Christ, and the infinite value of His work; and that, filled with the Holy Spirit; everything else being "obscured from our vision," we may so speak that great multitudes may believe.

It is one of the deceits of the heart, that when we really know God's will quite well, we go to ask advice of one no more spiritual than ourselves.

If we stop at the result we are at a distance from the source.
of the woman, is at once promised; and that, not to a state of innocence as before, but to holiness, in a paradise no longer upon earth, but above,—"the paradise of God." Also to the nation of Israel, when it failed as to the purpose for which God took it up, promise was given through the seed of David, our blessed Lord and Saviour after the flesh, of recovery to glory and blessing beyond anything they have yet known. Having said these few words as to the main facts of recovery, we may pass on to the more particular.

Recovery Illustrated.

The outstanding illustration in the Old Testament is Hezekiah. The Spirit significantly presents this thrice—in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah. A miraculous sign was also given in connection with Hezekiah’s recovery, on the sundial of Ahaz (Isa. 38. 8, 22). He was recovered to rejoice in and to praise the Lord. "He had been sick, and was recovered (khaw-yaw) of his sickness"; and he said, "The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." It was a blessed instance of recovery to the Lord, to rejoice in Him. In the ways of God—with Israel particularly this vividly painted picture is presented to us by the Spirit, to depict those ways illustratively for our encouragement and edification—"written for our learning." It is framed in the central division of Isaiah, as an historical section, between the public and the moral divisions of that threefold book.

The understanding of this illustration is a rebuke to unbelief, and to the lips that say, "There is no hope of recovery." Such words, though the users themselves may not mean it, limit the blessed God. The miraculous sign, and the recovery of Hezekiah, picture for us that which God does through Christ, through His death and resurrection, so that we may rejoice in Him. What can He not do for our blessing and for His.
own glory? He has already raised our Lord, Leader and Head from among the dead! Are the saints of God to lie down and repine in an unhealthy state of soul sickness? or are they, in spite of the breakdown in the assemblies, to heed the word, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice"? He is the Head of the assembly. Our eyes are to be directed to Him, and the Spirit is here to do this for us. He is our hope, and not one good thing promised in connection with Him shall fail. All is Yea and Amen in Him.

We have said that Hezekiah was recovered to rejoice in the Lord. Ahaz, his father, had not done that which was right in the sight of the Lord; but Hezekiah did not therefore say, Israel has failed and all hope is over! He looked first to himself, and "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chron. 29. 2); going back, not to such bright examples as Joash and others, but to the beginning, to David, "according to all that David his father had done." We are not left in doubt as to where the beginning is to be found for the saints of God to-day.

We are told in Colossians 1. 18, "He is the Head of the body, the assembly: who is THE BEGINNING, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." The beginning for us is Christ, the Son of the Father's love, risen from the dead.

Then Hezekiah opened the doors of the house of the Lord (ver. 3), which his father had shut (28. 24); and, mark, he did this in view of "all Israel" (24), although he was king of but two tribes. God's original thought filled his heart and mind. "Love to all the saints" necessarily fills the hearts of those who know the love of Christ, for He loves all the members of the body of which He is the risen and glorified Head. What sanctification and cleansing followed Hezekiah's action! and how rich was the offering made to the Lord! Seven bullocks, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he-goats for a sin offering; all speaking of the perfection of Christ in His work of putting away sin. This lies at the foundation of all true recovery, and must be entered into experimentally. Reconciliation and atonement were made for all His own in the blood of that offering. We read, "They made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel; for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel." The Lord and all His people were in view. Notice the wealthy burnt offering that went up wholly as a sweet smelling savour to the Lord. Seventy bullocks, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs (32)! "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, King of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped." We are also moved to worship to-day, as we see CHRIST, WHO IN HIS GREAT LOVE GAVE "HIMSELF FOR US AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR A SWEET-SMELLING SAVOUR " (Eph. 5. 2).

Difficulties Overcome.

Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people. Then he sent letters to "all Israel," that they should come to the place of Jehovah's Name, to Jerusalem, to "keep the passover to the Lord God of Israel." Mark again: "to the Lord," not simply to have a good feast for themselves! Some scorned the letter-bearers and laughed (30. 10); needless to say, they missed the revival; but others responded. "Let Hezekiah look after the few in Judah," the mockers might say, "we belong to the ten tribes." Others, however, recognized that the House of God—the place of Jehovah's name and presence—was at Jerusalem, and they went up out of the ten tribes. The Levites outvied the priests in sanctifying themselves. Humbling and confession marked the people gathered before the Lord. Some, though their hearts were right, were not
"cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary" (19): "yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written." This was a serious matter; "but Hezekiah"—like the Lord who intercedes for His own to-day at God's right hand—"prayed for them." And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah (20). Is it any wonder that we read, "So there was great joy in Jerusalem" (28)?

God gave them one heart, and difficulties were surmounted. The recovery was very bright and blessed. It was to the Lord, as we said, not the recovery of the nation of Israel, that is still to come when Christ returns; but we are told, "Since the time of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem." A later revival under Josiah went even beyond this, notwithstanding that the reign of wicked Manasseh intervened, for "there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet" (35. 18). Hezekiah's revival was blessed; Josiah's was more blessed; but the most blessed is yet to come: when our Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's true King, shall return to them, and when they shall return to Him. Like Thomas, they will worship, saying, Our Lord and our God. Their restoration will be like life from the dead. He will be as the dew to Israel, and they shall be like the lily; their roots shall spread like the cedar's, while the branches of Israel's tree shall be beautiful—the children shall rest beneath its shadow; and with the corn, and the oil, and the wine, they shall be filled abundantly with the blessing of the Lord. He shall be their delight, and they shall bless His holy Name. He will rejoice over them with singing; and they shall rejoice in Him, and worship with gladness of heart. So far will this recovery surpass all others, that we read, they shall be "a name and a praise among all the people of the earth" (Zeph. 3. 20).

Now what are we taught by all this which is recorded for our learning? Surely, first that there is such a thing as recovery, and that God Himself is the great Recoverer: also, that though the greatest is still in the future, yet, like Hezekiah, we may first do the right thing ourselves before the Lord, and then act in the sense of God's grace for the blessing of "all" His own. As we have seen, the Lord and all Israel were before Hezekiah when he opened the closed doors of the house of God. The assembly is the house of God to-day, not a building of cold stones. Difficulties arose in Hezekiah's time, and so they have ever since; but their hearts were right Godward, and in answer to prayer, healing was granted by the Lord; faith triumphed, and the sound of their joy, of their blessing, and of the voice of their prayer, reached up to heaven. Entering into the divine favour into which we are taken in Christ to-day, our hearts also may well exclaim: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens; in Christ; according as He has chosen us in Him, before He even chose Israel—before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless BEFORE HIM in love.

"Return unto ME," He said over and over again to Israel. He remembered them, the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals, when they went after Him (Jer. 2. 2); and when they were far from Him, He chastened them in His faithfulness to bring them back. "Yet," five times He says in one chapter, "have ye not returned unto ME" (see Amos 4. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11). All was in view of that, as He reiterated again and again. "Seek ye ME, and ye shall live," said the Lord; "but seek not Bethel" (the house of God); seek HIM who made the seven stars and Orion, the Lord is His Name (5. 5–8). In our Lord Jesus Christ He is now made known to us. He is fully revealed now; as He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and in Him, raised from among the dead, we have redemption through His
blood, and are brought to God in the One who makes Him known. It is therefore our privilege to rejoice in Him. Well may we worship and adore.

The Shining Path.

The path of the just shineth more and more to the perfect day. The apostasy of Christendom cannot alter that. Clearer and clearer, brighter and brighter, as the darkness is passing, shineth that blessed path till the full perfection of the day of glory breaks. The downward way of evil men and seducers may become blacker and blacker; the upward path of the just is shining more and more. And hark! when the night is darkest about the world around—Jesus speaks! What does He say to His assembly, the bride? He speaks of that which is dearer than all else to her heart—dearer than herself. Of Himself He speaks! for He knows she loves Him, and like music divine in the stillness of night the sweetest of strains reach her ears and her heart: "I JESUS, . . . the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star." At once she responds, in harmony with the Spirit who is here to glorify the blessed Son of God. "Come," say the Spirit and the bride in response to the presentation of the Bridegroom. With deep Spirit-begotten desire she calls for Him to come.

