EDITORIAL

THIS is the tenth volume of "Scripture Truth."

We could not have continued thus far but for the gracious help of the Lord, given, we believe, in response to much prayer on the part of our friends and brethren. All the failure and feebleness that has marked the effort has been ours; all the truth ministered, the comfort, edification and blessing given has come from the Lord.

In the second place we acknowledge with gratitude the free, ungrudging and invaluable cooperation of our beloved "fellow-helper to the truth" (3 John 8), and "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God" (Col. 4. II). Many of those who were foremost to help at the Magazine's inception are with the Lord, and rest from their labours; but for the encouragement of those who are still active here below, we wish to say that we continually receive from all parts of the world letters of thankfulness for help and comfort received through our pages. It is an immense privilege to have any part in the blessing and edification of Christ's church on earth, so dearly loved by Him. May this be still our only motive in continuing these labours.

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"The Floods have lifted up their Waves."

THE floods of evil are threatening to break through and pour over all the bounds that have hitherto held them in check. Autocracy, anarchy and other phases of the awful will of man, defiant of the will of God, seem bent upon destroying every institution that has been laboriously raised for the safety of mankind, and are combining their evil influences to make it impossible for us ever again to lead quiet and peaceable lives. And behind the godless will of man are the powers of darkness in whose malign intentions there is no admixture of pity or mercy. It is no wonder that in this darkest hour of history men in every land should be apprehensive of the future, and that leaders find it necessary to constantly brace up the endurance of the people. If the Christians are to be fearless in the storm and outride it for the glory of God they need something more than the hope that springs eternal in the human breast, or that human fortitude, splendid as it is, that can grit the teeth when disaster comes. They must have a strong cable and a sure anchor firmly holding to something outside of them that will keep their souls while the billows roll, and these they have in the knowledge of God.

In our first words of this New Year’s ministry we want to turn our readers to God and to strengthen their confidence in Him. We cannot make light of the surging evil, but "GOD IS," and if this great fact is a fact in the consciousness of our faith we shall realize that He is greater than the greatest evil that can lift up its tempestuous waves. God cannot be baffled by any evil, and no device of darkness can thwart His plans, AND HE IS OUR GOD.

"I believe God," said the great Apostle in a great storm, and his faith made him supremely quiet and lifted him sublimely above the circumstances of the hour; and though the Euroclydon still roared in its desolating fury, he raised his voice above it and cried to his sorely troubled and fearful fellow-sufferers, "Be of good cheer." And again with added emphasis, and giving also the basis of his own magnificent confidence, "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Such faith as this that made Paul the master of his circumstances we need now, faith in the living God. Let us reinforce what little we have not by recalling our feeble experience of His power in the past but by turning afresh and prayerfully to see how He has revealed Himself to us in His Word.

What saith the Word? "O Lord of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? THOU RULEST THE RAGING OF THE SEA: when the waves arise Thou stillest them" (Ps. 89. 8, 9). "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their waves. THE LORD ON HIGH IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, YEA, THAN THE MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA. Thy testimonies are very sure" (Ps. 93. 3). And when we are conscious of God’s eternal supremacy we can "give unto the Lord the glory due to His name[and] worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. . . THE LORD SITTHETH UPON THE FLOOD; yea, the Lord
sitteth King for ever. The Lord will
give strength unto His people; and the
Lord will bless His people with peace" (Ps. 29.). Yes, He can give strength for
the trial and peace in the storm. Does it not produce quietness of
spirit to know that God is above all, that He has fixed the limit to all this confu-
sion, that He has set bars and doors, and has put His bridle upon the jaws of the threatening seas, and has said, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" He will make the wrath of men to praise Him and the rest He will restrain. We may be always confident, then, that whether He commands the floods to cease their raging or allows them still to surge about us, "all things will work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28), and we may still be "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8. 38, 39).

Held up on the Waves.
The condition of things affects all more or less in a general way, and thence all need the knowledge that the Lord is above the water floods if they are to keep from anxiety and fear. But there are many who seem to have been the special objects of the fury of the storm; it has shattered their brightest earthly hopes, for it has swept from them those who were more precious to them than life itself. The waters have entered their souls, they are sorely bruised, and most pitifully poor, also, if they cannot find some compensation, some true, definite and constant support. Great is the confidence that the knowledge of God's supremacy and goodness give, but more is needed by these, and God knows it and has given them more.

Let us recall a wonderful story told in the Gospels. It was night and the disciples of our Lord were afloat upon the Sea of Galilee. He had remained upon the quiet mountain-side in prayer to His Father, but He looked through the darkness and beheld them toiling uselessly, for the waves rolled high. His heart was moved with compassion as He saw how the storm baffled them, and from His peaceful retreat He stepped out upon the sea to go to them. His appearance, as He strode from wave to wave, affrighted them, but His voice quickly calmed them. How sweet must have been the peace that filled them when they heard Him say, "BE OF GOOD CHEER; IT IS I; BE NOT AFRAID!" Aye, it is good to hear the voice of the Lord above the night-storms and to know in days of stress that He is nigh.

But Peter, impulsive and full of admiration for his Master, and ready to dare much to be near Him, left the boat to join Him where He walked. Then he found himself in circumstances that were new and strange to him—circumstances in which the creature could only sink and perish. But here comes in the loveliest bit of the wonderful story. He felt his desperate need and cried out to His Lord, and "immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him," and held him up. And together with the Master of every storm Peter walked on the very crests of the waves. The gale still raged fiercely and the sea surged and swished about his feet, but he was held up by almighty power and he walked by the side of his Lord, erect, fearless, and comforted.

Now let us understand the story. The Lord who sits above the water floods, and rules the waves from His throne of eternal calm, does not send succour to His saints as a sympathetic onlooker who knows nothing experimentally of the sorrows they endure. No. He came
down upon the waves, He came from the eternal peace of heaven into the storm where His loved ones labour; the winds blew and the waves tossed about Him. When His disciples saw Him, they were affrighted and supposed that He was a spirit, but He was not a spirit. HE WAS A MAN, AND HE IS A MAN. This is the amazing thing, Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood He, the Lord of Glory, likewise took part of the same, that He might know in His own experience the fierceness of the storms that beset our weak humanity; and He was tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin, and so He can succour us with a sympathy that is perfectly human though divine.

It was the hand of a man, in which was the very power of God, that held up Peter on that memorable night. It is the hand of a man—of Jesus, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—that is stretched out to us, and that holds us up upon the very waves that have leaped to our destruction. He is the Son of God, eternal in His being, and omnipotent in power, yet a man who loved us enough to die for us that He might take from our souls the very fear of death and make us triumph evermore.

We want our readers to lay hold of this great truth, not as a theory, but as a fact to be known first to faith and then blessedly in their experience. Peter's was an individual experience, he had it for himself, but it is an experience that every Christian may have when seas of trouble roll around. Yes, each for himself may be supported by that hand of gracious power and be made more than a conqueror in the very circumstance that threatens to swallow him up. What encouragement there is for us in the story—Peter's need and distress stretched out and reached the Saviour's heart, and the Saviour's hand stretched out and reached His sinking saint, and with his need met, his fears calmed and his faith strengthened, Peter walked hand in hand with his Master until the storm ceased.

"Concerning them that are asleep."

It is natural for the heart to enquire earnestly as to the condition of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and whose bright presence are so sorely missed, and God in His mercy has answered this longing; He would not have us ignorant concerning them that sleep, that we sorrow not as those that have no hope.

The Word of God will help us and instruct us as to them. To the dying malefactor, Jesus said, "To-day, shalt thou be WITH ME in paradise." In speaking of the intermediate state the Apostle Paul says: "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present WITH THE LORD," and again, "Having a desire to depart and to be WITH CHRIST, which is far better." The great point in these passages is that they are with Christ, and we know that they could not be with Him without being wholly absorbed with Him, and this is evidently the impression that the Scriptures would give us. Their compensation, their joy while awaiting the resurrection is this, they are absorbed with Christ, to be near Him satisfies their every longing and fills up their cup of pleasure.

We know that our brightest and happiest moments on earth are those in which we are absorbed with Christ, this is now their portion without the limitations and hindrances that rob us of so much in this mortal state, and so we conclude that their joy in the presence of the Lord is fuller and more perfect than the greatest and best joys on earth could be.

But this is not all. The Holy Ghost would carry our thoughts onward to the resurrection, to the moment when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and He
would make us exult in the glorious outlook. So He says to us, "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." He will change the weakness, humiliation and corruption that belong to death, and bring them out in the full manifestation and glory of resurrection power for the universal reign of Christ. And we are told how it will come about, and full, indeed, of comfort are the words. We cannot read them too often or dwell upon them too long. "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 be FOR EVER WITH THE LORD" (1 Thess. 4. 13-18). Here again it is made clear to us that to be with the Lord is the supreme joy. Greater than the honours, the rewards, the glories, more satisfying and blessed to our hearts than the manifestation of kingdom splendours is this being for ever with the Lord, and this is the eternal portion which we shall share "together with them" who have passed on a little while before us.

"The Lord Himself shall descend . . . with a shout."

1 Thessalonians 4. 16.

"With a shout" our loved Lord will return.
O soldiers of Christ, rally all!
The cowardly part let us spurn
Whilst waiting the marshalling call.
The foe of our Lord is our foe,
An enemy subtle and strong,
In strength not our own let us go,
Whilst cheering each other with song.

"With a shout" our loved Lord will return.
The dead who have died in the strife
Will rise on that thrice-blessed morn,
Awakened in newness of life.
That voice which alone can command,
Each unit will hear and obey,
Till in one mighty army we stand,
As victors in glorious array.

"With a shout" our loved Lord will return.
The Shepherd will gather His own.
The voice He has caused us to learn
Will call us to where He has gone.
From straying on earth's sun-scorched hills,
Or from folds which unite not, but sever
To heavenly pastures and rills
"ONE FLOCK AND ONE SHEPHERD"
FOR EVER.

EDWARD WHYTE.
The Great Sacrifice.

In heaven the Father delighted in His Son, His well-beloved, His only Son. In His bosom that Son has ever dwelt, the Son of His eternal love. No words could possibly set forth the love which the Father has to JESUS.

But a strange, new thing is about to take place. Down there is a world of sinners: wicked, vile, rebellious, God-hating sinners. Yet it is a world that has a wonderful place in the heart of the blessed God, a world that He loves. He cannot leave it to perish without hope, He is going to give up His Son, that only, that well-beloved Son for it. But does God know what will happen in the world when His Son is there? Does He know they will look upon Him with angry scowl? Does He know they will fling their gibes and curses at Him? Does He know they will take up stones to stone Him? Does He know they will lay violent hands upon Him? Does He know they will scourge Him as if He were a common felon? Does He know they will stain His cheeks with their vile spittle and press a band of thorns upon His brow? Does He know that they will nail Him upon a gibbet and thrust a lance into His side? Does He know that His Son will be murdered in a cruel and shameful manner? Does God know that all this will happen?

Yes, He knows it all. To His eye the future is as open as the past. He knows all that will be done to His Son, and YET HE SENDS HIM.

Think what this means. It can only have one explanation. Only one word can account for such a sacrifice, and that word is LOVE; love transcendent, unthinkable, inexplicable, unfathomable, infinite, stupendous, divine. Such is the love of God to men, such is the force of the little word "so" when we read that "God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

Here I conclude, having only touched on one side of what Jesus suffered, and shown God's love triumphing over man's hatred. I wish not to point a moral, or to draw a conclusion, or to make a practical application. My desire is that the hearts of us all may throb with an intenser appreciation of the infinite love that made such a sacrifice. Practical consequences will surely flow therefrom. Let us dwell often upon this love; let us say the words again and again, He thought it worth while to give up His Son for love of us—for love of me.

H. P. Barker.

The Victory of the Lamb.

I GO from grief and sighing, the valley and the clod, To join the chosen people in the palaces of God— There sounds no cry of battle amidst the shadowing palms, But the mighty song of victory, and glorious golden psalms.

The army of the conquerors, a palm in every hand, In robes of state and splendour, in rest eternal stand Those marriage robes of glory, the righteousness of God— He bought them for His people with His most precious blood.

The Lamb of God has saved them from hell's deep den of fire— The Lamb of God adorns them in spotless white attire; The Lamb of God presents them as kings in crowns of light— As priests in God's own temple to serve Him day and night.
Jesus: the Doer of God’s Will.

It makes all the difference when we see HIM in the Word! The Bible is lit up then: it is like a new Book to us! In “all the Scriptures” His varied glories shine also for us.

This is the main object of the Bible. It is not simply a book of history, but a divinely inspired volume to give to us the knowledge of God; and the more we progress in this, the more are the boasted results of the Germanized criticism of its sacred pages seen to be worse than vanity.

The first writing of which any mention is made is “the volume of the Book,” and it speaks entirely of Jesus, the doer of God’s will. And that writing is a document that the hand of man shall not and cannot touch! The destructive efforts of the unbelieving critic have not reached up to it. It, also, speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the heavenly record of the counsels of the Godhead—in the eternal roll—it is written of Him, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God” (Ps. 40. 8; Heb. 10. 7). He is the subject of that volume, as coming to do God’s will, and as delighting in it; but how much that involved!

“He said; and, “A body hast Thou prepared Me” (Heb. 10. 5). This was necessary, that thus, as a man, in the place of obedience, He might have the “ears” of Psalm 40. 6. Going forward in that path, the rising storm of calumny and shame began to beat pitilessly upon Him, but to God’s will He was devoted, and He would not turn back. Innumerable evils thickened about Him! “They that hate me without a cause,” He said, “are more than the hairs of mine head.” They smote Him. They plucked the hair from His cheek. They spat upon Him. He turned not to the right or to the left, but pressed onward in the path of God’s will. What did the religionists, who clamoured for His life, know of that? They thought God was against Him—that He was smitten of God and afflicted! When they saw Him they esteemed Him not: they despised and rejected Him.

And what of Jesus?—He “despised the shame” they heaped upon Him; but He did not despise the cross—He “endured” that! Yea, and He must endure it, in all its awful depths of sorrow and suffering, if God’s will were to be accomplished. Into those unsounded deeps His love for His God and Father carried Him. To the natural eye His path appeared to be all wrong; but in devotedness to God’s will He went onward. He looked into the dark cup which He must drink, and though sweat as blood fell from Him, He took the cup and drank it—“Thy will be done,” He said. He finished the work He came to do. He glorified God on the earth. He was the mighty One. Any other would have been crushed under the heavy load of sin and judgment, which He bore when He endured the cross, when He settled for God’s glory the question of good and evil.

Rising in triumph from the grave, He has brought us according to God’s will to Himself—“we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once”; and “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Wonderful fact! His brethren. And as the risen Man He said, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God”—thus putting us into the same relationship as Himself with God; and all this is in accord with the will of God. How much more that will involves we may not here go into; but Jesus is the Doer of it. God’s pleasure prospers in His hand! Blessed, adorable Lord and Saviour.
Devotion to Christ.

Young souls in the freshness of early energy seek to attach others to the person of Christ, as the one point of importance. Thus, Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus; and again in the early church we read, “Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5. 14). That is so, and rightly so, but it is also first said, “The Lord added together [to the assembly] those that were to be saved” (Acts 2. 47). It is equally true that the Lord added them together, and that they have added to the Lord. We must not give up the one while holding fast to the other.

The Gospels are the history of the life of Jesus, while He was here, and, finally, of His ascension. The question then was how His people would receive Him. In this the world too was involved; how would the Messenger of God, the “sent one of the Father,” be received by Israel and by it? The secret purposes of God and the present interests of Christ as regards the church are not there revealed, save as mystically alluded to in passing in a parabolic form. The great question in the Gospels is attachment to the person of the Messiah, with occasional foregleams of things to come. But attachment to the person of Christ implies devotedness to all His interests when those interests, whatever they may be, are made known. And it makes no matter how fallen and disregarded those interests may have become in the mind of man: all faith in the purpose of God may indeed have ceased; he may have forgotten the title deeds of his own blessing; but God never forgets; and so the Psalmist says, “He hath remembered His covenant for ever... which He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant” (Ps. 105. 8-10). To this we can add further, despite all our failure and unbelief, “whatever promises of God there are, in Him is the Yea, and in Him the Amen, for glory to God by us” (2 Cor. 1. 20).

The “stronghold of Zion was the city of David,” the fortress of Jerusalem, until now through the wickedness of the people for centuries in the hands of the Turk. Yet still it remains true that “There are set the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee” (Ps. 122.). And when the day of blessing comes it is from Zion it will go forth: “The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life” (Ps. 128.).

Now, in what way could the godly Jew show his faith in God if he was regardless of the beloved city as the seat of all his hopes? “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God” (Ps. 87. 3). “If I forget thee O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy” (Ps. 137.).

This was the way the godly Jew showed his faith in God, and this was at bottom the way the disciples were attracted to Jesus. Other exercises of soul were awakened in them as well, but these attachments never ceased to bind their hearts to Him from whom they expected the fulfilment of all their hopes. Their last question to Him was, “Lord, is it at this time that Thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1. 6). Whatever other things He set before them this thought never left their minds.

We belong to another economy. The hopes of Israel and of the world, while ever retaining their own interests in perspective, as forming part of the
interests of Christ are not our special and more immediate interests. Our interests are the present interest of Christ. This is our great, our gracious, and our glorious privilege, that His interests should be ours, as ours again are His. Alas! that the Apostle should have to say, "All seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ."

But what is the present interest of Christ to-day? Listen.

"Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; and having found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all, whatever he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13). Can there be any question what that beautiful pearl is? The church.

And what of this beautiful pearl? What has become of it? Where has it gone to? Alas! those who make boast of being it are little like it. But because of what has happened to us, because of our own criminal folly during the long centuries of growing wickedness and multiplying evil, and because of the incorrigible self-sufficiency with which we find ourselves in constant conflict, without and within, are we to forget and not to remember the pearl, the "beautiful pearl," as though it had lost its interest to the Lord, and its governing interest to us? If we do forget, certain it is He never does. It is engraven deeper than in the "palms of His hands" (Is. 49. 16). Nailed as they were to the cross; more sensitive than "the apple of His eye" (Zech. 2. 8): it is immanent in Himself, inherent in His essential being, the purpose of His heart from before all worlds (Eph. 1); ordained for His fullest, completest pleasure for evermore, the commanding object of His eternal counsel, the vessel of the glory of God for the ages of eternity (Eph. 3. 21). Wonderful, wonderful thoughts! No, we must not forget it, or belittle it, this "beautiful pearl," because of evil men and their evil ways, who have either ignored it, or refused it, or sought to set up a counterfeit in its stead. Rather let us keep praying the prayer of the Apostle (Eph. 3. 14-21), "That we might be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man," that we might . . . know the love of Christ wherewith He loves His beautiful pearl.

Now, to be devoted to Christ is to be devoted to the chief interest of His heart. The misuse to which this great soul-propelling and exalting truth is put by the narrow, self-centred ecclesiasticism that puts the church instead of Christ, and so loses both it and Him, in nowise affects the constancy of the Spirit that never ceases to be occupied with "Christ and the church."

The church instead of Christ is only evil. Christians instead of Christ is only human. We must cleave to the Scripture of truth, "Christ and the church" (Eph. 5. 32).

The Bridegroom and the bride are one. He would be a poor husband who allowed his wife to be slighted. She would be a poor wife who set her personal claims above his. It has been well said, "The cross gathers all, but they are gathered to Christ and not to the cross." Those whom Christ gathers are gathered to Him, and any one so gathered will not forget the gathering to which he has been gathered. You cannot be intelligently devoted to Christ and forget His interests, not only in souls by the gospel, but in the church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The actual condition of things renders the practical working out of this in any measure most difficult. It is a path beset with thorns. But to give up the formative power of the truth of it, would be to lose touch with the Merchant and His beautiful pearl, and get to our souls much loss thereby.
[IF the Flock of God has been scattered, one of the chief contributing causes is the absence of loving, self-sacrificing, pastoral care. When and where there has been a faithful shepherding of the sheep they have prospered, where this has been neglected they have wandered and failed. This ought to produce deep exercise and searchings of heart in all who have been called of the Lord to care in any way for His Flock. The sheep are not told to seek the shepherds, the shepherds must go after the sheep. And this they will do if they have any sense of the preciousness of the sheep to Christ. But there has been great failure here. It is easier to build a little fold and enclose a few sheep therein than to be interested in the one flock. It requires less exercise of soul, less energy of faith, less self-judgment and true spirituality to keep a few sheep together by rules and regulations than to gather the sheep to the ONE SHEPHERD. But if the under-shepherds mourn before the Lord because of the scattered condition of the flock and own that they have had their part in this, and have renewed in their souls the sense that He has called them to shepherd and feed those for whom He gave His life, we may look for a ministry from Himself that will revive and recover many. May the following paper be used to help us in this way.]

“The Flock of God.”

By Hamilton Smith.

In the eightieth Psalm Asaph addresses God as the Shepherd of Israel, and likens His people to a flock. In the one hundredth Psalm Israel takes the ground of being Jehovah’s people and “the sheep of His pasture.” Jeremiah, too, in the same strain, speaks of God’s ancient people as a “beautiful flock” (Jer. 13.20). But while God ever remained the Great Shepherd of Israel, He also delegated authority to under-shepherds who were responsible to care for the flock.

In the exercise of this responsibility the shepherds lamentably failed, and as a result the flock was ruined and scattered. In the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel we have a solemn denunciation of these under-shepherds for the violation of their trust. In the first four verses three distinct charges are brought against them.

First. They are charged with using their position to exalt themselves at the expense of the flock. “Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.” They fed themselves; they indulged themselves; they clothed themselves, but they allowed the flock to perish for lack of food (vers. 2, 3).

Second. The shepherds are charged with having utterly neglected the flock. There were weak sheep, but they had not strengthened them; there were sick sheep, but they had not healed them; there were wounded sheep, but they had not bound up their wounds; there were sheep driven away from the flock, but they made no effort to recover them; and there were wandering sheep, but they had not gone after the lost (ver. 4). Occupied with themselves they had entirely neglected the good of the sheep.

Third. These shepherds are charged with having ruled God’s flock “with force and with cruelty.” Not only had the sheep been neglected, but they had been crushed and oppressed for the selfish ends of the rulers.

But the failure of the shepherds of Israel has been repeated, alas, by the shepherds of God’s people to-day. For in this day also God has His flock. Passing through this world, the Lord Jesus gathered a company of Jewish
believers around Himself, leading them outside the Jewish fold. To these the Gentile believers were afterwards added, and, according to the Lord's own word, there was "one flock and one Shepherd" (John 10. 16). The Lord Himself is the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and the Great Shepherd, as risen again from among the dead—the One who has triumphed over the power of death, and He can say, "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 28). But furthermore, the Lord is the Chief Shepherd, and as such He has again delegated the oversight of His flock to under-shepherds. Paul, in his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, gives the under-shepherds a solemn charge in Acts 20. 28-35. He warns them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. He gives them a threefold exhortation in reference to the flock, which answers to the threefold denunciation of the shepherds of Israel.

First. Instead of exalting themselves they are exhorted to "feed the church of God" (ver. 28).

Second. Instead of neglecting the sheep they are to "watch" and "support the weak" (vers. 31, 35).

Third. Instead of ruling with "force and cruelty" they are to remember "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (ver. 35).

Furthermore, the Apostle Peter, before his departure, gives a threefold charge to the under-shepherds (1 Peter 5. 1-4).

First. They are exhorted to "feed the flock of God."

Second. To care for the flock, "taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."

Third. They are warned not to lord it over God's heritage. Not to drive the flock but to lead as "ensamples to the flock."

But, as we have seen, these are the very things in which the shepherds of old so signally failed. Instead of feeding the flock they fed themselves; instead of taking the oversight they neglected the flock; instead of being ensamples they ruled the flock with harshness and cruelty. And, alas, as the shepherds of Israel failed, so, in like manner, the shepherds of the Christian flock have failed, and with a like result. Turning again to Ezekiel 34., we find the prophet, in verses 5 and 6, depicting the pitiful condition of God's flock as a result of the failure of the shepherds.

The sheep are scattered for the lack of a shepherd to lead. Being scattered they become a prey to the beasts of the field. Harassed by the beasts of prey they wander through all the barren mountains and on every high hill. Instead of one flock—one beautiful flock—we have scattered, harassed, and wandering sheep with none to search or seek after them. And what a solemn and striking picture of the condition of God's people to-day. As a result of the failure of the leaders, God's people have been scattered, and being scattered they have fallen a prey to the enemy. United they could have resisted the inroads of the enemy, but scattered they fall an easy prey to every evil; and under the power of evil they are starving and wandering in a solitary way in this barren world.

Having portrayed the sorrowful condition of the sheep, the Lord proceeds to pass sentence upon the responsible shepherds: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand" (vers. 7-10).

But if God is against the shepherds He is for the sheep, as He says, "I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them." And in the verses that follow we have a
magnificent description of how God shepherds His flock. And as the Chief Shepherd acts so should the under-shepherds. Thus in these verses (11-16) we have the perfect example for the true-hearted shepherd, whether in Israel or amongst God’s people to-day. We do well to take to heart the sevenfold actings of the Chief Shepherd as set forth in these touching verses.

First. God says, “Behold I, even I, will ... SEARCH for my sheep.” They have been scattered, and they have wandered, but they are “mine,” says God, and “I will SEARCH for them.” May we never forget, whatever the condition of the sheep, they belong to Christ. He thought of them from all eternity, but, alas, we can only give them the odd moments of our lives. He left His home of glory to seek His sheep, and can we not leave our poor homes to seek them? He went to the uttermost distance of the cross to find His sheep, but we can hardly go into the next street to seek them.

Second. Having sought them He “tends” them, for thus the passage should read, “I will both search for My sheep and TEND them as a shepherd TENDETH his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered.” His sheep are the objects of his tender care. After the Good Samaritan found that poor wounded man and bound up his wounds, he brought him to an inn and “took care of him,” and ere he left he put the man in charge of the host, saying, “Take care of him.” He seems to say to the host, “Do what I have been doing.” And immediately afterwards we hear Martha coming to the Lord and saying, “Dost Thou not care.” Oh yes, Martha, He cares, as you will soon learn when the death of your brother plunges you into the deep waters of sorrow, and He comes and walks with you and weeps with you. Yes, blessed be His name, He cares, but how little we care. We have failed in tending the sheep. But not only does the Lord tend His sheep, but He does it in a very blessed way. It is not as one far removed in some high position giving directions for the care of the sheep, but it is as a shepherd “among his sheep that are scattered.”

We speak of the Lord in the midst of two or three gathered together in His name, and blessedly true, but we do well to remember there is such a thing as the Lord “among His sheep that are scattered.” If we have driven them away, will He desert them? Never. If we have scattered them, will He forsake them? Never. Will He leave them because they follow not with us? Surely not. He will never give them up. Are they scattered? He is “among His sheep that are scattered.” We speak at times as if “two or three gathered to His name” would imply a company of saints apart from the ruin of Christendom, but let us never forget that, however glorious the future destiny of the church, that, at this moment, the one church of God, the church to which we belong, is a ruined and scattered church so far as any outward display is concerned.

Third. Further, the Lord says: “I will DELIVER them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” While leaders are busy darkening the sky with their controversies, the enemy is busy scattering the sheep. While the shepherds wrangle, the sheep wander. We can scatter, but what little power we have to deliver. But the Lord will deliver. Not one of His sheep will be left behind when He acts in delivering power.

Fourth. But the Lord does not deliver His people from the powers of the enemy and then leave them; He also “gathers” them, and so we read, “I will bring them out from the peoples and GATHER them from the countries.” “Separation” and “gathering” must go together. Separation without gathering only puffs up and leads to the spirit
of the Pharisee, and to further scattering. When the Lord separates His people from evil He gathers them around Himself. Christ is God's great gathering centre. We may get Christians together, but if it is not gathering to Christ and with Christ it will only add to the scattering. We may gather people around some great truth, or to deepen spirituality, or to increase holiness and thus make a holiness party; or we may get Christians together to express the truth of the One Body, and to maintain a scriptural discipline, and thus make an ecclesiastical party. We may gather believers together to preach the gospel, and thus make an evangelical party. But, however good our intentions, if we fall short of gathering to Christ as the living centre we shall only add to the scattering. It has been well said by another, "It is not Christians but Christ who is become God's centre. We may gather Christians together, but if it is not Christ in one's own spirit, it is scattering. God knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Himself the object, and nothing but Christ can be the centre. Whatever is not gathering round that centre, for Him and from Him, is scattering. There may be gathering, but, if not 'with Me,' it is scattering. We are by nature so essentially sectarian that we have need to watch against this. I cannot make Christ the centre of my efforts if He is not the centre of my thoughts" (J.N.D.). The Lord Himself has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me, and He that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke 11:23).

Fifth. But what does God do with His delivered and gathered saints? "HE WILL BRING THEM TO THEIR OWN LAND" (ver. 13). There is a company we can call our own (Acts 4. 23), and there is a country we can call "our own." It is a heavenly country, but, alas, as the result of the scattering of the sheep the heavenly calling of God's people is almost unknown, and the people of God have lost their pilgrim character, have settled down in this world, and sought to make the world that nailed Christ to the cross a respectable and comfortable place. Israel has been scattered and lost their land, Christians have been scattered and have lost the truth of their heavenly calling. But when God takes His people in hand, whether earthly or heavenly, it will be to "bring them to their own land." And what more important in this day than to seek to arouse the people of God to their heavenly calling. If gathered by the Lord it is that we may be led by the Lord into our own country.

Sixth. Having led His flock into their own land the Lord "FEEDS THEM IN A GOOD PASTURE." The true food for the Christian is in the heavenly country. When Israel were brought to their own land they fed upon the old corn of the land (Josh. 5. 11, 12). Passing through the wilderness we need Christ as the manna, but as a heavenly people we feed upon Christ as "the old corn of the land." We need to feed upon all the glories and perfections of Christ in the place where He is. And what we feed upon forms us. To feed upon Christ in His earthly path of humiliation will win our affections, but to feed upon Christ in His glories will change our characters. Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18).

Seventh. And lastly, in that heavenly land He gives His people "Rest": "I WILL CAUSE THEM TO LIE DOWN" (ver. 15). In this world there is no lasting rest for the people of God. The Christian is like the dove that went out from the Ark and "found no rest for the sole of her foot." The raven found corruption to feed on, but the dove found nothing but death. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." And when God brings His people to rest it is "in a fat pasture" (ver. 14). Hungry sheep will not lie down in a fat pasture, they will feed.
If they lie down it is a sure proof they are satisfied. The great Shepherd of the sheep leads them into a region of satisfied desire. When we awake in His likeness we shall be satisfied. Yes, but "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." He will make us to lie down in perfect rest, and "He will rest in His love."

How perfect are the ways of the Chief Shepherd of the sheep. In the light of this perfect example of shepherd care may we have grace to judge our past failures and seek, for the little time that may yet remain, to shape our service according to this divine standard. How better can we serve the flock, or seek the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, than by,
1. Searching for the Lord's sheep,
2. Tending the sheep,
3. Delivering the sheep from evil,
4. Gathering the sheep to the Lord,
5. Leading the sheep to their own land,
6. Feeding the sheep, and
7. Bringing the sheep into rest.

May we remember the words of the Lord, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13.16). And if we "do" them, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear we "shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5.4).

The Renewed Commission.

The following paper (slightly abridged), an address by Dr. C. I. Scofield and published in The Christian Worker's Magazine (Chicago), will further help us in our exercises as to the way of recovery of zeal in the service of the Lord.

In company with a good Welsh brother I was once listening to a sermon on the healing of Naaman. It was a good sermon from a homiletical standpoint, and I admitted it to myself in a kind of protest against an inner feeling that somehow, good as it was, it was leaving me cold. Just then my good Welsh brother leaned over and sighed, "If only the dear man would take a fresh dip in Jordan himself!"

I went out, when the sermon was ended, but my message had come from the Welsh brother. I walked away into the night, I know not whither, for death seemed in my heart, and I kept my face to the stars as I tried to tell God that I was the "dear man" who needed that fresh dip in Jordan himself!

The Experience of Job.

Come with me to the last chapter of Job, verses 5 and 6: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The word "myself" is supplied. The Jews shrank through reverence from pronouncing the ineffable name Jehovah, but here is a man who, in a sudden clear vision of himself, cannot bring himself to say even the word "myself" in the presence of a holy God!

It is not necessary to go into the case of the patriarch. Superficially, the problem is, Why do the good suffer? But in the working out of the drama a far deeper thing comes to light, namely, the stone blindness, and utter spiritual deadness, of religious formalism. Three self-righteous bigots—Eliphaz, a religious dogmatist who has
had an "experience"; Bildad, whose "religion" consists mostly of pious platitudes; and Zophar, a dogmatist who knows all about God—essay Job's case in vain. They cannot have the smallest glimmer of real light upon it. And this inability has descended upon all their kind, even unto this day. God help the troubled saint who falls into the hands of the "good" with their little half-pint measure!

At last, brought face to face with God, Job sees himself and it is the end of him! Nay, rather the beginning of him.

What have we? A good man who had heard of God by the hearing of the ear. He believed that testimony. Upon it was founded a faith that endured unshaken in the very sieve of Satan. In the agonies of his unexampled misfortunes he bore a far better testimony to Jehovah than did his pious, untroubled friends.

Well is it for us, servants of Jesus Christ, if we can say as much.

But the question I press is this: Must not we too say concerning the foundation of such faith as we may have, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear"? Well, that is a true foundation, and upon it may rest a sure faith, if our hearing has been from the Word of God. To the test of that Word should all testimony for God be brought.

But there is such a thing as Christian experience. Conformed to the Word, growing out of faith in the Word, tested by the Word, there is such a thing as the very presence of the living God.

It is David's great cry in the wilderness:

"My soul thirsteth for THEE, my flesh longeth for THEE."

In the great upper chamber discourse our Lord did not end His promises with the pledge that the Comforter would complete a revelation which His disciples could not then receive. He also promised the personal revelation of Himself. The Samaritans believed because of the woman's testimony, but afterwards they could say: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves." There is a knowing of God, a personal and undervived "seeing" of God, and it is this, and what comes out of this, that renewes the commission.

But the vision of God which came to Job is no exceptional experience. While the circumstances are never twice the same, the effect of the vision is always the same.

Job came, but to a final, thorough and unsparing judgment of self. Not only did he no longer expect anything from that source, but he abhorred the source.

That is the first thing. The next is that thereupon, and because of that self-judgment, the patriarch's commission was not only renewed but broadened. He is now a sacrificing priest unto God, and the condemnatory bigots must seek God through him. And not only this, but his fruitfulness is doubled as well.