What a blessed result from the work of the Spirit of God throughout the long centuries since Pentecost, and that after He has been grieved so much. Now He has the heart of the assembly for the Lord. She is recovered to Him. He is all in all to her. And is not this last view of the assembly in the Bible disclosed for the encouragement of those who know the precious love of Christ? Most surely! And is not God by His Spirit recovering us to the Lord Himself to-day, so that, filled with His love and glory, our hearts may be set a-longing to see Him; and as we await the rapturous moment of His coming, we may be assembling together before Him even now, to worship in spirit and in truth; and that the melody of our praise, the glad notes of the true worshippers, may be welcomed, along with our rejoicings in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus before our God and Father?

"While we wait the Bridegroom’s coming, 
We would joy before Thy face, 
Bless Thee for Thy rich redeeming, 
Sing the glory of Thy grace."

“My Father’s House” (John 14.).

Oh, whither doth life’s tangled pathway tend?
What peace awaits us at our journey’s end,
Dear Saviour, who for us Thy blood didst spend?

“My Father’s House.”

Thy Father’s House! No strange and foreign land;
No wonderful new world, too coldly grand;
But home—a Father’s outstretched welcoming hand;
Our Father’s House.

“WHEREFORE GLORIFY YE THE LORD IN THE FIRES.”
Recovery not Reconstruction.

SOME cannot understand the difference between RECONSTRUCTION and RECOVERY in regard to the truth of the Assembly, but these two things have nothing in common.

Reconstruction is the putting together of material that has fallen to pieces. Recovery comes from the revival of the powers of life within the members of the body.

Reconstruction may be accomplished by the ability of men. Recovery can only be by the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Reconstruction must result in worse ruin, for all man's work must perish with him.

Recovery means a revival in the truth and in the knowledge of the God whose faithfulness brings it about.

Reconstruction occupies the mind with the material apparently available.

Recovery comes from turning the eye away from the failure and from men, whether promising or otherwise, to Christ in whom dwells all the fullness of God for us.

Reconstruction must be lifeless and formal and powerless against external attacks and inward decay.

Recovery is vital; it breaks through hostile surroundings and will show its power in those blessed traits of divine life, zeal and wisdom, fervour and forbearance, deep-toned joy in the Lord and sorrow that He is so slighted and belied, and a tender interest in every fellow-member of the body of Christ.

We do not intend to labour for the correct expression in words as to what is before us. What we desire for ourselves and for all is to have the experience of it, and then we know it will find its own expression for the glory of God.

There are some who strongly hold that God never restores a testimony that has failed; we confess that we do not know what they mean, but of this we are persuaded, for we see it everywhere in the Word that God in His dealings with His people constantly labours to recover them to THE TESTIMONY THAT HE HAS GIVEN OF HIMSELF. If He did otherwise He would not be faithful to Himself and His purposes. Take the revival in Hezekiah's day, God then recovered His people to the testimony that He had given of Himself in the passover, which was that of their Redeemer who brought them out of bondage. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of King Solomon the son of David King of Israel was not the like in Jerusalem." Then in the power of that blessed recovery they dealt with the idols within and turned to God in confidence in regard to the foes without. Again, in the days of Nehemiah, God recovered His people to the testimony He had given to Himself as the One who would infallibly fulfil all His promises to bring them into blessing, so that they kept the Feast of Tabernacles, and that in such a way as had not been done "since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. . . . And there was very great gladness." These two revivals of the past dispensation clearly prove that God does not abandon His testimony, even though His people fail in their response to it, and that He is always ready to bring them into the brightest enjoyment of it WHEN THEY TURN TO HIM AGAIN.

When we come to the New Testament the same encouraging thought is impressed upon us, were it not so we could only despair. We find comfort in the Lord's call to Ephesus to repent, for we believe and are sure that He would not have so called them if there had not been grace with Him to restore them to their brightest day when they did so. Moreover, in the fact that the Bride says "Come" to the Lord Jesus, in unison with the Spirit we read the hope of recovery to first love, not certainly
of the whole church, but, at least, of those who feel how great has been the departure from Him. Yet this response of love is put down to the bride; those who make it will not separate themselves in their thoughts from the church, which is the bride.

The truth as to the assembly, which is the body of Christ, is woven into the whole texture of Paul’s epistles, but it is in his first letter to the Corinthian believers that we find it set forth in the simplest way. And many on reading this Epistle are amazed at the awful and universal departure in Christendom from the truth there so clearly stated. Naturally the first impulse of the zealous soul is to put things right, and herein lies the danger of attempts at reconstruction instead of seeking recovery. For instance, chapter 12. shows us that the body is one, but there is not a town in Christendom in which this oneness is not denied in practice. This ought not to be, but how can it be changed? Would it solve the problem if all Christians agreed to come together and find some way of compromise, as an Irish convention seeking to frame a constitution under which all could live happily and as one? No, that would be reconstruction, and could only end in disappointment and fresh disaster. It would be an endeavour to attain what is right in a wrong and human way. It would be occupation with the circumference without reference to the Centre, and if anything were accomplished it would only foster self-complacency instead of self-judgment. We must come at chapter 12. through chapter 1., and only thus can we be recovered to the truth.

It is a common thing to talk of the truth being recovered for us. We object to this expression, as it appears to us to be most misleading. The truth has always been what it was, and where it was, in Christ the living Head in heaven, and in the Holy Spirit indwelling believers on earth, and plainly set out in terms for our faith to act upon in the Word. But believers have departed from the truth, they have substituted other things for it, and it is they who need to be recovered to it. Recovery to the truth does not consist in the adoption of correct ecclesiastical forms and practices, this we might have—and it be only a name to live and yet dead, for the flesh can take up these things and make them the rigid rules of a sect. Recovery consists in the revival of divine life and health in the members of Christ’s body which will make them rally afresh to the uplifted standard, the testimony of the Lord, and expresses itself in whole-hearted fidelity to Him, and in love to one another, and it will reach out in spite of barriers to which the divine sanction is not given in order to help other members of the body. For each member has been made necessary to every other member “that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.” If we have lost the sense of this great truth as the Corinthians had in their carnal zeal for their sects and parties and circles we must come to the recovery of it through chapter 1. of the Epistle, and then step by step through all the chapters that tie between 1. and 12.

Chapter 1. tells us that “GOD IS FAITHFUL.” And here lies the basis of all recovery. Were it not for this the failure to respond to the testimony of God on the part of those whom He has called would fill us with despair, but in this we have hope, and in this we can rest. But the blessedness of this great and absolute statement will only be realized by those who have been led to face the failure, whose hearts have been sorely burdened because of it, and who have come to their wits’ end in regard to it. It is then that we are face to face with God, and then we learn that God is faithful, and that everything depends upon that.

We learn as we dwell upon the faithfulness of God that He will never abandon His own thoughts in respect to His saints, and that He has found a way by which He can bring those thoughts to pass, and that if we desire to be
experimentally and practically accor-
ding to His thoughts for us He is able to
make us so. We learn also that if we
have been false to His call, and have
grown indifferent to His thoughts about
us, that He abides faithful and recalls
the heart and recovers the soul-sick-
ness and restores us to His way. That
may not all be done in a moment, for
God’s way is to produce heart searchings
and self-judgment, but there is no
experience that gives the failing, weak
saint such confidence in the faithfulness
and grace of God as that of being led
into a true judgment of self in the
presence of God. Here the soul reaches
its Peniel, and can say, “I have seen
God face to face, and my life is pre-
served” (Gen. 32, 30). No failure after
such an experience can utterly daunt
the one who has passed through it, for
the lesson has been learnt that the faith-
fulness of God is greater than the failure
of man, and that He holds the truth
in His own divine power, and then we
are contented to simply obey His Word.

Space and time prevent us from con-
tinuing this subject in this issue, but we
hope to return to it. Meanwhile we
desire to emphasize what we have
already stated, that the basis of all
recovery lies in the faithfulness of God,
and it cannot be brought about except
as we have to do with Him in true self-
judgment.

“**He hath done all things well.**”

**"H** E hath done all things well”—oh let Him pour
His consolations in and weep no more:
Though wave on wave of sorrow o’er thee roll,
The water floods are under His control.

**“He hath done all things well”—oh may this word**
Within thy heart’s recesses now be heard.
The Lord who gave, and only He alone
Hath undisputed right to claim His own.

**“He hath done all things well”—His skilful hand**
Makes no mistakes—He well doth understand.
Thy sorrow He hath measured—and His care—
Is not to give thee more than thou canst bear.