The Experiences of Joshua and the Prophets.

Let us go to Joshua:

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come."

Do you not see that if Joshua wa...
not captain he was nothing. What happens?

"And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"

And that was the end of Captain Joshua? Yes, and no. We do not find Joshua going about telling the people that he is "nothing and nobody"; he goes straight on with his mighty work; but he and the Man with the drawn sword understood.

Isaiah knew the experience of the renewed commission. For five terrible chapters he presents the case of Jehovah against Israel. In effect it is woe to the people, woe to the priests, woe to the shepherds, woe to everybody. But in the sixth chapter he sees "the LORD high and lifted up" and now it is, "WOE IS ME! FOR I AM UNDONE."

Isaiah undone? Well, that is the end of prophesying in Judah, for Isaiah is easily the best man in the nation. No, no! It is a new beginning. For when a good man who has tried to serve, says, "I abhor myself"; when he says with his face in the dust, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" when he says, "Woe is me, I am undone," he is going to hear from God, "Go, and tell this people." For the man who has seen God, who cries, "I am undone," receives a renewed commission.

It was not otherwise with Ezekiel.

"As I was among the captives by the river of Chebar . . . I saw visions of God . . . and when I saw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. And He said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee . . . And He said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel."

The vision of God; a man on his face; a prophet re-commissioned!

And observe, these men are not even praying. Is not prayer good? Oh, yes! but these men are at the end of everything! At the end even of prayer. The prophet Daniel was easily the best and greatest man of his time, and a fearless witness for God. But one day—but we will let Daniel tell it.

"And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision . . . therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."

Note the sequence of things here:

"I Daniel alone." There is a place for fellowship, but not here. "Eagles do not go in flocks. If you are minded to take the upper air you must learn to go alone" (Isa. 40. 31).

"There remained no strength in me."
That is hard if one is determined to hold on to a little of self.

But worst follows: "for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption."
"My comeliness!" Had Daniel's refusal to eat the king's meat become a source of much secret satisfaction; and his night with the lions because he would not bow down to an image? Hard indeed, Brother Daniel, when our comeliness, that which was right at the beginning, is seen to have been all along these later years just secret pride—miserable self-righteousness!

And the first words which this man heard were, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved." What words for the ear of a man strengthless on his face at God's feet! "O man greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong." God grant us, along with the vision of Himself, grace to lie supine upon our faces till HE speaks: "Be strong!"

You know what follows—the supreme vision of all Daniel's ministry.
The Experience of Paul and the other Apostles.

The Apostle Paul began his ministry with a vision, but even he must be caught up, whether in the flesh or out of the flesh he knew not, into the third heaven, and then he can say, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." It is resurrection power now.

And John, whose head had been upon his Master's breast that last night in the upper chamber—when Jesus went beyond the cross and took the twelve off Jewish ground into the heavenlies—even John must have his commission renewed before he can be entrusted with his last supreme ministry.

And when the vision comes, where is John? In the place that Job knew and Joshua, and the prophets. Listen! "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."

Ah, yes, brother John. Thou hadst known a Jewish Messiah, a dear Lord Christ after the flesh. If thou art to write the last Revelation till He come, thou must know a Christ in the glory! And we would have known what follows even if we had never read it: "WRITE!"

What the Vision is.

But what is this "vision"? A "vision," in Scripture, is an unseen thing made real. Not real to faith—that it has been all along. Upon that we have lived and served, never doubting. But the vision of God is God Himself become actual to our very inmost selves.

Have you ever said concerning some thought for which, perhaps, you can find no words, "I see it!" This has been true a thousand times of some thought about God. But a vision of God—the actualizing of HIM—is not a mental process culminating; it is the indescribable sense of HIMSELF.

Paul heard "unspeakable things." But was it not, in some sense, induced? Friends, I am not concerned with the psychology of this ineffable thing, but I cannot imagine it apart from yearning; apart from David's cry: "My flesh longeth for thee." "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

And yet I do not know how the vision may come to you. In the instances from Scripture which I have cited the circumstances were never twice the same. It was the passing before him of creation that brought the vision to Job (38.-41.). God became actualized through the work of his hands—but how foolish we, if we ran away with the thought that we could come to the vision through nature study!

I know this: when God becomes actual to us we shall know it! The unutterable sense of weakness as all our props break under us; the turning of our very comeliness, our special righteousnesses, into corruption in that awful, blessed presence—these are unmistakable.

But that presence is LOVE, is LIGHT.

Listen, brother, as you lie at the feet of God. Listen! "O MAN, GREATLY BELOVED." Listen! "BE STRONG, YEA, BE STRONG." Listen, oh! listen! "GO, TELL THIS PEOPLE." Listen yet again: "BEHOLD, I HAVE PUT MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH. SEE, I HAVE THIS DAY SET THEE OVER THE NATIONS AND OVER THE KINGDOMS TO ROOT OUT, AND TO PULL DOWN, AND TO DESTROY, AND TO THROW DOWN, TO BUILD, AND TO PLANT." May He in infinite grace renew our commissions!
The Gospel of John gives us an introduction to fellowship with Divine Personalities in a way not so distinct in the three preceding gospels. Being written by the Apostle John at a time when the body of Christian teaching committed to the Apostle Paul had been established, it seems designed to open out that intercourse with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for which all teaching and blessing is designed to prepare and qualify us.

Nothing can be finer than the presentation of the glories of Christ, the revealer of the Father, in the first chapter. The One who is the Word in relation to God was the Light in relation to men. Two things thus meet in Jesus, the revelation of what God is, and the disclosure of what man is. No wonder that, in order to bring these two together—God in all His glory, and man in all his darkness—it was necessary that Jesus be the Lamb of God that sin might be put away; and be the baptizer with the Holy Ghost that He might inaugurate a new order and condition of men wherein His own nature and character might be reproduced.

But though the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. It was the world's condemnation that it knew not its Creator. Nor was the special nation of Israel any better. He came to His own, prepared by the scriptures of the prophets for His advent, but they received Him not. Thus the Lord stood alone in all His unique glory, unknown by the world and rejected by Israel. But a few, relatively few, the subjects of a new birth of God, received Him and believed upon His Name, and to these He gave the privilege of becoming the children of God.

Henceforward this new company, distinguishable from the world at large, and also from the Jewish nation hitherto described as "His own," are seen to be the subjects of His special affection and care. They are described characteristically and constantly as believers, "he that believeth," "they that believe upon Him," in contrast with others. These are His sheep (ch. 10.), these are the people to whom the Spirit was to be given (John 7. 37-39). It is these, such as these, who are seen gathered with Him on that never-to-be-forgotten night referred to in John 13. 1, when the Lord lifts the title of "His own" from the Jewish connection of the first chapter and places it upon the brows of His beloved disciples, given to Him by the Father out of the world. Nor upon their brows alone; for the affection which was there shown to the little nucleus of the Gospel story is passed on in chapter 17. 20, to those who should believe on Him through their word. The apostolic testimony has led to the conversion of others to the Lord, and to their inclusion in the same interest, affection, and blessing. Through grace we are of that number.

Thus it is that we read these chapters now; they the nucleus, and we who now believe in Christ are the subjects of the same love, the recipients of the same Spirit, and equally the happy objects of the Father's counsels secured for the Father's house.

Let us then see the Lord's thought for us in providing the Comforter. This is the same Holy Spirit of whom we have before spoken. He is referred to by the Son of God in four parts of these three wonderful chapters in John's Gospel. The first is chapter 14. 16, 17; the second is chapter 14. 26; the third, chapter 15. 26, 27; and the fourth, chapter 16. 7-15.

First of all, let us recall and realize our
position. The world knows not Christ, and Israel has rejected Him. But we have been born of God, we have received Him, and have believed upon His Name. The Lord, being now exalted and glorified, and having sent down the Holy Spirit (John 7. 37-39), two things appeal very blessedly to us. One is that we (i.e. true Christians one and all) are the subjects of His unchanging, precious love. Looking down upon the believer in any part of the world, and at every time in his history, the gracious Saviour, Son of God, whispers to him, "My own." Secondly, the Holy Spirit has been given to us; and although this opens out into marvellous meanings and wonderful privileges, the fact itself is our starting-point.

Let us now study verse 16 of chapter 14. First of all, the company loved of the Lord (Judas had gone out) is assured, of the intercession of the Lord in His new place. The Son addresses the Father, and communes with Him on our behalf. The Father and the Son find it worth their while to think about us and study our interests.

Secondly, the Father, perfectly in unison with the Son's affection and care, grants the request and gives the Comforter. That is, the Holy Spirit given to believers is here described as the Father's gift to us in answer to the Son's prayer for us.

Thirdly, the One He gives is described as "another Comforter." No one can doubt that Jesus had been a Comforter to His disciples, soothing as a nurse, encouraging as a master and teacher, undertaking as a guardian. But the disciples, losing Him as to His presence with them on earth, were to have the other Comforter, charging Himself in the same way with the responsibility of their welfare.

Fourthly, the new Person to be their Comforter would not be with them for a few years and then leave, as had been the case with the Lord Jesus. He is given with nothing less than a permanency in view, as long as there were saints to be responsible for. The "for ever" goes from the beginning to the end of our stay here. It goes past our Christian youth and old age, it goes past our joys and sorrows, it goes on though we stumble and fail. The love of Christ is for ever, "to the end," and the Spirit's abiding with us is as enduring as the love.

Fifthly, this Comforter is the Spirit of Truth; the greatest possible contrast to the pretence, false show, unreality, and treacherous friendship that characterize the world. You might perhaps think that your weakness and the presence of the flesh within might expel the Holy One, and lead Him to give you up. But no; in coming in, in being given of the Father to you, He is the Spirit of Truth, and knows all about you when He takes possession. Nothing disconcerts Him, nothing takes Him by surprise. You make fresh discoveries as to yourself; He makes none, because He knew it all at the outset. Hence, knowing all, He takes you for better or for worse (as men say), and never gives you up.

Sixthly, you are comforted in this, that you are no longer reckoned as part of "the world" which cannot receive Him, but among the "you" dear to Christ, who do know Him. The world can see and know what is visible and tangible and capable of analysis; but only the believer can know the Spirit.

Finally, it is with the disciples that the Spirit makes His home, and it is in them that He dwells. We who are Christians alone form the company honoured by His residence, and further, He is in us. Unlike the Lord Jesus who on earth was simply with, and not in His disciples, the Holy Spirit dwells in us; a most wonderful fact. It is made possible, as we learn elsewhere, on the ground of the atonement, in which our sin has been judicially dealt with and thus done away for God.
The next passage in which the Comforter is referred to is chapter 14. 26. In passing, let us note that the name "Comforter" is the same in the Greek original of the New Testament as the "Advocate" of 1 John 2. 2. While Christ is our Representative, our Guardian, our Solicitor, on high, maintaining our interests before the Father, the Holy Ghost is equally so for us down here in the world. In this passage, the first element of help for us is that He is given His simple, absolute Name in the Godhead—the Holy Ghost. Let us consent to ponder this stupendous reality, a Divine Person dwells in me. Do we not well to ask ourselves what is the Object of His being within us, that we may fall in with it, and obtain the full benefit of His presence?

It will be noticed that, in this new verse it is not presenting the fact of the Spirit being the Father’s gift (as in v. 16), so much as that He is sent on a mission from the Father. A definite purpose is before Him, a commission on the Father’s part. This is nothing less than to act in the Name of the Son, to care for His honour, and to promote His interests in the saints. Nothing is nearer to our affections than to see Jesus exalted. Cold is the heart that does not long to be whole-hearted for Christ, to be gripped by His love, to be surrendered utterly to His will, that our whole being should be radiant with His life, not self. What we wish to point out from this verse is that in every such purpose and aim, and notwithstanding every deterrent influence, we have the support of God the Holy Ghost within. May we see what irresistible power there is at our disposal in so far as we are at His disposal.

Now in the words that follow we have two ways indicated in which He pursues His mission. The Lord shows what one might call the objective themes with which He engages believers’ hearts. Let us recall that Christ is on high in the Father’s presence, and that the Spirit has come from the glory into which Jesus has gone, to make His Name everything to us. The expression “He shall teach you all things” needs then to be read and understood in that connection; it implies surely the “all things” bound up with the position and glory of Christ in the Father’s presence. While the Saviour was on earth He was not able to unfold all that was in the Father’s counsels to the disciples; this is implied in verse 25 and is definitely stated in chapter 16. 12. But when the Comforter arrived He would not be under restraint. Coming from the supreme height to which Jesus was ascended and knowing all the glory and all the love of that bright home, the Father’s house, He would teach us all things. Dear saint of God, what education is indeed open to us, and what a Teacher! Do you not long to be able to use such a Guest, your permanent, indwelling Friend?

Nor are we to lose what Christ was on earth. For this seems to be implied in the remainder of the verse. He shall “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Nothing would be omitted or forgotten of all the telling and proving of that love which He had brought into the world which had for ever won His disciples’ hearts. The Spirit, while filling our souls with the brilliant light of His glory, never fails to keep our hearts in touch with the grace of His service here. Christ in incarnation, lowliness, suffering, and rejection, yet revealing God; Christ crowned with glory and honour, in resurrection life, the last Adam, set over all by the Father’s hand.

These are the objective themes with which the Spirit, sent from the Father, engages our hearts. Is it possible for me, among the least of God’s saints, to be at home with all that Christ has been and is? Yes, more than possible; it is God’s design in giving us His Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

W. H. Westcott.

(To be continued.)
The following question has been sent to us: "What is it that leads expositors and prophetic lecturers to identify 'the King of the North' especially with a Russian ruler? In what passage of Scripture is the matter mentioned?" In answer to this and other similar questions we give the following notes.

The career of the future King of the North and his campaign against Jerusalem is given in Daniel 11. 40-45; and that of Russia's great onslaught on the Holy Land in Ezekiel 38. 39. These two must not be confused. The first will take place before the appearance of the Lord to deliver Israel and the east after that appearing. Daniel 11. is the only Scripture that speaks definitely of the King of the North, though the many prophecies which tell of the trouble that will come upon Israel from the Assyrian of the future and, probably, "the overflowing scourge" of Isaiah 28. 18, have this personage in view.

It cannot be correct to say that a Russian ruler will be the King of the North, if he is to come from the same territory as the king bearing the same designation spoken of in the earlier part of Daniel 11. This king, who proved to be Antiochus Epiphanes, and who fulfilled the prophecies concerning him to the letter, reigned over Syria, the northern part of Alexander's Grecian empire, and became the great persecutor of the Jews, and one of the most blasphemous figures in history. The events from verse 35 to end of chapter await fulfilment, and the King of the North (ver. 40) who is to appear must rule over the territory of his predecessor—the northern parts of Asia Minor at present held by Turkey.

As the Turk does not now possess the power that this war-like personage will have, and as what power he has seems likely to be broken, it has been thought that he, or whoever occupies this territory, will come under the rule of, or be allied to, Russia, and so will have Russia's support in his terrible onslaught upon Jerusalem, but we cannot discover anything in the passage to support this thought; it gives the impression that he will act independently of any other political power. Though at the later date to which we have referred Asia Minor, as well as the whole of Persia, will certainly be under Russian control as we shall see, but this refers to a time when the King of the North shall have perished.

It should be borne in mind that there exist great powers in the spiritual world—fallen beings that influence the nations and are entirely opposed to God's intentions as to the disposal of the kingdoms of this world. The greatest of these is Satan, but he is not the only one. Daniel 10. speaks of one who is styled "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," who fought against God's messenger to Daniel, and prevented him from fulfilling his mission for twenty-one days, until Michael, who is spoken of as "the great prince which standeth for" the Jews, came to his aid. Another in the same chapter is called "the prince of Grecia." These references to these heads of spiritual principalities are illuminating, especially as they come into view in connection with the prophecies relating to the sorrows and final successes of Israel, and they help us to understand the fierce attacks that will be made upon Jerusalem.

During this church period God is not putting the world right, but is gathering
a people out of it, from amongst both Jew and Gentile, to form the heavenly bride of Christ. But the moment is fast approaching when the church will be completed, and God will begin to prepare the way for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. The first step towards this will be the gathering of the Jews into the promised land. The work of God in this direction will stir up the rage of these evil principalities, and especially those that influenced Israel's ancient enemies and constantly sought to destroy them because they were God's people. They will see in it the portend of their final overthrow, and they will energize afresh those nations over which they have gained an ascendency to attempt to prevent God's purposes by attacking His people the Jews. We know that Satan will give his power to the great head of the revived Roman Empire—the first beast of Revelation 13—and it is probable that these lesser princes in the evil spiritual world will give their power to the various personages that shall appear before God's kingdom comes. This will easily account for nations otherwise weak suddenly displaying extraordinary energy and power. The supermen will be a reality during that period of violence and awful desolations, which will approximate in many respects to the condition of things in the days of Noah when the flood came and took them all away.

The King of the North seems to be specially energized for his work, for when the Jews are put back into their own land, as the sure word of prophecy shows they will be, even though at that time Antichrist will be their king, he comes upon them like a whirlwind, but God's time is not then ripe for their deliverance and his destruction, thence he will find that the King of the South—Egypt—the ancient enemy of the King of the North, has also started a campaign to secure Jerusalem—the prize for which all the world will fight, or himself. With surprising energy he will first attack his rival and subdue him and return and plant his headquarters between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. (This is the regular meaning of the Hebrew, De Wette so translates it. *Synopsis, Vol. 2.*, p. 454.)