**“He hath done all things well”—and all is right,**
The path of faith is not the path of sight.
In quietness and confidence then rest
Upon His perfect love—He knoweth best.

**“He hath done all things well”—oh mayst thou see**
The tender love that placeth all for thee.
He wounds and heals, He gives and takes away
To fill thy heart with joys that ne’er decay.

**“He hath done all things well”—There mayst thou rest**
And own that all He doth must be best.
The Lord thy blessing only has in store,
Then cling to Him and all His ways adore,
Restoring in Meekness.

In writing to the Galatian believers, the Apostle emphasizes the cardinal qualification of one who would be used in restoring a Christian who has fallen. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted (tested)" (Gal. 6. 1).

The Greek word translated "restore" has a peculiar force and is nowhere else in Scripture translated in the same way. It is used by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 1. 10 and is there rendered "perfectly joined together." He exhorted the Corinthians to be perfectly joined together in the same mind. The word literally means "to set a fracture in a bone."

No better example of reunion can be found, because the bone becomes thicker and stronger at the point which has been fractured and set, so God’s purpose in permitting a Christian to be overtaken in a fault is that he may learn not to trust in his own sufficiency: after learning his lesson he may be restored to the whole-hearted fellowship of the saints, and, moreover, that all may profit by his experience, being better knit together than before the incident.

But the Apostle points out that the restoration process may be furthered by those with the qualifications of spirituality and meekness. It should be observed that intelligence (as commonly understood) finds no place. A man may be able to quote scripture very fluently and yet be quite unfitted to repair a breach.

The priest and the Levite in the parables of Luke 20. were doubtless well instructed in the letter of the Holy Scripture, but they could not help the poor man who was half-dead on the downward road to Jericho. The good Samaritan (the spiritual man) met his needs and poured into his wounds the healing oil and wine.

So nowadays it is the minister of the spirit, rather than the letter of the new covenant, who is able to succour wounded souls, bringing reinvigoration of spirit and joy to meet the need. At the same time it must not be inferred that God sets a premium on ignorance. We shall not be divinely instructed apart from a proper apprehension of the Scriptures, but we should not rest content with mere verbal expression.

That comparatively few Christians who fall are restored is largely due to the self-righteousness of those who come in contact with them. The atmosphere of restoration is the spirit of meekness.

In the parable of Luke 15. the Father, although he might well have done so, did not stand upright when the repentant son dropped at his feet. He fell on his neck and covered him with kisses: he who was altogether right went down with him who was altogether wrong. What infinite love in meekness!

"Joy Cometh in the Morning."

The Master’s hand
Must sometimes touch life’s saddest chords to reach
Its sweetest music, and His child to teach
To trust His love, till the long, weeping night
Is all forgotten in the morning light.
Trust—trust Him, then, and thus shall good or ill
Your trustful soul with present blessing fill.
Each loss is truest gain if, day by day,
He fills the place of all He takes away!
A Lesson from the Laboratory.

It was my privilege a short time ago to visit the United States Government laboratory at Richmond, Virginia. The microscopist there very kindly explained to me the operation of his magnifying instruments and the method followed in the detection of disease and other germs. Two things I learned there which struck me very forcibly.

One was that for the more ready detection of the sought-for germs it was the practice to immerse the infected enclosing substance in a coloured fluid called a "stain," usually blue or a bluish purple. This brings the microbe out into relief at once, as I myself was permitted to see. I first looked through the instrument on to the glass slide containing the cultures without the colouring matter and could see nothing but what appeared to be a few scattered indistinct dust spots. My instructor then applied a drop of dilute methylene blue to the substance under examination, after which I could distinctly make out the germs and their varying forms and styles and degrees of development.

And here the natural will illustrate the spiritual; for in our examination of the things contained in Scripture, do we not require something beside our natural powers to detect or see clearly that which God has placed there for our admiration and wonder and profit and praise? It is true that thoughtful men without this outside help may, and often do, see beauties and excellencies in that book commonly called the Bible, just as without the addition of the colouring tincture the minute forms of life under the cover glass of the slide could be discerned; but they are seen only in a haze, they appear more as a blur than as distinct and different shapes, each in its own peculiar form and degree of incubation. Men without the aid of the heavenly illuminant, the life from above, new birth, have seen and do see something of the wonders of revelation, its absolutely accurate history, its unerring prophecies, its profound philosophy, its matchless poetry, its purest morals, its lucid description, its charmingly simple narrative, its faithful, unadorned biography, the precision of its science, the unanswerableness of its arguments; all this men see and acknowledge without any assistance whatever apart from their natural perceptions, inherent or acquired.