He will pitch there because of the tidings out of the east and out of the north that shall trouble him—probably these tidings will refer to the coming of the kings of the East (see Rev. 9. 13 to end; 16. 12-16); and perhaps also the army of the Beast, head of the Roman Empire. He will be full of fury because of these new rivals to the possession of Jerusalem, but there he meets with utter defeat, in the terse language of the prophecy, "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." The fact that he comes to his end then and there proves, we believe, that he cannot stand for the Russian power. The fate of his army is probably given in Joel 2. 20.

Russia comes in later, and is the last enemy that attempts to disturb Israel, then at rest in the land. This great attack is described in Ezekiel 38. 39. and has been confounded by some with the attack made by the King of the North. The word itself will help us. "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarma of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee "(Ez. 38. 1-6).
Of this passage J. N. Darby says: "'The chief prince of Meshech and Tubal' is, properly translated, 'Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.'" (This translation of the correctness of which I have no doubt, is that of the elder Lowth, some hundred and fifty years ago, before these prophetic views were mooted.) And again: "Gesenius gives it as the unquestionable meaning, and adds that without doubt it means the Russian. In the Middle Ages in the East they had the name of Ross." And again: "If you consult Genesis 10. the generations of the sons of Japheth are named—Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesec and Tiras. Of these we get Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Meshech under the same names in Ezekiel 38. as followers of Gog; you will also find Persia, which was united to Media (Madar) . . . these mentioned above are the nations that comprise Russia, Asia Minor, Tartary and Persia. . . . They are described as under the dominion of Gog, Prince Rosh (Russia), and Tubal (Tobolsk), Meshech (Moscow)."

The thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel should be read, to understand the vastness of this army that shall come "out of the north parts" and of its terrible destruction by mutual slaughter and pestilence, overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Israel will not need to fight, God will do this, for He will magnify and sanctify Himself in the eyes of all nations upon them, and for seven months after their destruction will Israel be burying the dead.

Three Ways in which Prophecy is Presented.

There are three ways in which prophecy is presented.

1. Direct Prophecy.

2. In Type.

3. By Biography.

(1) Direct Prophecy.—This includes all direct statements as to future events. One instance out of many must suffice.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that shall be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5. 2).

Over three hundred direct prophecies as to the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and future glory of our Lord Jesus Christ’s lie scattered over the pages of the Old Testament scriptures. The fulfilment of prophecy (save that which is still future—"the glory that should follow," 1 Peter 1. 11) is the strongest proof of the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. It is as if three hundred rays of light had been shot across the centuries, and lit up the face of the babe in Bethlehem’s manger; illuminated the form of Him who went about doing good; shone with heavenly glory on the form, more marred than any man’s, hanging on the cross of Calvary; disclosing the emptiness of the tomb, attesting the triumph of His work; and lighting Him up with their divine rays, who sits upon the throne of God, till we exclaim in adoring worship it is Jesus our Saviour, High Priest, Shepherd, King.

Volumes might be written on this subject, but we must forbear.

(2) In Type.—All types are prophetic in character. Take the first instance in Scripture, Adam cast into a deep sleep, Eve formed out of a rib taken from his side, type of the church formed as the result of the death of Christ. Ephesians 5. 25-32 brings this out so clearly that there can be no mistake as to its meaning. Marriage was not a convenient illustration of Christ and the church, but
was indeed instituted of design that it might be a type of it. Thus, on this little planet running its little day between two infinite eternities, if we may use such an expression, God has been pleased to illustrate that which filled His heart in purpose from eternity, and which can alone find its answer in Christ and the church in eternity.

The tabernacle and its service formed a typical system illustrating God’s relation to men, Christ, His deity, His humanity, His life, His death, His resurrection, His glories, the various approach to God and the saint’s ability to draw near in worship.

Th passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, the lifting up of the brazen serpent, the passage of the Jordan, and many other things were typical and therefore prophetic. What a vast field for delightful study is thus opened out to the diligent student of God’s Word.

(3) By Biography.—The Bible biographies of Adam, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon and many others are in certain details typical of Christ, and therefore in that respect prophetic. Adam, the head of the first creation, is typical of Christ, the Head of the new creation.

“Adam ... is the figure of Him that was to come” (Rom. 5. 14).

Isaac is the type of the heavenly Christ. The first mention of love in the Bible is where God said to Abraham:

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee there into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of” (Gen. 22. 2).

Does this not illustrate most beautifully the love of God the Father to His well-beloved Son, and bring before us that great sacrifice that righteousness demanded and love provided?

Isaac marrying Rebekah provides the second mention of love in the Bible (see Gen. 24. 67), typical of Christ and the church.

Joseph furnishes a type of Christ in death, resurrection, exaltation and in millennial glory. This is seen in his being sold into Egypt, brought out of prison and being set next to Pharaoh on the throne.

David is typical of Christ in His rejection, and in His triumph over the desire who had the power of death.

Solomon is typical of Christ in His glory. Together they bring out “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1. 11).

The Psalms, which are in part autobiographical of the feelings of the writers, are clearly in this as in other details, prophetic.

Psalm 22. will suffice as an outstanding example. In it the sufferings of Christ are detailed in a most wonderful way. You can see, as it were, the mocking crowds: “All that see me laugh me to scorn” (5. 7); the nails being driven into His hands and feet: “They pierced My hands and My feet” (5. 16); the soldier-robbers gambling for His clothes, and casting lots for His vesture: “They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture” (5. 18).

And then the triumph of it all in the outburst, “I will declare Thy name among my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee” (5. 22), quoted in Hebrews 2. 12, proves its prophetic value.

This short article might be expanded into a whole library, so great and interesting is the wealth of materials at our disposal on this interesting theme. What is written is merely suggestive.

A J Pollock.
Instances of Answered Prayer for Children.

THE biographer of Mrs. Susanna Wesley—the mother of John and Charles Wesley—gives us the following from her own pen:—

"Then, I thought, if I were inspired with true zeal for His glory and really desired the salvation of souls I might do more than I do... so I resolved to begin with my own children, and accordingly I purposed and observed the following method: I take such portions of time as I can best spare each night to discourse with each child by itself on something that relates to its principal concerns. On Monday I talk with Mollie, Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Nancy, Thursday with John, Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles, and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday."

Of the great-grandmother of Fidelia Fiske it is written: "Her last days were days of almost continued praying; and the burden of her prayer then was, as it had previously been, that her posterity might be a godly seed even to the last generation." Of her, Miss Fiske writes to a cousin: "Have you heard your father tell how she used to pray for her descendants to the end of time?"

In 1857 three hundred of the descendants of this godly woman were associated with Christ's church. Miss Fiske adds, in speaking of it: "I often think I may be receiving blessings in answer to her prayers, for I know she prayed for her children's children for all coming time."

This was a grasping of the promise for "thy seed's seed." On the opening page of Miss Fiske's Life it says: "Fidelia Fiske was a child of the covenant." Precious record!

Mr. Hastings tells of a father and mother who set apart an hour every Sunday morning to pray for their children. They were all converted, and, as they grew up and had families, they followed their parents' custom of prayer; so that, at the time of writing the sketch, there had been four generations of this godly pair, and not one of the four generations had been known to die unsaved. A number were ministers of the gospel and missionaries, and otherwise useful men and women.

Look at the mother of John Newton: Some time in the past century lived a poor woman in England, of whom the world knows but little, who had a son, and she poured out her tears and prayers for his conversion. But he grew up reckless and dissipated and profane. He engaged in the slave trade on the coast of Africa, and was perhaps hopelessly abandoned as any pirate who ever trod the deck of a slave trader. But at last, when all hope was nearly expired, his mother's ceaseless prayers were answered. He was converted; and was the means in God's hands of saving many more good and useful workers for God. This is the result of one mother's ceaseless prayers.

J. Hudson Taylor's mother was so burdened for his salvation that, while visiting at a friend's home, she excused herself from dinner and waited on God till she felt that God had heard and answered her. That afternoon in his far-away home he was led to Christ. As he told his mother, two weeks later, she joyfully replied: "I knew it fourteen days ago!"

Dr. A. J. Gordon said that one morning at family prayers his father broke down completely, and groaned and sobbed for his boys, and that it so affected him that before long he became a Christian.

(Selected by N. L. McF.)
Scripture Truth.

Praise.

"The race of God's anointed priests
Shall never pass away.
Before His glorious face they stand,
And serve Him night and day."

A truer stanza was never penned. It was written some three hundred years ago; if true then it is true to-day.

The business of the priest is, first and foremost, to praise. He may have other sacred occupations, but praise is the chief.

"God inhabiteth the praises of Israel" (as we read in Ps. 22. 3). Praise is His becoming environment. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee" (Ps. 84. 4). Praise is their delightful and constant employment.

When a tribe was chosen to lead Israel across the desert, from sea to river, Judah was selected, and Judah means "praise." Alas that the harpers failed in their song!

Praise was the pean of Jehoshaphat ere he fought his battle.

Stones would cry out if praise were restrained.

Prison walls only elicited praises when Christ's priests were, for His sake, placed in the stocks.

"Worthy is the Lamb" is the praise that reverberates throughout the wide vault of heaven. All is praise.

No, this race is immortal. It survives time with its thorns and hindrances, it shall continue for ever. It shall never pass away.

As surely as God has given His Spirit to a single soul—no matter when, or in what day or dispensation—that soul is hereby bound to sing His praise.

That Spirit is the pledged proof of blessing, and how can anyone be blessed without, subsequently, giving thanks and praise to the Blesser.

No doubt the fuller the light the deeper also the praise. The early notes of Ephesians 1. are a great advance on anything we find in the old Testament; but, whether Old Testament or New, praise is the very life of the saint. Who then are God's "anointed priests"? Are they a special and distinctive class? Are they marked off from others by any external attire—anything that places them in a caste peculiar to themselves?

What is the anointing, the consecration, whereby their priesthood is assured? It is the reception of the Spirit of God. All who can truly cry "Abba Father," who can thus consciously address God, these are anointed; they have received His Spirit, and this is true of every child of His—every Christian to-day. They are a "royal priesthood" so that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. The Christian community, the whole blood-bought family of God—the entire church of Christ, should be marked and distinguished by this grand special feature that, here and now, they show forth praise for the grace bestowed on them.

The apprehensions of all may differ, gifts may be diverse, but the one thing that declares the anointing is praise. That which God has done for His saints calls for their praise. Look at the Book of Psalms and see how it ends with a long, loud, lovely Hallelujah—a grand outburst of praise on the part of His redeemed and delivered people.

Quite true praise is not worship, but it is more than prayer and more too than thanksgiving.
We utter in prayer our wants, we give thanks for the gifts of God—His mercies and goodness; we praise Him for that which He has done, is doing and will do for our blessing—all this is in language articulate and audible, possibly, to the intelligence of men; but worship being the absorption of the soul in its glorious Object—the Father and the Son, may be beyond all possible expression. "The elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 5. 14). What they said (if anything) we are not told.

Such worship! How little do we understand it! What a terra incognita it is to the majority of the children of God! But what a field for our increased apprehension, ere we find ourselves in the Father's House on high where our absorption in God fully revealed—Father, Son and Spirit—shall be eternal and complete.

Praise, on the other hand, as the true and simple acknowledgment of our being placed already in His "marvellous light" is the becoming language of every saint of His to-day.

But may it be cultivated diligently. May we charge our sluggish, selfish grovelling hearts to live more in the bright, blessed region of praise to our God and Father as belonging to that "race of priests" which shall never pass away.

"Whoso offered praise glorifieth thee" (Ps. 59. 23).

J. WILSON SMITH.

Comfort in Sorrow.

Extracts from Letters.

There are many aching hearts and tear-filled eyes in the family of God in these sad days; many whose experience and feelings are exactly like those that find expression in the first of these extracts. It may be that such will find some comfort from those that follow it. We publish them with this hope.

"... They only know who know. I know. This sad blow has brought you to where I have come twice. When at my business I think of it. Lying down and rising up it is with me, threatening to break and rebreak my heart—at meal hours—why don't they come in? At night time—why don't they come in? Why does not the post bring letters? Others come from the front; they come no more!"

"There has been the wrench, the break, a breach, a wound. How unnatural, how cruel, it is! Not on God's part! Oh no! God is justified, whether it is something He allows, or brings to pass. We must possess a pure heart here."

"... Amid the crash of earthly hopes you are forced to take stock of your resources. You have GOD and His calling. You have CHRIST and His priesthood. You have THE HOLY SPIRIT and the comfort of His incessant service. You have THE WORD with its tender entrance in your heart's sorrow and its sweet sympathies with your trials. You have the PRAYERS OF GOD'S SAINTS, your brethren, wherever your loss is known. ... But the blank is there and nature cries out in its woe. Yet even for your—you have the knowledge of God's purpose for him, though death has supervened. But it will not fail of fulfilment, and your brightest and grandest hope for him will fructify, for he will be with and like Christ. ... You can be glad that among the happy spirits that are absent from the body and present with the Lord is one so dear to you. And even
the poor body which lies in French soil, sown in weakness, will be raised in power, to be like Christ and with Christ for ever. God has truly given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, and I trust He will comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.'

"Loved with all the love that fills the heavens
With eternal song—
Look up, weary heart—how short the sorrow,
And the love how long!"

"This is indeed a deep wound, but, thank God, His hands make whole the wounds HE makes, and I know that He who has chosen to refine you in the furnace of affliction is with you, though it may be heated seven times more than you have ever borne before. 'I will turn MY HAND upon thee and purely purge away thy dross' (Isa. 1. 25). His hand that was wounded for you is indeed a hand of love. I do pray that the presence of the Lord Jesus in this dark hour may be such that you will be able to thank Him for the trial..."

"The intense loss is only known to Him, and He only can fill the gap. 'I, even I, am He that comforteth you.' I have passed through deep waters and know what the miss of loved ones is and He who uphold me will uphold you. 'He carried them all the days' (Isa. 63. 9). As you cast this burden (gift, a lovely thought) on the Lord, He WILL sustain you (Ps. 55. 22). Hebrew of 'thy burden' is 'that He hath given thee.'"

"We can now praise God that another dear one is in His immediate presence, free from all the horrors of the field of battle, and the glorious prospect of the Lord's near appearing will help to lessen your present anguish. Surely He will not be long and then the glad reunion with the loved ones gone before—the 'together' of Thessalonians 4. 17 is so comforting."

"... The separation may be very brief, and His voice of power will touch first the poor shattered body... and then your living body, and together in bodies of glory you will ascend to Him who won his heart and yours. — waits yonder, we wait here, and He that testifies, 'Surely I come quickly,' is gratified by your response, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Till then the benediction is ours. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, and that is enough.'"

"My only thought regarding you both is that, 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' Your --- is gone, and you are bereft of your chief earthly treasure; but bereft by One who had a prior and a greater claim. --- was His in fullest right and title, and had been loaned to you, only that, for these --- years... That flower blooms now in Paradise, and is with the Lord. He shall 'rise again,' and you shall have him for ever in conditions new and eternal.'

"Your consolation lies in bowing to the will of God... The mystery of to-day will be solved and appreciated in light to-morrow."

"What can we say while sorrowing and sympathizing with you, but only to 'rejoice in the Lord always,' for the hope we have in Him, beyond all the mysteries of this present mysterious world. Of course it is sorrow—sorrow which He knows well and gauges to its depth, below which He has gone Himself to support us in it, and lift us above it in the power of an endless life.'

"Dear ---! He has gone HOME, and who would grudge him the change from a life of struggle and temptation to what is 'far better' than its best, even in service here? He was yours in part for a while. He is Christ's by deeper and by better ties for ever. His course is run as truly as if he had survived unto grey hairs. Time counts for nothing in eternity, though it is fruitful for it. A thousand years are as yesterday and as a watch in the night;
and the relationships traced in it in a body of clay are of interest only as they import what is eternal."

"God is faithful, not He has been, Not He will be, both are true; But to-day, in this great sorrow, God IS faithful NOW, to YOU."

"... I will tell you, if I may, of the way the Lord's word came to us when the news which brought our brightest earthly hopes crashing down about us reached us. We felt that we had to begin everything anew, even our family reading. And we took up our Bibles with the question, 'Where shall we read?' It turned out that Isaiah 24 was the chapter at which I opened, and the first words that arrested my eyes were, 'Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires' (ver. 15). It was our first lesson to be learned in this new form in God's school. Glorify the Lord! Own the wisdom of His way; rest in the love of His heart. Let His name be hallowed, lifted up in your souls above all question or doubt. Say, 'Blessed be the Name of the Lord,' and 'Though He slay me yet will I trust Him.' Yes, the first lesson was that of SUBJECTION to the holy will of God.'

"The chapter seemed so applicable to present conditions that we read it, and then the next day we went on to chapter 25. There we found another word waiting specially for us. 'He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.' Here was our second lesson. Our eyes must be lifted above 'the encircling gloom' to the fulfilment of God's most blessed and sure purposes. We must not sorrow as those who have no hope, for the day of God's victory and of our full comfort is not far off. This second lesson was that of HOPE in the fulfilment of God's sure Word.