But how different the glories of Scripture appear when united with faith in them that hear or see them. What a difference it makes when these things are viewed through the medium of a heaven-born faith, given us expressly at new birth, for then have we a nature that responds to the things of the Spirit revealed to us in the Book of God.

I remember well when I was first converted, the time I received this new life from God; I had a holiday soon after that blessed event (it was the 4th of July, I believe), and I spent the afternoon reading the Book of Acts. Oh, how charmed I was with what I discovered there! I had always kept the New Testament in my trunk before but could never become interested in it. How different it all was now; I no longer saw "men as trees walking," the blur and confusion and haze were gone, yes, gone for ever, and like another of old, "I rejoiced at God's word as one that findeth great spoil." It was like the blue illuminant, the hue of heaven, applied to the living organisms on the microscopic slide; heaven's light illumined the page of inspiration and I "saw all things clearly."

Another thing interested me greatly in connection with the working of the microscope; it was the use made of oil in the examination of minute microscopic bodies. The investigator, I noticed, placed a drop of oil of cedar on the slide in the line of vision between the matter under observation and the
lower lens of the instrument (called the "objective"). He explained to me the reason for this; it is that the atmosphere tends always to refract to a greater or less degree, which the oil used does not; so placing a drop of oil on the slide he screwed his instrument downwards until it came in contact with the superimposed oil, thus forcing out the air, leaving nothing but the nonrefractive oil between the investigator's eye and the bacterial culture.

And besides the new life from above, how necessary to the study and proper understanding of the Scriptures is the Holy Spirit of whom the oil is in the Bible everywhere the standing type. Not only is the Spirit the author of all Scripture, He is likewise its only infallible interpreter (see 1 Cor. 2. 9–12). "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And the believer has received this Spirit that he might know the things that are freely given to him of God.

Forgiveness.

What is the difference between forgiveness in 1 John 2. 12 and 1 John 1. 9?

In 1 John 2. 12 forgiveness is in connection with the standing of the Christian before God. He is at all times a forgiven person, the blood on the mercy seat is the abiding witness of this, therefore he cannot be charged with sins committed for the blood has put them away. Besides the One who shed that blood is there, and in His acceptance the believer is accepted, his sins are forgiven for His Name's sake. But while grace has given a standing that is perfect and unalterable, the believer is still in the body, under the government of God, which requires practical holiness. If in this connection the believer should say he had no sin, he would deceive himself and prove that God's word was not in him.

On the other hand the consciousness of the fact that he has been forgiven, instead of making him careless or indifferent to sin, only leads him to judge the inconsistencies of his conduct in the light of the grace that has been shown him. Liability to sin is part of our bodily condition, we may, alas, do so, and in view of this, how utterly vain it is of men to think that they can by a superior intellect, higher education and culture understand God's Book, or are capable of analysing its contents or sit in judgment on its statements or pronounce as to its credibility. No; without this medium of the Holy Spirit man is sure to err and get astray in all his laboured investigations of Holy Writ; the oil is necessary if the things therein contained are to be accurately visualized.

And, fellow-believer, how careful we should be not to grieve this Spirit, whose office it is to take of the precious things of Christ as revealed in Scripture and show them unto us. He is the Holy Spirit, and trifling conduct, a besmirched conscience, a careless walk, such things as these will grieve Him. Let us walk in His fellowship then, and we will thus be in no danger of being "led away with the error of the wicked" now so common everywhere. Amen.

But God is not indifferent to sin in His children, and the standard of His government is that they should be holy as He is holy. The result therefore of the advocacy of Christ is that the believer is brought to confess and judge his sin, and is forgiven that which otherwise would have brought him under the chastening hand of God. For if we judge ourselves we are not judged (1 Corinthians 11. 37, 32). How gracious is this provision, in order that our souls may be restored to communion in the light of God's holy presence, and that practical holiness, according to the place of acceptance which grace has given us in Christ, may be increased in our daily life and conversation.
CHRIST EXALTED IN THE HEAVENS PREPARES A PLACE FOR THE CHURCH, AND CAN FULFIL THE PROMISES MADE TO ISRAEL—MEANWHILE THE CHURCH IS CALLED.