"'Then we passed on to chapter 26. And our third lesson lay plainly before us. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because He trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength' (vers. 3, 4). This was a needed word and lesson indeed, by the learning of which our hearts could be kept quiet and calm in the turbulent waters and held up in the storm of sorrow. It was a lesson of TRUST in the absolute goodness of God. To put our whole confidence in Him; to rest in His strong hand and upon His tender heart; to trust Him wholly, even when we could not understand His way, and to go on trusting, leaning on His power, walking in His light—this is the way of perfect peace—of 'peace, peace,' as the margin reads. And so we put the three words together—a complete lesson are they—

"SUBJECTION, HOPE, TRUST.'"
The ancient city of Salonika, or Thessalonica as it was formerly called, has witnessed many a campaign. Armed men of various nations have trodden its narrow streets. But no campaign ever waged in or around the city can compare in character or importance with that of the year A.D. 53, conducted by two strangers from Asia, Paul and Silas. The visit of these two servants of Christ, the campaign they carried on in behalf of "another king, one Jesus," and the far-reaching results thereof, have lately been brought into fresh prominence by the preparation (by the Scripture Gift Mission) of 100,000 copies of the Epistles to the Thessalonians for distribution among the troops of the Allied nations now engaged in warfare at Salonika.

The message carried by the ambassadors of Christ to the men of the old Macedonian city has more than a mere historic interest. Its significance and importance are as great to-day as when it was first delivered. The campaign carried on by them on the occasion of their visit has had consequences which affect the lives of tens of thousands of men and women in this year of grace 1918.

Let us turn to the inspired account of this memorable visit. It is found in the first nine verses of Acts 17. We read that Paul, as his manner was, went first to the synagogue of the Jews. It was not till centuries after this that the great influx of persecuted Jews from Spain, driven from that unhappy country by the Catholic Ferdinand and Isabella, made of Thessalonica an almost Hebrew city. But already a considerable Jewish colony existed, and there was a synagogue, and, it would appear, a large number of proselytes from among the Greek inhabitants. Of these latter, and of the chief women of the Ghetto, many received the Apostle’s message with faith and gladness.

The message, first of all, laid stress on the great facts of the sufferings and the resurrection of Christ, and of the identification of the Jesus whom Paul preached with the Messiah to whom the Old Testament scriptures bore witness. No message can be of God unless it makes everything of Christ and shows that He, and the work He has done, are the keynote to all God’s ways of grace and blessing. This was the message that in the words of the unbelieving Jews of Salonika had “turned the world upside down.” They had grasped the fact that the great central theme of the Apostle’s preaching was JESUS, and that His was a kingdom destined one day to overthrow the kingdoms of earth, imperial Rome included.

God graciously wrought with His servants, so that many of the Thessalonians believed, and when, after their short sojourn the time came for them to leave, there was a company of brethren who shared their trials and made arrangements for their safe departure. This much we learn from the narrative in the Acts.

From the two Epistles, written to the Thessalonian church by the Apostle some time after his memorable visit to their city, we learn much more of the subject matter of his preaching and teaching amongst them. Let us turn to some of the references.

I.

With no uncertain sound the Apostle states what was his main object in his visit to Thessalonica, an object to which he made his whole manner of life subservient. He says:

“WE WERE BOLD IN OUR GOD TO SPEAK UNTO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD WITH MUCH CONTENTION. . . FOR YE REMEMBER, BRETHREN, OUR LABOUR AND TRAVAL: FOR LABOURING NIGHT AND DAY BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT BE
The preaching of the glad tidings: this was the prime motive of the labours of Paul at Thessalonica. For this he endured persecution and hardship; for this he toiled at making up the goat-hair of his native Cilicia into tents, carrying his labour far into the night. Of what supreme importance in his eyes must have been the proclamation of the grace of God!

Nor has the importance of this diminished with the passing of centuries. Men may boast of their progress, and imagine that modern developments of religious thought have made the gospel old fashioned and unnecessary. But it is still true that man can have no relations with God, and cannot escape the due penalty of his sins, save on the basis which the gospel declares. God's terms have not changed. Christ, the blessed Son of God, is the only Saviour offered to the world, and the salvation that is in Him is only available on the ground of His atoning death, through the merits of His precious blood. By faith, and faith alone, is this great good to be appropriated. Unless a man begins here he cannot begin to live unto God at all. Unless he starts by believing the gospel of his salvation he has not made any kind of start on the road that leads to glory. Can we wonder, then, that the ambassador of Christ at Salonika devoted himself in the chief place to the setting forth of the message of life and salvation?

But he had other things also to proclaim. Those who had believed the glad tidings had need of much further instruction. What were they to expect now that their allegiance was given to One who had been cast out from among men and delivered to an ignominious death? Had the Apostle anything to say on this subject? Let us see.

II.

"VERILY, WHEN WE WERE WITH YOU, WE TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT WE SHOULD SUFFER TRIBULATION" (3. 4).

The Apostle did not deceive them by representing the Christian life as smooth and easy-going. He did not by any means suggest that those who received the gospel would be able to spend their days in singing, and be carried to heaven on a bed of roses. Tribulation is the normal lot of those who are true to a rejected and crucified Lord. This Paul had again and again proved for himself, and he would have the converts at Thessalonica prepared for what they must expect.

Sometimes the question is raised: In what respects are Christians better off than the men of the world? They have their full portion of trials and disappointments; their path is not shielded from sorrow, and they have additional hardships to bear on account of their faith. The answer is, that while all this is true, the Christian has something which helps him to endure, something that takes the sting from sorrow, and makes the heavy burden seem light. This "something" is the secret help of Christ, the enjoyment of His love, and the knowledge that suffering is only for "a little while" and that then will come an eternity of joy unspeakable.

Let no real Christian seek or expect to escape his share of tribulation. Does anyone imagine that the necessity for this has disappeared because the character of the days in which we live is different? On the contrary, as we reach the "last days" the tribulation becomes more acute. We read that "in the last days perilous times shall come... and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3. 1, 12). It was part of the Apostle's ministry during his Salonika campaign to warn his hearers as to these things.
III.

Another matter of which the servants of Christ spoke while at Salonika is referred to in chapter 4. 6:

"THE LORD IS THE AVENGER OF ALL SUCH, AS WE ALSO HAVE FOREWARNED YOU AND TESTIFIED."

The liberty into which we are brought as the children of God is not a licence to sin. We cannot do wrong with impunity. The Lord Himself takes the part of the one who suffers the wrong and pledges Himself to avenge it. The consequences may not always fall upon the wrong-doer immediately, nor, in some cases, may we discover the serious results to ourselves of the injury we have done to another until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But what we sow, sooner or later we reap. So let us be on our guard against anything that will entail the righteous chastisement of the Lord upon our heads.

Grace does not militate against government; the fact that God is our Father does not involve the cessation of His just rule over us. On the contrary we become subject in a new way to that holy and blessed rule. For it is as our Father He judges according to every man's work (1 Peter 1. 17), and He chastises us for the very reason that we are His sons (Heb. 12. 7).

All this is most wholesome for us to know and remember. No wonder that the Apostle forewarned the Thessalonian Christians as to the consequences of practical wrong-doing, and testified as to the attitude that the Lord would assume towards those who injured their brother.

But his exhortations as to practical walk and ways were not all of this negative character. He did not merely testify as to what they should not do. Again and again he dwelt upon the kind of walk that should mark those who professed to belong to Christ. We see this in two or three passages that we will quote under our fourth heading.

IV.

"YE KNOW HOW WE EXHORTED AND COMFORTED AND CHARGED EVERY ONE OF YOU, AS A FATHER DOTH HIS CHILDREN, THAT YE WOULD WALK WORTHY OF GOD, WHO HATH CALLED YOU UNTO HIS KINGDOM AND GLORY" (2. II, 12).

Not only in public discourses, but in private conversations the Apostle showed his earnest desire that those who had been the subjects of God's call and who were bound for His kingdom and glory, should walk worthy of Him who had shown them such grace. This was to be the motive that should actuate them. People who observed them would form their estimate of the God to whom they belonged by the way in which they walked. Nor did Paul leave them in the dark as to how to walk so as to bring honour to the great Name by which they were called. For in chapter 4. 1 he says:

"YE HAVE RECEIVED OF US HOW YE OUGHT TO WALK AND TO PLEASE GOD."

The learned and pious translator who has given us the "New Translation" of the Scriptures says in a note upon this verse, "The point is, what is the way to please Him, not that it ought to be an object, however true that may be. Here it is assumed." The previously quoted passage shows us that to please God should be our object. And here Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they had heard from him how they should do this. Born of God though we are, and indwelt by His Holy Spirit, yet we need to have set before us objectively the things that we are to pursue and cleave to if we would have our walk pleasing to Him. "Excellent things," "things . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report" are not infrequently brought before us in other
parts of the Word. But we have all set before us livingly in the blessed Lord Himself in His pathway here. We see the things that are of great worth in the eyes of God shining out in perfection in Him. And loving Him, we get to love the things that characterized Him, and thus we are formed after Him by the work of the Spirit. This shows itself in our ways, and in proportion as this is true of us we become like Christ, and God can find pleasure in our walk. He finds pleasure in nothing but Christ, and it is only as Christ is formed in us and is exhibited in our walk that there can be anything in us to please Him.

No doubt the Apostle brought this before the Thessalonian believers. Taught of God Himself though they were, yet they needed to have the way of His pleasure made known to them, and this His servants took care to do. Says the Apostle: "YE KNOW WHAT COMMANDMENTS WE GAVE YOU BY THE LORD JESUS" (chap. 4. 2).

But there was something further. The Thessalonians had turned to God from their idols, not only to serve Him, but to await the coming of His Son from heaven. They were instructed as to this, and the Epistles contain further instruction, intended to supplement that which had already been imparted in the way of verbal ministry. But even though the Apostle appears to have left much to communicate on the subject of the Lord's Coming till he wrote the Epistles, yet he had taught the Saints at Salonika the truth as to the manifestation of the man of sin, which was to take place after the Lord's descent from heaven with a shout, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the catching up of those that should be alive (see 1st Ep. 4. 16, 17), and which was to precede the advent of the "Day of Christ" (2nd Ep. 2. 2, 3). Let us quote his words.

V.

"THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST, AND THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION . . . REMEMBER YE NOT, THAT, WHEN I WAS YET WITH YOU, I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS?" (2 Thess. 2. 3-5).

It is evidently of importance that we should be instructed as to the character and coming of the false Christ, whose advent is to be the outcome of the direct work of Satan (ver. 9). During his short stay at Salonika Paul had included this subject in his ministry, and now in his second epistle he repeats the instruction, so that all of us may profit thereby.

Before the Day of Christ can come, three things have to take place, according to the Scriptures:

1. A catching away (1 Thess. 4. 17).
2. A falling away (2 Thess. 2. 3).
3. A sweeping away (Isa. 28. 17).

The "catching away" is what we Christians are waiting for. It will take place when the Lord descends into the air to claim His own.

The "falling away" is the apostasy of Christendom; the name of Christ being given up, the truth entirely abandoned, and the man of sin being received and venerated as a god.

The "sweeping away" refers to the judgment of God that will fall upon the nation of Israel, also apostate and in league with death and hell in the person of Satan's great superman, the Antichrist (see Isa. 28. 15).

Recent happenings, and the present state of the world, all seem to point to the rapid development of the great final crisis. The currents running so strongly among the nations indicate it. Is the conclusion of the war going to witness the proclamation of universal peace? Very probably. But its proclamation is one thing, its establishment quite another. The proclamation of peace is on a future occasion to be quickly followed by sudden destruction (1 Thess. 5. 3). May it not be that this will be
fulfilled in the eagerly anticipated peace that is to follow the present turmoil among the nations?

Is democracy to hold sway and work its will unhindered? The sea is an apt picture of the restless peoples rising and surging in tides of revolution. The late W. Kelly, in his "Lectures on the Book of Revelation" says: "The sea sets forth the unformed mass of the people under a troubled state of the world—people in great agitation, like the restless waves of the deep. It is that which represents a revolutionary condition among men." Now mark the point: it is out of the sea, out of a condition such as we have seen exemplified in Russia, that the last great European ruler is to arise. Revelation 13. I teaches us this. Who shall say that the present condition of things in Europe does not answer to the vision in the first part of that chapter?

Again, are the nations leaguing themselves together for the purposes of mutual support? Is the present Entente of ten European nations (supported as it is by nearly the whole of Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Australia) to persist in a more or less modified form after the war? Well, it is exactly what is predicted in the Word of God, as taking place just before the coming of the Day of Christ. Have we not read again and again of the ten kings which are to receive power as kings one hour with the Beast, and which have one mind, combining to support the Beast, who is the great European leader of the last times?

Yes, everything points to the speedy fulfilment of these and many other prophecies. Things have been moving with tremendous rapidity of late, and no doubt the speed will still further increase when the church is removed from the earth and the Holy Ghost will no longer be here to restrain the final violent outburst of the powers of evil.

The Apostle told the Thessalonians of these things, and we, who live centuries nearer the day of fulfilment, shall do well to give heed to his words.

Not that we should become mystical, or cease to diligently perform our duties in the world because we look to be so soon taken out of it. This danger was foreseen by the Apostle, and dealt with during his sojourn at Salonika. Read what he says.

VI.

"FOR EVEN WHEN WE WERE WITH YOU, THIS WE COMMANDED YOU, THAT IF ANY WOULD NOT WORK, NEITHER SHOULD HE EAT" (2nd Ep. 3. 10).

Christianity never makes men unpractical. There have been contemplative, mystical, unpractical Christians, excellent people in their way, deep students of the Bible and a host of other books, but their hold of divine realities has been defective. The Lord Jesus was not that sort of person when He was in the world. The truth when held with an even balance and rightly divided, makes the Christian the most practical of men. He is no visionary, with his head in the clouds. He is in touch with what is supernatural, but the power that comes to his help from heaven enables him to tread his appointed pathway in quietness and peace. He does his daily work diligently and in the fear of God. The importance of this is urged by the Apostle, and is referred to by him again in the epistles because there were evidently some who, perhaps carried away by excitement, or the morbid feelings of their uninstructed minds, were using the Christian hope of the coming of the Lord as an excuse for negligence in connection with everyday duties. Surely the right appreciation of the fact that the Lord may come at any moment will lead us rather to increased diligence, so that when He comes He may find us doing His pleasure, and bearing witness to the reality of the grace that has saved us and the power which keeps us day by day.

Harold P. Barker.
Love in Redemption.

In creation the eternal power and divinity of God are declared; in government His authority is displayed; in redemption His great love is revealed.

The present gospel of the grace of God has to do with the last; the future gospel of the kingdom with the second; and the everlasting gospel with the first. In its special bearing, this is also future.

The gospel of the present period, and that which is involved in it, is what we desire to speak of. The preaching of it is in the Acts of the Apostles and its teaching is in the Epistle to the Romans. The latter instructs us that those who have received the gospel are justified freely by God’s grace “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (3. 24). It was the love of God which planned and provided this redemption in Him.

Outside of Christ, the unbelieving remain “in sin.” This stands in contrast to being “in Christ,” just as being “in the flesh” is in contrast to being “in the Spirit.” The unbeliever is in sin, and sin is in him: the believer is not in sin, though sin is yet in him.

Now the redemption which is in Christ Jesus involves, eventually, the complete deliverance of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and also the deliverance of the inheritance, the purchased possession, where bondage is now through Satan’s power. The love of God has secured this eternal redemption in Christ Jesus righteously through Christ’s death; and believers, though still waiting for the redemption of their bodies, can say even now, In Christ we have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1. 7). The redemption is theirs; and soon, the display of it will unfold the vast and varied riches of all that is now enfolded in it, to the praise of God’s glory; while our hearts shall rejoice in, and praise the love which brought it all to pass; when spirit, soul and body shall reap the glorious results of that redeeming love.

Those who share in this were once like others—away from God and “in sin.” They were reached by the gospel of God’s grace;—called, and justified, they are brought to have part in these things by faith, even before they are actually glorified. Christ having stepped into their place in grace, He opened a way by His death and resurrection whereby they could come into His place now before God. He died to sin once, and now He lives to God. Those who are His can consequently reckon this change of position theirs, for He took it for them. So it is written, “Reckon ye yourselves also dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6. 11). It is in Him they are thus livingly brought into the good of redemption now before God; for the redemption is in Him in whom they are now alive to God.

Moreover, the wonderful gift of God is also in Christ Jesus. This we are told at the close of Romans 6. The gift of God, or the act of His favour, is “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (N.T.). Promise having been made of life on God’s part, He has now secured this for those who were once in sin, through the death and resurrection of Christ. By man sin came, and death by sin: by man also, our Lord Jesus Christ righteousness and life are secured; and, in free favour, God has now given to us eternal life in Him. The grace of God has over-abounded where sin abounded, that eternal life might be ours, and that through righteousness. It is ours now as God’s gift, though we await its fullness in glory. This life was necessary if we were to enter into the riches of redemption; and, eventually, those who receive this abundance of grace, and of the free gift of righteousness,
shall ""reign in life"" by Jesus Christ (Rom. 5. 17).

The love of God having thus wrought for those who were once guilty and subject to condemnation, they are now placed where there is no longer anything to condemn. They are

"IN CHRIST JESUS."

"The love of God is commended toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). Now He has raised Christ from the dead, all the sin and condemnation having been borne. There is now nothing to condemn in Him raised in life, and we are in Him. Redemption is in Christ Jesus, and we are there. ("CHRIST JESUS" is a name used of Jesus in resurrection.) Life is in Him, and there we now live to God. God's gift to us is in Him, and we are there too. How naturally therefore those precious words of Romans 8. I come to us: "There's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

"NO CONDEMNATION, OH, MY SOUL 'TIS GOD WHO SPEAKS THE WORD."

Before there could be any condemnation for one of His own, let it be said with reverence as with truth, the One in whom they are must be found subject to it Himself; but, thank God, that can never be. Nor is it only that we are clear of condemnation in Christ Jesus, for in Him we have the positive blessedness of God's love as our present portion, even as the last verse of Romans 8. tells us: "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No condemnation for those in Him! but the love of God is theirs, and nought can separate them from it. Eternal praise to our redeeming God.

We may well glory in the Lord, boast in Christ Jesus, and be strong in the grace that is in Him! We have seen from Romans 3. -8. that—

(1) Redemption is in Christ Jesus;
(2) We are alive to God in Him;
(3) God's gift is in Christ Jesus;
(4) There is no condemnation there;
(5) But God's love is in Him.

Redemption, as we have shown, has placed us where the love of God that planned it is; and it has done so in such wise that all the praise is to the glory of God's grace, which is His love in activity, taking us into favour in His beloved Son. Each one of us therefore who knows this can say what the Apostle said concerning all those who belong to Christ: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In closing, it must be said, Though this belongs to all the saints, yet, if like Caleb and Joshua, we would rejoice in the wealthy Canaan freely given to us of God, communion with Him, as we abide in Christ, is to be maintained. Thus we shall dwell in divine love. Christ fed upon, as the One who went into death for us and rose again, is the food and strength of this communion, even as He said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in Me and I in him." Mark, it says, "Dwelleth!" not a happy visit on some special occasion, but—

"DWELLETH!"

H. J. VINE.

"His love's a changeless everlasting NOW, And thus my happy soul is still at rest in God's eternal will."

"His hand at last, the hand once pierced for me, For ever holdeth mine— O Lord, no song, no harps of heaven will be Sweet as one Word of Thine."
A THIRD passage awaits us. It is chapter 15. 26, 27. To understand it a little we require to read its context. The end of the fourteenth chapter shows that up to that point the Lord had the disciples inside with Him. The fifteenth then seems to view them as coming out into the world, privileged and responsible to bear fruit for the Father, and yet certain to meet with hostility and hatred from the scene outside. Verses 17 and 18 show a remarkable contrast; love in the circle within, hatred from the world without. Christianity is, properly speaking, a love circle. You have the Father loving the Son, and the Son loving the Father. You have the Son loving the disciples, and the disciples loving the Son. You have the Father loving the disciples because they loved Jesus. You have the disciples loving one another. And I think that the picture can hardly be complete without a suggestion that the disciples—seeing what the Father is, in and through Jesus the Son—must have begun to love the Father too. Anyway, here is a love circle, and through grace, though few and weak, we are in it.

And what outside? Hatred; just downright, unreasonable, blind hatred. Hatred to the Father, hatred to the Son revealing the Father, hatred to the disciples who bear testimony to the Son, hatred to every testimony given by the Holy Ghost through the disciples. A love circle in the midst of implacable hatred. Such are we here, in no strength or power of our own, assailed by all that corruption or violence can invent to blight our testimony and to obliterate every trace of the Christ of God. Who could stand for one hour were it not for the Spirit of God?

But we have verse 26. The same Spirit, the gift of the Father in chapter 14. 16, sent of the Father in chapter 14. 26, is here said to be sent of the Son from the Father. The risen One upon whom fell the brunt of the opposition to God in His earthly life, who knew the bitter and ceaseless hatred of men against the whole truth of God, understands perfectly the position of His dear disciples left here, the raging of the antagonism that would test their faith and wear their spirits, and destroy their loyalty if possible. Viewing it all, and knowing exactly what they needed, He having reached the Father’s presence on high, sent down the Comforter to them, to be with them in this otherwise unequal conflict. As seen in this passage, then, the Comforter comes to sustain the testimony of Christ in the world from which Christ has been rejected with hatred; and is again described by the Lord as the Spirit of Truth. He is identified with, and bears witness to, the whole range of truth. The world is a vast system of unreality and falsehood, and is hostile to the truth; there is the element of contrariety in it to every detail of the truth of God. In whatever aspect truth is presented to it, it fights against it; it gives no quarter and shows no pity. Whoever stands for Christ will be relentlessly persecuted. Its character is unchanged through all the Christian period, and notwithstanding all the revelation of the patience and love of God.

In the midst of such a scene the Spirit appears, and raises the testimony to Christ. He identifies Himself with it, and with the disciples who were standing for Him. It is to be remarked that when it is a question of testifying unto Jesus, the words are added, “which proceedeth from the Father,” that is, that while He is sent by the Son from the Father, He comes voluntarily and as an act of His own. Gladly does He come even into
this uncongenial scene if it be to render tribute to the honour of Jesus, and to keep alive the light for His Name. "He shall testify of Me." Thus is summed up in one clause the whole of the Christian witness. It is to be here for Christ. But it involves much. It involves the displacement of self, it means warfare, defensive and offensive. It costs, it hurts; yet neither hurt nor cost can be for a moment deterrent if only Christ be precious as the Spirit would make Him precious.

The Apostles were to be associated with the Spirit in this testimony for their absent Lord; but while they were the beginning of the host, a vast number have since followed in their steps, and have been added to the nucleus of witnesses. The Spirit remains. The subject of testimony, Christ, is the same. The hostility of the world undergoes no diminution or attrition. But the units who form the vessels of testimony are in solution; these coming, those going. How simple our Christianity would be if we only realized that the Holy Ghost raises the flag for Christ, and that we Christians simply rally round the uplifted standard. Nothing other than Christ; nothing less than Christ.

Our last passage to-day is chapter 16. 7-15. A very world of meaning seems to lie in these verses, but we must strictly limit ourselves, praying that the gist of the Lord's words may be conveyed to the reader, and that, like good seed in an honest and good heart, it may germinate and grow.

The news of His coming absence filled the disciples with sorrow. Although they did not yet realize to the full all the character of the world in which they were to be left, nor the gain that would accrue to them by His going, the sense that they were to be left was a pain and a grief that for the moment appalled them. Once more does the gracious Son of God bring in oil upon the troubled waters, referring a little more in detail to the Comforter and to His service. But His introductory words in this section are amazing.

Notwithstanding all the sweetness and power of their association with Him on earth, despite all the marvellous gain it must have been to these few simple men to see the service of the Son of God, to hear His ministry, to realize His love, to walk in such exalted company, to be shepherded by such a Person amid such surroundings, their loved Master's words fall upon their ears, mysterious yet true—true they must be, for they were His words—"It is expedient for you that I go away." It is profitable for you, it is to your advantage that I leave. Oh, how could they have understood it if He had stopped there? Let us reverently trace out the words that followed: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." The gain of which He spoke would be conveyed to them by the Comforter whom He would send. The presence of the Holy Spirit with them, consequent upon His departure to the Father, would be more to them than His presence could then be, while in flesh and blood upon earth.

It is intelligible if we come to understand what His death, resurrection, and exultation would effect for them. The atonement for sin to be wrought by the shedding of His Blood, the life to be shared with Him as the Man risen victoriously out of death, the place in the Father's presence to be taken on their behalf to show their destination in the Father's purpose—all these things were involved. It was with all this in view that the Lord speaks of going away; and promises the Comforter as their solace and their gain in His absence. Do we realize all that the Spirit is given to be to us? Dare one of us say that there is naught more to be learnt or enjoyed of what He can do in us?

There are two great lines opened up by the coming of the Comforter as our Lord indicates here. The first is what
His coming means in regard of the world; the second, what it means in regard of His own that are in the world.

The first is declared thus, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

His presence here, and Christ's enthronement on high, are related to each other as the two sides of a coin. Now Christ's exaltation in heaven is God's reversal of man's rejection of Him on the earth.

These then depend mutually the one on the other; if Jesus had not been rejected here, the Spirit would not have descended to take His place. The presence of God the Holy Ghost, resident among Christ's people and in them, brings demonstration in itself— independent of any such things as preaching —of the state of the world into which He has descended. It is a world which has not believed in Jesus, God's Son. It is a world which, in spite of civilization and education and philosophy and inventions, is guilty before God of the rejection and murder of its own Saviour. Whether autocracy be in the van or democracy rule; whether religion be prevalent or irreligion; the voice of the world religious, and the world political, and the world social, has been raised once for all in its critical hour against Christ, "Away with Him, crucify Him." This then defines its character in the Spirit's eyes, and in the eyes of him who is indwelt and taught by the Spirit; it is SIN. It may come with its honours, its rewards, its pleasures; it may offer its wealth or its fame or its interests; but over them all the Christian sees that definition writ large, SIN; "of sin, because they believe not on Me."

Now at first sight this would make it appear as though sin had got the upper hand, even though the Spirit be here to protest against it. But a second consideration is brought before us. While we feel the wrong, the deadly wrong, of Christ's rejection, and are taught to repudiate with all our hearts the world's refusal of Him, we are comforted when we think of what took place immediately afterward. For He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, claimed by it for the Father's presence on high. While we see, and are ashamed of, and by grace repudiate, the world's wrong act in refusing Him, we are taught to approve of and delight in God's right act in accepting and exalting Him. It shows us there is such a thing as righteousness in the universe, even though it consist for the moment in removing Christ personally from the sphere of human sight. We know at least where He has gone, and that the place which He occupies in the Father's presence is the Father's righteous answer to the world's wrong. The Spirit's presence here, contingent as it was upon His going there, is a continual reminder that righteousness exists, and will prevail against sin's worst doings. It is the pledge that God will in His own time, and publicly, establish righteousness on the throne and right every wrong, even as He has already privately done so in setting Christ there, where we see Him by faith. If we think alone of the cross, unrighteousness seems to have prevailed; but we look into the Father's presence and we see that after all righteousness has conquered, and is in evidence from the lowest point to the highest.

But, finally, this leads to a very serious conclusion. Behind the world's action has been the prince of the world. However little we know of the way evil spirits operate through human minds, Scripture leaves us in no uncertainty as to the fact that Satan can and does use man as a tool to give effect to his purposes. By craft at the beginning he became the dominating factor in Eve's mind and set her in motion against God; and the forces then started in their germs developed in the clearest way when he led Jew and Gentile together.
into the murder of God's Son. So that in the death of Christ we see Satan's purpose challenging God's purpose; the counsels of the prince of this world up against the counsels of God. Which was, which is, to prevail? Christ's exaltation on high, and the Spirit's presence here in the world, is God's answer, and solves it all for us. The prince of this world is judged. God has already given to Christ personally the place He is to occupy according to His plan; and the Spirit is here quietly and resistlessly carrying out His purpose in respect of His disciples. And this brings the whole world, as a system dominated by Satan and built up according to his purpose, under the judgment of God. All that he plans will be overturned by the same power that has set Jesus on high out of death, and has sent the Spirit to testify of Him here.

Such then is the world's character as the Spirit's presence determines it for us.

But then it is clear that if this be so, the Holy Ghost must aim at occupying our minds—not with the world as we see it now, the awful sphere of Satan's workings, but—with the world to come, when the Father's counsels will prevail. How blessedly natural therefore are the words which follow in chapter 16. 13-15.

First, let us point out that the Spirit is to guide us into all truth. There is now no limit to what He may teach us, and grant us the realization of. Secondly, however, He is to guide us, not exactly force us. It supposes no reluctance on our part, but rather a glad surrender to our Guide. Any point at which we submit to be deflected by human affection or earthly interest is the point at which we lose His guidance, and miss the path of truth. Any reserve in our hearts as to putting ourselves under His absolute control because of some cost dreaded, and no one can tell what we miss. Many would like to save themselves exercise by following human leaders, eminent teachers, and so on; but it is a sad substitution for the One of whom Christ says, "He shall guide you into all truth."

But now we see the blessed themes with which He would fill our hearts, all I doubt not in connection with the Father's counsels, and what you might call the Father's world.

In verse 13: "He will show you,"
In verse 14: "and shall show,"
In verse 15: "and shall show."

The first is in connection with "things to come." The second, "He shall glorify Me." The third, "All things that the Father hath." These three things are all to be opened out to us in so far as the Spirit of God has His way with us. All the details of the world to come, all the glories of Christ, and the whole range of the Father's counsels which have Christ for their Centre.

Oh dear fellow-believer, may we be more in earnest about giving the Holy Ghost His place in our lives, and so find our souls filled and thrilled with the delights He has to place before us, and enjoying the fellowship with God's thoughts for which His grace has fitted us.

W. H. WESTCOTT.
Is God to Blame?

We have met men who have denied the goodness of God because of the present sorrows of humanity, and we know others who have misgivings and much perplexity of mind because He has not brought the war to a close by some signal mark of His displeasure upon the guilty aggressors in it. Some openly lay the blame of it all at God's door, others do so tacitly by their questions and doubts.

But if we trace out God's ways with men from the beginning we shall see that every dispensation has been framed in divine wisdom to bring peace and blessing to men, if they would only abide by the conditions imposed in God's dealings with them, and if trouble has come upon them, it is because they have chosen the way that seems right unto them instead of God's way.

Creation.—Take the very beginning of man's career. Who can read the first two chapters of Genesis without feeling that God had a tender care for him. What pains He took to prepare His residence. How wonderfully He ordered things for His benefit, considering him from every side so that he should lack nothing that was necessary to make up the sum of earthly good. How alien to that pleasant garden were hatred, strife and bloodshed, and God had made it so. It was all designed by Him, and every provision for the lives of the happy pair that He placed therein proved that He wished them to live in contentment and peace.

Nor did He lay any grievous burden upon them. God was no almighty tyrant breaking the neck of His creature with an unbearable yoke. He made him rich with His blessing, shed the radiance of His good pleasure upon him, and then gave him only one simple command. That command was broken deliberately and, it would appear, immediately. And they had no excuse for doing so, "Men do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." But they were not hungry, for the countless trees of that wonderful paradise yielded their precious fruits for their sustenance. But man would be independent of God, the master of his own destiny as he thought, and by his act of disobedience he opened the door for all the evils that followed.

Disobedience of God in chapter 3. was followed by hatred of one another in chapter 4., and the startled earth drank for the first time in her sad history the blood of a man made in the image of God. And that lifeless man, who lay at the feet of his murderer, was not slain by a wild beast of the forest, or by a demon from the nether darkness, but by the son of his own mother, by the first man born to the disobedient pair. Hatred, strife, and cruelty are the offspring of disobedience to God, which is sin, and it is because man abides in this disobedience that these awful things are triumphant to-day. They are not God's choice for man, but the consequences of the choice that he has made for himself in defiance to the will of God.

Government.—As men multiplied the violence of Cain filled the earth, until God had to cleanse it with judgment, one family—the only righteous family amongst the earth's millions—being saved from the universal flood. God gave the government of the earth into the hands of the head of that family, and afterwards divided up his descendants into nations, setting the bounds of their habitations. Paul's address to the Athenians (Acts 17.) is illuminating in this connection. It is evident from the 26th verse of that chapter that the earth's surface is sufficient for the habitation of men, and that God has set the bounds of the nations. If men had respect to these God-appointed bounds, and had been contented with the "place
in the sun" that He had given them, there would have been no wars. But not finding satisfaction in their possessions and refusing to feel after God for it, they have cast covetous eyes upon their neighbours' lot and have broken the bounds by God appointed, thence the bloodshed and the sorrow. But again the cause lies in the sinful and covetous will of man that refuses the restraint that God has put upon it.

LAW.—The next step in God's ways for the blessing of mankind was that of taking out a special nation and giving them His laws for the guidance of their lives in righteousness and peace. Canaan had to be cleared for them, but not until the people that defiled it had filled up the cup of their iniquities, their heathen abominations being of such an outrageous character that it is said the very land "vomited out the inhabitants thereof." Then Israel was set in it with God's law to bless them and to make them a blessing to all nations of the earth. That law is summed up in two great commands: "(1) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; (2) and thy neighbour as thyself." And it should be clear to all that if men had been obedient to God's good and holy law the vast resources of the civilized world in brain, brawn and material would not now be taxed to their uttermost on works of destruction.

GOD IN CHRIST.—Then a marvellous thing took place. God showed His interest in men and His will to save them from their self-willed folly in a new way. Not now by His goodness in creation, or His wisdom in His providential government, or His justice in His law, but He came down Himself to dwell amongst us. "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass," said the shepherds. They went and "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen." But what had they seen? A BABE IN A MANGER wrapped in swaddling clothes. Was that a great sight? It was, it was the most marvellous sight ever seen in heaven or on earth, for the name of that babe was EMANUEL—"A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD." There was God manifest in flesh, the only-begotten which is in the bosom of the Father born into the world of a virgin mother—"to give light unto them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, TO GUIDE OUR FEET IN THE WAY OF PEACE."

That Babe, born in those circumstances of extremest poverty, had come from the eternal throne to reconcile the world to God, and give it peace. So the heavenly hosts praised God and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." He was Himself the peace, but the world would not receive Him. They crowned Him, but it was with thorns; they refused their blessing and hugged their misery; chose war instead of peace, cried, "Not this man but Barabbas: now Barabbas was a robber." If the world has been shaken by wars and rumours of wars since that fateful day it is because it put the Prince of peace upon a felon's cross instead of on a throne.

THE GOSPEL.—We should have thought that the murder of God's Son would have brought man's history on earth to a close in judgment. But no, God has made the chief expression of man's rebellious will and hatred of Him to be the full manifestation of His great love to men, and for near a score of centuries the gospel of grace of God has been preached to men by the Holy Spirit of God come down from heaven. Who that carefully considers that gospel can doubt that if it had been heard and believed it would have brought men's feet into the ways of peace? The effect of it, when truly received, is to make the recipients like the God from whom it has come, and ready to lay down their lives for one another. The warring millions prove beyond a ques-
tion that God's last and best offer of blessing to men has been despised and rejected by the vast majority as every other approach to man on God's part has been.