The resurrection of the Saviour had the double result of accomplishing the redemption of the church, and of putting Christ in a place where He could secure the sure mercies of David (Acts 13. 34), that is to say, confirm in His own name all the promises made to Israel. Moreover, it was needful also that He should take possession of the heavenly places, in order to establish the kingdom of heaven and to fill all things (Eph. 4. 10) (compare with John 20. 17); as well as to associate the church with that glory—new, and yet eternal—prepared before the foundation of the world, and yet hidden from the former ages, but the manifestation of which had been determined according to the wisdom of God by the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people.

We must here distinguish two things: Christ preparing a place, a heavenly habitation, and Christ gathering from among all nations those who are to be His joint-heirs, calling the bride who is to enter into possession with Himself.

Thus, in John 14. 2, 3 the Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In John 17. 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

In Romans 8. 29 it is written: "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

AT HIS COMING, HE RECEIVES THE INHERITANCE WITH THE RISEN CHURCH.

In Colossians 1. 18, Christ is called "the head of the body, the church... the firstborn from the dead."

But in what manner do these things take place?—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." These words are found in 1 Corinthians 15., where we find the subject of the resurrection exclusively treated. Thus again it is also written in Romans 8. 30, and that in reference not to sanctification, but to glory: "Whom he justified, them he also glorified"; without any mention of sanctification.

Philippians 3. 21: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

The time when these things will be accomplished is clearly taught in Scripture. Christ is now hid in God, and our life is hid with Him there (Col. 3. 3). The present time is that during which are gathered, by the Holy Ghost, the members of His body, His joint-heirs, while He is seated at the right hand of Jehovah, until His enemies are made His footstool. "This man," says the Apostle, "after He had by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified," "sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Heb. 10. 12–14). He has accomplished all that was to be done for the redemption of us, His friends; and while He is still gathering His own by the power of the Holy Ghost whom He has sent, and who reveals Him, and the Father through Him, He is seated, in the expectation of the possession—and not in the effective possession—of the earth, of creation; until the number of the joint-heirs is
completed. He is sitting on the Father's throne, and it is there that the church knows Him at the present time.

But while He is waiting, we wait also; and even as regards the whole creation, it waits also: it waits for the manifestation of the children of God. As for the time and manner of that manifestation, the Scriptures are clear.

Since we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, it is evident that it must be by resurrection and by glorification; for He is risen and glorified. Therefore it is said that the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the children of God; and the Apostle adds, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8. 19, 23). Again, it is written, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4). "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is" (1 John 3. 2).

THE SAINTS JUDGE THE WORLD.

We have already seen that the Lord says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 3); and this is what will take place, either by resurrection, or by being changed; for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51). This is the entrance of the church into glory, as we are taught in detail by 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17: "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."

One may read in Revelation 19. the description of this scene—the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the subsequent judgment of the earth, or at least of the heads of the antichristian revolt. This judgment is again described in more general terms in Jude 14. 15: "Behold; the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment," etc., and in Zechariah 14. 5, it is said, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

How blessed the time when Christ shall have presented the church to Himself, as a glorious spouse, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" (Eph. 5. 27). Clothed with the beauty and glory which belong to her, seeing in her Lord the beauty and glory of the Father, she is, moreover, associated with the glory of her Bridegroom in the power of that love wherewith He loved her, and in which He gave Himself for her, that she might be perfectly cleansed and made glorious with Him, even where He is; then manifested in glory, surrounded with honours such as He receives Himself; made partaker of all His glory, of that glory which the Father gave Him, that the world might know that the Father has loved her, as He has loved Him. Associated with the Lord of glory, the saints will judge angels and the world; they will be the servants and instruments who will dispense the light and the blessings of His kingdom over an earth delivered of all its sorrows, and where Satan is no longer. "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2. 5). "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age] to come, "and the resurrection from the dead," can die no more (Luke 20. 35, 36). "On such the second death hath no power," but they live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20. 6). Happy those believers!