But why do we trace out these various dealings of God with men? Simply to prove that the blame of the world's sorrow does not lie at God's door, but at man's. We would raise a testimony to the goodness of God. He willeth not the death of any, but that all should turn to Him and live.

But we are nearing the end of this period of grace, this greatest of all the manifestations of God's patience with men.

Surely the time seems ripe for the intervention of God, to bring the world's long history of wilfulness and sin to a close in judgment, to end corruption and violence, and to establish His kingdom of peace. This He will do, but meanwhile He waits, and we count His long-suffering salvation. Oh that men would be wise and turn to Him and prove for themselves that He is their friend and not their foe, that His will for them is good and acceptable, while theirs can only end in disaster, and that He has in store for them a home and a land untouched by sin, where death is swallowed up in victory, and where tears are wiped away from all faces, where pain and sorrow and death come not, but where God is all in all.

J. T. MAWSON.

"THEREFORE doth My Father love Me, BECAUSE I lay down My life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10. 17, 18).

This seems to suggest—does it not—that the Lord Jesus supplied the Father with a fresh motive for loving Him. We know that the Son ever was the Object of the Father's deepest affection. Under the name of Wisdom we hear Him speak in Proverbs 8. 22-31 of the place that He had with the Father before the world's foundations were laid.

"Then was I by Him, as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (ver. 30).

Wending His lonely pathway through this world, every step of which was for the glory of God, the Father once and again opened the heavens over Him and said:

"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5).

Yet in the verses before us He Himself says, "THEREFORE doth My Father love Me BECAUSE—" The Gospel according to John brings the Lord Jesus before us as the Son of God in the divine glory of His Person. It also brings His death before us in the burnt-offering character. It was His own voluntary act, and it was all for God. These great facts are embodied in the verses that we are now considering, and are developed in more or less detail in Colossians 1., Hebrews 1. and 9. In Colossians 1. we learn that "from Godhead's fullest glory" He came, invested with all the fullness of the Godhead, to accomplish the work on the ground of which He should reconcile everything to the Godhead (vers. 19-22). In Hebrews 1. we see that by reason of who He was in the excellency of His Person, He "made purification of sins" (ver. 3, R.V.). He came to carry
out that which would ensure the final and complete removal from before the eye of God of all that was obnoxious to Him. Hebrews 9. 14 tells us how He did it. Having lived a life that was blameless in God's sight, and delightful to His heart, HE

"through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God."

As we contemplate the greatness of the Person; as we consider the magnitude of the work; as we try to conceive the far-reaching results that flow from it; as we think of the glory that has been brought to God; as we see that now the Father's name has been declared, and His love has been revealed; we can apprehend in some measure how the Father found a new cause for loving the Son.

* * * * *

"The Father Himself loveth you, BECAUSE ye have loved Me" (John 16. 27).

Here we see how we may give the Father fresh cause to love us. He loved us when He chose us and gave us to the Son in the past eternity. He loved us when He gave the well-beloved of His heart to die for us. He loved us when He saved us and called us His children. We are daily conscious of being the objects of His eternal, unchanging, and unchangeable love. In the precious words now under consideration, we find, however, still another reason for His loving us. So unspeakably dear is His Son to His heart, that all who love Him have a special claim upon the love of the Father. Some deprecate our being occupied with our love to Christ, and indeed as we realize how poor and fickle it is, we feel that we cannot say much about it. Nevertheless, that the Lord values and counts upon our love is evident from His many allusions to it in John 14., and in this last mention of it He shows how it is appreciated by the Father, and that our present compensa-

tion for any suffering that loyalty to Him might involve, is the Father's love.

* * * * *

"We love Him, BECAUSE He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19).

We can very easily understand this, even if we cannot understand why He loved us. There was not the slightest pulsation of our heart toward Him. We were "hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3. 3).

Yet He set His heart upon us; He determined to have us for Himself, and though it meant the suffering of Calvary's Cross, this was endured in order that the yearning of the heart of infinite love might be gratified. Our hearts have been captivated by the wonderful story of such wonderful love, and

"We love Him, BECAUSE He first loved us."

The Revised Version leaves the word "Him" out of this verse, which makes it read:

"We love, BECAUSE He first loved us."

We love Him first of all to be sure. But in His love to us we find a cause for loving ALL WHO ARE HIS. Not only a few of His own; not merely those whom we know most intimately and like best; not simply the "nice" Christians whom we meet here and there; but all whom He loves "we love, because He first loved us." We are to love "not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3. 18). Not in pious expressions in our prayers, nor in large-hearted sentiment in our ministry, but in actual practice He would have it to be true of us, that

"We love, BECAUSE He first loved us."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.
THE Lord hath afflict ed His Zion,
The City He loved so well,
Where He deign'd, like a couching lion,
In glory and strength to dwell.
And why hath Jehovah forsaken
The place of His ancient throne,
His Vine from the wilderness taken,
To flourish for Him alone?

Ah! deem not the Holy One cruel:
Had Israel loved His will,
She had sparkled the costliest jewel,
The beauty of nations still;
The Lord had been still her defender,
And she, the queen of the earth,
In holiness, freedom and splendour,
Had gloried in Shiloh's birth.

But she fell—and her crown of glory
Was struck from her rebel brow,
And with feet all wounded and gory
She wanders in exile now.
Yet, sad one, distrust not our pity;
Though some may wring out thy tears,
We will weep for the Holy City,
And sorrow o'er former years.

The deliverance of Jerusalem from
the yoke of the Turk is undoubt edly the outstanding event of the
war. It has thrilled the whole civilized
world and set Jewry in every land rejoicing. Its immediate influence on
the present titanic struggle may not
be so great as would have been a
signal victory to the allied arms on the
Western front, but it has its significance in regard to a larger issue, even that of
the establishment of Christ's kingdom
on the earth and the wider outlook of permanent peace for every tribe and
nation under heaven. Its significance
lies in the fact that the British Govern-
ment has declared that its determined policy is to restore the land to the
Jewish people as a nation, and this policy has behind it the approval and the
conscience of the whole of the
British peoples.

It is plainly set forth in the sure word
of prophecy that the reign of righteous-
ness for which the whole creation
groans will be inaugurated by the
personal presence of the Lord Jesus
Christ; that Jerusalem will be the
metropolis of His earth-wide kingdom,
and that the children of Jacob must be
gathered into the land promised to their
fathers before these things can be. So
that this solemn pledge given on the
part of the British Government indicates
unmistakably the direction of the
march of events. And the whole world
has taken notice of it, and Christians are
rejoicing, and the Jews in every land
are "sounding the loud timbrel" as
though this brilliant feat of arms in
Palestine and the surrender of Jeru-
salem to the British would immediately
end the long travail of Jacob's Children,
and usher in the kingdom of the Lord.

But this is not the case. This event
is the prelude to the opening of the
darkest chapter in the chequered history
of this remarkable race, and Jerusalem
Scripture Truth.

has still to pass through her most appall­
ing hour.

Bright hopes will arise in the breasts of those who look not to God and believe not His word, but who put their trust in an arm of flesh. These hopes will rise high as the holy land becomes peopled with its rightful nation. But then shall come the rule of the scornful men who make lies their refuge (Isa. 28. 14, 15); and of Antichrist; then shall come the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30. 7); of "the great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24. 21). A time in which if the days are not shortened no flesh shall be saved (ver. 22). And the fowls shall summer upon Israel and the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them (Isa. 18. 6) until all hope in man's help is extinguished and they are prepared to say, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20. 7).

Before considering more closely what the Word has to say as to the things to come, let us cast our thoughts back and learn how the future of this great city is mirrored in its early annals as given to us in the Scriptures, and learn also that God cannot be thwarted in the fulfilment of His purposes, no matter how long they may be delayed by the opposition of Satan and the unbelief of men.

Genesis 14. King of Salem and God's Purpose.

Arguments have been advanced to prove that Salem, of which Melchizedek was king, was not Jerusalem, but Psalm 76. settles this question for us. Consequently we take Genesis 14. to be the first allusion to the city in the Scriptures, and there we see God's purpose as to its great destiny. Melchizedek appears as the priest of the Most High God, who is possessor of

heaven and earth, and in whose hands lies the final disposal of all things; he appears to refresh and gladden and bless Abram after his victorious fight with the kings in the valley of Shaveh, and in this, his dramatic and only appearance in the word, he stands out as a beautiful foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ as the great royal Priest. Righteousness and peace are to be the two great characteristics of the coming Kingdom of Christ. He was King of Righteous­ness and King of Salem—Peace, and God's purpose is to set Him as His King in Zion. It is, also, written of Him: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110.). And again: "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and HE SHALL BE A PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6. 12, 13). And again: "... The prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9. 6, 7). Christ is the King who shall reign in righteousness, and Jerusalem, the city of sin and sorrow, shall be Salem, His tabernacle, from which peace shall flow to the uttermost bounds of His domain. He will bring forth the bread and wine of divine blessing to comfort and invigorate and gladden that distressed yet godly remnant that shall endure through the great tribula­tion and whose faith shall gain for them the victory over all their enemies. (Matt. 24. 13; Zeph. 3. 12, 13). And then will they respond to the challenge: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the
heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. . . .
The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not. . . .
The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing' (Zeph. 3. 14-17). And then shall the words be true, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge (Ps. 48). And this city is to be the centre as well as the joy of the whole earth, and all nations shall go up year by year to it, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts (Zech. 14. 17). Wonderful indeed is the future of Jerusalem, wonderful because the Lord has chosen to place His Name there.

Joshua 10.
Adoni-zedec—Antichrist.

The second mention of the city occurs in Joshua 10., and there we learn that an implacable foe to God's purpose and people had established himself there. And this king, Adoni-zedec, became the leader of a confederation of kings, the sworn foes of any who were not the foes of God's people. He sets forth that opposition to the will of God which grew strong in Jerusalem and took complete possession of it when the Son of God, who came in His Father's name, was led forth bearing His cross to Golgotha. This opposition will be personified in Antichrist who shall come in his own name, and shall yet reign at Jerusalem. He will be inspired by Satan to persecute and endeavour to exterminate God's elect (Rev. 13. 15; Matt. 24. 22), and then finally to fight against the Lamb in order to hold the city against Him (Rev. 19. 19, 20). "But in standing up against the Prince of princes he shall be broken without hand (Dan. 8. 25). And just as Joshua made the captains of his army put their feet upon the necks of Adoni-zedec and his allies, so will the Lord give His saints complete victory over Antichrist and all their enemies, and will lead them, as the true Joshua, into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Judges 1. 5, 6, 7.
The Harvest of Tribulation.

In Judges 1. 5-9 we have a further mention of the city, and here we learn the third outstanding fact in the history of Jerusalem and its people, namely, that in them has been and will yet be exemplified that stern law, "What a man soweth that shall he also reap." We read that "Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes." Such treatment of a fallen foe seems both unchivalrous and cruel, but the reason of it is not hidden from us, as he had served others so was he served. He immediately acknowledges the justice of his punishment, and in that state of self-judgment is brought to Jerusalem.

In no city in the world has this law of sowing and reaping operated so inexorably as in Jerusalem, her history since she became the city of David is one long record of it. But for the greatest of all her crimes she has yet to suffer. She rejected her Messiah, spat in His face, delivered Him to the pagan power, and cried, "His blood be upon us and our children," and held high festival when He was crucified as a malefactor. That generation reaped a fearful harvest from this sowing, for according to Josephus 1,100,000 perished during the siege of Titus in A.D. 70, and the temple and its precincts " were so thoroughly levelled and dug up that no one visiting would believe it had ever been inhabited." But the harvest of that crime has not been fully reaped. The woes through which the city has
passed will be exceeded in the time of Jacob's trouble, until it will seem as though none would survive. But those sufferings will bring the nation to repentance before God, they will cry to Him for deliverance, and not till then shall the terrible entail be broken. Their Messiah will appear for their deliverance, and when they look upon Him whom they had pierced their sorrow will be deep and real and they will acknowledge the justice of their punishment, and the Lord will comfort them and lead them, a repentant and restored people, into Jerusalem, a redeemed and restored city (Zech. 12. 10-14; 13. 1; 14. 1-4; Isa. 52. 9).

2 Samuel 5.
David takes the city—Zion.

In 2 Samuel 5. Jerusalem emerges from the unimportant place that it had occupied in Israel and becomes the great centre and pride of the nation, but for this the God-appointed king had to appear, and he it was who subdued it completely for the first time, and called it Zion.

The Jebusites had held the city since the entrance of Israel into the land. They were descendants of the accursed Canaan, and their name means 'trod down.' May they not represent man in his unregenerate condition—whether Jew or Gentile, who remains 'blind and lame' in spite of all advantages, even those advantages that the law gives? May they not represent for us the state of man, under the yoke of sin and trodden down by Satan, needing to be born again, needing the grace that could deliver such from their bondage was not in him, its manifestation awaits the coming of 'Great David's greater Son.' He has already been, and as He walked in His temple, Zion's true but unrecognized King, and "THE BLIND AND THE LAME CAME TO HIM, and He healed them" (Matt. 21. 14). And when His kingdom shall be established in Zion, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. 35. 5, 6).

David was the rejected and suffering man of God's choice, and afterwards the warrior and victorious king, and the turning of the city of the Jebusites into Zion by him tells of how the once suffering and rejected Christ, soon to come forth as the warrior king, will establish Israel in blessing not on the ground of law, but on the principle of grace, that is instead of their blessing depending as of old upon their faithfulness, they will draw everything through Christ from God. "And this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8. 10-12). There we get what Zion will mean to Israel.

David who in figure established Zion prepared for the building within it of the temple of God, that in the people's worship there might ascend to God a suited response to His grace to them, and it is a point of deepest interest to note that the spot chosen for God's house, the spot from which peace offerings and burnt offerings ascended to God from the altar that David built, was the threshing floor of a Jebusite, Araunah by name. He had two names—Araunah, which means 'Jah is firm,' and Ornan, which means...
And it was at the threshing floor of this Jebusite that the sword of judgment was arrested. Was he one of those weak Jebusites who had become strong in the sense of Jehovah's firmness and faithfulness to His own word and name? It would seem so. Indeed in the knowledge of God He seems to have been for the moment greater than David, for it is recorded of him, "All these things did Araunah, AS A KING, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee" (2 Sam. 24. 30). Pity that David spoilt the beauty and grace of that by insisting upon paying for all he got.

But it will be in the sense of God's faithfulness, the firmness of Jah to His own word, that Jerusalem will be established, and that the people will draw near to Him in His holy temple. Psalm 89, gives us a most beautiful unfolding of God's word and His faithfulness to it, and when Salem becomes His tabernacle and His dwelling-place Zion, Jerusalem and all Israel will say: "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen."

J. T. Mawson.

(To be continued.)

True Unity in the Truth Alone.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10. 11).

THANK God, there are still Christians who believe that God in His supreme love became Man, and so died for them, and that the first of duties, the truest affection, without which all others are vile, is to appreciate this and Him who did it. The first of all obligations is to the Saviour; and to slight Him and yet attempt to sustain love in despite of this is the chiefest wickedness and the worst of all dispositions. We owe something to Christ; and if He is dishonoured and slighted I may seek to win, but I cannot be the loving companion of one who has deliberately denied my Lord.

"To me to live is Christ." To profess His name and yet walk with those who dishonour Him is worse than heathenism: it is to own and acquiesce in His dishonour when I know better. The man who believes Christ to be God and remains the professed Christian companion of him who denies it is worse than the latter. We may all, alas! err, but he who knowing and accepting the truth yet deliberately prefers ease and the companionship of those who deny Christ degrades Him even though he may dignify his conduct with the name of brotherly love. Every effort to recover others from error is right, but a step in acquiescence is a step in disloyalty to One whom no one would have dared to dishonour if He had not come down in love.

I do not understand communion where Christ is denied. I believe that Christ, not opinion, is the centre of union; but a true Christ and a false one cannot be equally good as a centre, provided people were amiable with one another, for this means that union is man's amiability and the denial of Christ. What do I want with union if it be not a union in Christ, according to the power of Christ through the Holy Ghost?

The business of those united is Christ's glory. I have no reason for union but Christ, the living Saviour. I do not want any union but that which makes Him the centre, and the all, and the hope of it. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren; but to make a plea for indifference to Christ's glory in order to be one with him who, calling himself a brother, denies and undermines it is wickedness.

J. N. Darby.
THE subjects of King David had done an ill turn both to themselves and their country in lending their support to Absalom in his usurpation of the throne. The happy times that they had hoped for had vanished like a phantom, and instead of peace and prosperity, "all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel."

The thoughts of men began to turn increasingly to the exiled king. His grace and power for good were once again remembered with gratitude. "The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies," they said; and at last the rekindled affections of their hearts for their dethroned and rejected sovereign framed themselves into the utterance with which one questioned another: "Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?"

Did they realize at last that in this lay their only hope; that there could be no righteousness, no peace, no contentment, no stable government, no deliverance from surrounding foes, no glory for their nation, till the true king came back to his own?

History repeats itself, and necessarily so when the things that happened in the days of long ago enshrined within them prophecies of things yet future. For "great David's greater Son" was yet to come, and the rejection and exile of Israel's king were to be re-enacted on a larger and far more serious scale.

And so it has been. For Jesus has been "disallowed of men." Their choice fell on another, and their emphatic declaration was, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." So He has gone away, and Satan reigns as the prince of this world (John 14. 30).

In the absence of the true King men try to make the world a tolerable place to live in. They pass laws for the better government of the nations; they employ policemen to suppress crime; they endeavour to improve social conditions; they strive for the abolition of war and for the establishment of courts of arbitration; they hope for the coming of a world-wide and durable peace.

But in spite of everything the strife and turmoil continues and the efforts of well-meaning men to introduce the millennium seem to be farther than ever from reaching success. Does it never occur to them that the one thing needed is the return of the King? Why do they speak not a word of bringing the King back? When He comes righteousness will come, peace will come, contentment will come, prosperity will come. He is "the desire of all nations" (Haggai 2. 7). Remarkably enough the Hebrew word for "desire" is in the plural. How then must we translate it? It may be bad English, but it conveys the true sense to say that He is the desired things of all nations: the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the glory—all these things His coming will bring, and the desire for them on the part of the nations can only find its fulfilment in Him.

When men began to ask themselves the question as to David: "Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" there was resident in Jerusalem a young prince whom David had adopted into his family circle. The grandson of King Saul, David's predecessor and bitter enemy, he had had little reason to expect such kindness at the hands of the man who had been so cruelly persecuted. But David's generosity sought the young man, and had him conveyed to Jerusalem, where he was surrounded
with all the lavish kindness that the king could devise.

Prevented by lameness from following his benefactor into exile, he remained in the city, mourning the absence of his lord. How grateful to his ear would be the first whisper of the suggestion of bringing back the king!

Slandered, misrepresented, and very probably neglected and reviled, Mephibosheth had every reason to long for the king’s return. And when at last the message came, ‘‘He is here,’’ his joy would know no bounds. ‘‘My lord the king is come again!’’ were his jubilant words. Nothing mattered but that: his interests, his prospects, his happiness, all were wrapped up in the king. His possessions were of little account in his eyes; others might have them now that the king had returned (2 Sam. 19. 30).

There are Mephibosheths in the world to-day, men of a race that is alien to God, through sin. They have been freely forgiven by their Saviour-King. The rebellion of their hearts has given place to grateful love. They have been treated with illimitable kindness: the very grace of God Himself has been poured into their bosoms.

Unable to follow their Lord to the place where He has gone (John 13. 33, 36), they mourn His absence, and sing

‘‘Lord Jesus, come!
Thine absence here we mourn;
No joy we know apart from Thee,
No sorrow in Thy presence see;
Lord Jesus, come!’’

They know He is coming back, to take to Himself His great power, and to reign. The kingdoms of this world shall surely become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11. 15). And in this prospect they rejoice exceedingly.

His coming will be a personal and a glorious one: ‘‘This same Jesus’’ (Acts 1. 11), ‘‘And the Lord shall be king over all the earth’’ (Zech. 14. 9), ‘‘All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him’’ (Ps. 72. 11).

When He thus comes with ‘‘salvation and strength,’’ with glory and majesty, He will be followed by the warrior hosts of heaven clad in garments that mark them as the saints that have waited for His coming on earth (Rev. 19. 14). They accompany Him to share the honours of His triumph and to reflect His glory far and wide (2 Thess. 1. 10).

How came those hosts to be in heaven? Why are they not on earth to welcome the King at His coming even as Mephibosheth welcomed David? We may well ask this, and we should be left to wonder in our perplexity as to how it can be were it not for the special communication of 1 Thessalonians 4. 15–17. These verses set before us, as the immediate hope of the church, the coming of the Saviour into the air to gather His saints to Himself and thus to bring them to heaven, so that they may follow Him thence when He returns to the earth. To be with Himself: this is our present hope, a hope that may reach its fruition at any moment.

Will it gladden our eyes to see our beloved Lord enthroned and honoured, the centre of adoring nations? Surely. But will it not much more gladden our hearts to hear His voice, to see Him face to face, to be in His presence for ever, and to have all the joy of His love, and His Father’s love, flooding our souls? This is the rapture that lies immediately ahead. After this comes the kingdom of glories.

We may continue to pray then, with ever increasing earnestness: ‘‘Thy kingdom come.’’ But with a still intenser longing we pray: ‘‘Come, Lord Jesus.’’

‘‘I ne’er can see His like below
Until He comes again:
And in the interval I’d live
To glorify His Name’’

HAROLD P. BARKER.
The Christian’s immediate hope is the coming of the Lord to catch away from this world His church, so that his first and most fervent prayer should be, “Even so, Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22.). But He has also taught us another prayer, “Thy kingdom come”; and as this concerns His glory as well as peace for the earth, we must not forget it. That kingdom cannot come until He has Jerusalem in full possession.

Those who are praying “Thy kingdom come” not with their lips only, but from their hearts, have a better and fuller desire than mere victory for the Allied arms. They are not looking for the triumph of right as that is understood by the great democracies of the world, but they are awaiting the time for which all God’s saints have hoped when His good and righteous will shall be done on earth; they have a better outlook than that all nations should be ruled according to their own “self-determination,” namely, that all shall be according to God’s determination, and His kingdom shall be established in His own way, for only so can permanent peace shed its blessings upon mankind.

Everybody wants peace, but Germany will not seek it because her leaders know that their depredatory ambitions will receive no consideration from the Allied powers unless they are enforced by the sword, and the Allied powers want peace, but they know that their aims can only be reached across the prostrate carcase of the hated and hateful military force. So the struggle continues, each battling for these opposing aims. But has God no purposes and aims? He surely has. And His children should be concerned as to what His aims are, so that they may pray earnestly, intelligently and prevailing, “Father, Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come” (Luke 11. 2, N.T.).

We may be sure that He who is “the God of peace,” and “the preserver of all men,” will not permit this awful conflict to continue one moment longer than is necessary for the attainment of His aims in allowing it at all. British statesmen have assured us that if they could righteously and for the general good call a halt they would do so at once, and we do not doubt them. But is God less righteous or compassionate than they? “The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” His children who know that His purpose is final and universal blessing will not grow impatient at the continued strife, but their spirits will be kept in quietness, and they will maintain constant watchfulness with their earnest praying for the moving of God’s hand in the affairs of men.

The withdrawal of Russia from the Allied cause is probably looked upon as the worst set-back that the Allies have sustained since the war began, and by it no doubt victory has been long delayed. But let us look at it from the standpoint of our prayer: “Thy kingdom come,” and see if we may not learn something from it in the light of that.

The Bolsheviks have published a memorandum in which is summarised the secret agreement entered into by Great Britain, France, and Russia in 1916. In this agreement Palestine occupies a considerable place, but the hopes of the Jewish nation in regard to it do not seem to have been considered. Great Britain was to secure the two most important and strategical points of Haifa on the Red Sea and Acre on the Mediterranean, but for the rest it was agreed, according to the report of the British Palestine Committee, that, “with a view of securing the religious interests of the Entente powers, Palestine, with the Holy places, is separated from Turkish territory, and subjected to a special regime to be determined by
an agreement between Russia, France and England." "The religious interests of an avowed atheistic government such as France is reads strangely! But had victory come to the Entente with Russia in it, and this agreement had been put into force, Jewish hopes in regard to Jerusalem and Palestine would certainly have been thwarted. Meanwhile, however, Czardom has fallen, anarchy has taken the place of autocracy in Russia, and those who claim power in that distressed country have repudiated this agreement, so that it drops out of the Allied aims, and in its place there springs up the British declaration—one of the wisest it has ever made—that, as soon as they are able they will establish in Palestine an autonomous Jewish state. And the sooner the better, for universal peace can only flow from Jerusalem, with the chosen people in possession under the glorious and righteous administration of the Prince of Peace, the Messiah of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ. So that the fall of Czardom and the withdrawal of Russia from the conflict has brought upon the horizon the fulfilment of God's word in regard to these people and their land, without which His kingdom cannot come. In this we ought to discern the hand of God.

At a great meeting of Jews in America, it was said by one of their chief rabbis that they had full cause for joy, for though this declaration was only "a scrap of paper" it was written in English. And that was certainly a tribute to British loyalty to her pledged word. But the declaration that the Jews shall have that land has been written in a more ancient and glorious language, and pledged to them by a greater and more faithful power; it has been written in Hebrew by the Holy Spirit and pledged to them by God, the Almighty, who cannot lie. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could sware by no greater, He sware by Himself, saying, Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. For verily men swear by a greater... but God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation" (Heb. 6. 13-18).

It may help us to briefly trace out God's ways with this people since the time when He pledged His word to their father Abraham, when He called Him out from Ur and separated him from the idolatry of the Chaldees. The twelfth and twenty-second chapters of Genesis give us the covenant that God made with him and the oath wherewith He confirmed it. But before God's promises and purposes could be fulfilled in regard to Abraham's seed, there were four things necessary: a COUNTRY in which they could develop, not under a "culture" of their self-determination, but under God's own culture; a CITY whose firm foundation shall be righteousness and from which shall be administered the peace-giving laws of God; a TEMPLE in which they could approach their God and Blesser in responsive worship; and a KING who shall give them protection from every outward foe, and who shall lead them as a shepherd in the paths of righteousness, and harmonize every phase of their national and domestic life into one glorious whole for a pattern to the nations and for the glory of God. The country is Canaan, the city is Zion, the plans and specifications of the temple have been issued, AND THE KING IS JESUS. And to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The people themselves were not only to be a chosen people, but a redeemed people, and the paschal lamb in Egypt, signified this: it was a type of the Lamb of God, by whose blood alone can men be redeemed. These people had to owe their position to God's sovereign choice, their life to the blood of the
lamb, and their deliverance from their oppressors to the power of God. And so He brought them out of bondage and sent them into the land to possess it and to destroy the inhabitants of it. And here the critic of God’s Word, and the caviller at His ways, steps up and charges Him with cruelty and injustice. But they are superficial thinkers and dishonest judges; they jump to conclusions without examining the evidence. God kept the people to whom He had apportioned that land in the fiery furnace of Egypt, in His patience with the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, for four hundred years, and did not proceed to execute His judgment upon their horrible transgression of all His laws until the cup of their iniquity was full. In Leviticus 18. 25 the condition of the land is described and the reason for God’s way given. “The land is defiled: therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomitteth out her inhabitants.” Thus was God’s judgment of them justified.

He gave Israel the country, and then a King when He raised up David from amongst the people, to be their shepherd, and David subdued the Jebusite and captured the CITY and there made preparation for the building of the TEMPLE that was reared resplendent by Solomon his son.

Here, then, were the four things necessary for the development of these people according to God, but these were only temporary, until the time for the true King to appear, and by them the people were to be tested in order to see how far they would, of their own volition, live in accordance to God’s will for them. The conditions could not have been more favourable: all their enemies were subdued; the land flowed with milk and honey; the wealth of Jerusalem was so vast that silver was of no more account than the stones of the street; the fear of them fell upon all nations, and the kings of the whole earth sent or came up to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of their king, “for his wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men.” “So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom, and all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.” We learn, too, how far he had advanced in the knowledge of God by his address to the people and his prayer to God at the dedication of the temple, and greater and better than all “THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”

Here Jerusalem reached her ancient zenith, but the glory soon began to wane, and that splendid king led the people down a steep road, gathering into his kingdom apes, and peacocks, strange women and idols, indicating the folly, vanity, corruption and heathen abominations into which they descended. How discouraging this would be if we had no hope save in man’s self-determination,” but the Scriptures help us, and from them we learn that the blessing that God has purposed shall flow out to all nations from Zion can only come through the One who is greater than Solomon, and that one CHRIST. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3. 16).

Israel and Jerusalem travelled fast on the downward road upon which Solomon started them. “They mingled with the heathen and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare to them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood ” (Ps. 106. 35–38). Each of those nations of Canaan, that they ought to have driven out, had its own special god—a demon (Deut. 32, 17; 1 Cor. 10. 20), in connection with
which was some special abomination, for these powers of darkness which inspired this awful idolatry worked upon the basest passions of men. But when Israel and Jerusalem departed from God, they did not choose one idol and one abomination only, they took in all and every one. And these evil powers behind the idols, demons, that seem to have been satisfied hitherto each of them to hold one nation in thrall, now were all eager to exercise their malign influence over God's people, and to establish their authority in His metropolis; and the people, alas, were willing, and so every nameless abomination found a home amongst them, until their transgressions became more horrible than those of the nations that occupied the land before them. How vividly the prophet Ezekiel brings all this out.

The consequence was that "the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His inheritance. And He gave them into the hands of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them; and they were brought into subjection under their hand" (Ps. 106.). Less than five hundred years after the crown of all Israel had been placed upon David's brow, the sovereignty passed from his house and was given to Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, and the "Times of the Gentiles" began, and the Jews became of subject race. But did God forsake them? No.

"He, caring for the vineyard of His choosing, Sent them His prophets till the day was done; Bore with their churls, their wrath, and their refusing; Gave them at last the glory of His Son."

What a moment that was when the star stood over Bethlehem, pointing the spot where the young child lay, and guiding the Eastern princes with their gifts to EMMANUEL! But all Jerusalem was troubled when they heard of it. The city had thrown off the abominations of the heathen, but so proud were its leaders that they would not recognize in that lowly Babe their great Messiah. And when He presented Himself to them, fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah: "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee meek and sitting on an ass," they asked contemptuously, "Who is this?" He gave them the opportunity of facing and answering that all-important question, when He said to them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Readily they answered, "The Son of David." Then came the final question, for which they had no answer, and which exposed their blindness. "He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit down at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" This surely was the test question, for them and for us, and for all mankind. He was David's Lord—the eternal God; He was David's Son—a man. Unfathomed and unfathomable mystery! The revelation of God for the salvation of Israel and the blessing of the world! But that salvation and blessing were postponed because they would neither own nor have Him. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but it knew Him not, He came to His own but His own received Him not. When they saw Him they hated Him, and said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him." And, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Jerusalem the beloved city, over which He had wept, cried, "Away with Him," and held high festival when her blood-stained hands had nailed her suffering Messiah to a cursed cross. Yes, that generation, more privileged than any that have gone before, crowned the centuries of Jerusalem's lawlessness by this foulest of all deeds, in the presence of which the sun shrank into darkness and the earth trembled.

But that deed, which showed man's utter and awful hatred against God, was
taken by God to be the manifestation of the fullness of His love to men, and there upon that cross on that 'green hill far away' love—divine, all-conquer­ing, eternal—celebrated its triumph. The glory of that cross shall fill the whole of that land and the universe also, for only through it can the promised blessing come to Israel and the world.

The last time Zion saw Him was when He hung dead, amid all those circum­stances of deepest shame, with a crown of thorns bound upon His sacred brow, and over His head this superscription written: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The chief priests and the Pharisees took counsel to put Jesus to death because said they, "If we let Him thus alone ... the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." To get rid of Him they pre­tended loyalty to the Roman Cesar, but their hypocrisy recoiled upon their guilty heads and the very thing that they feared happened to them thirty-six years after they had expressed that fear. Titus reduced the city and its temple to ashes and the foundations of the sacred edifice were ploughed up by the Roman soldiers. Thus, without knowing what they did, literally fulfilling the Lord's own words, that "not one stone should be left upon another that should not be thrown down." The aged and in­firm of those left alive in the city were killed, the children under seventeen were sold as slaves, and the rest were sent, some to the mines in Egypt, some to grace the triumph of Titus at Rome, and others scattered to various parts of the Empire. But it was not until the reign of Hadrian A.D. 135 that the people who had regathered in the ruined city were finally dispersed. For two years the insurgent Jews held out against the Romans, fighting with the courage of despair. But worn out by famine and disease they were com­pelled to yield. Their historians say

that "the Romans waded to their horses' bridles in blood, which flowed with the fury of a mountain torrent"; 580,000 are said to have fallen by the sword, while the number of victims from other causes was countless. Hadrian determined to obliterate Jerusalem as a city, the ruins that Titus had left were razed to the ground, and again was the ploughshare passed over "as a sign of perpetual desolation," according to the desolator, but fulfilling the prophecy of Micah uttered nine centuries before:

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be a plowed field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (Micah 3. 12).

Several attempts were made to rebuild the temple, which all failed, the last by the apostle Julian; when an earthquake, a whirlwind and a fiery eruption com­pelled the workmen to abandon their labour.

Since then Jerusalem has been, according to the Lord's own words, "trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be ful­filled" (Luke 21. 24). Thus Zion and her people fell, and

"The crown of glory
Was struck from her rebel brow,
And with feet all wounded and gory
She wanders an exile now."

What a confirmation of the Word of God has the subsequent history of that nation been. More than 3000 years ago Moses warned them that if they rebelled against God's will they would "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by­word, among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead thee" (Deut. 28. 37). And the closing words of his warning are so descriptive of their long travail and so moving that they can scarce be read without tears. We quote them to show how true is the prophetic word.

"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the
Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked off from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see” (Deut. 28.63-67).

There is no need for us to recount the awful persecutions through which these people have passed in every country of Europe, but mostly in Russia. Like the bush that Moses saw in the desert they have been continually burnt with fire but are not consumed, and though scattered for all these centuries in all countries they are absorbed by none. They are the miracle of the ages, one of the greatest concrete proofs of the infallibility of the Word of God and of the justice of His governmental ways. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

And has God forgotten them? And are His promises made to their father’s to fail? Never.

But the road that they have yet to travel, and how they will reach at last their final goal of blessing must be reserved for another paper, if the Lord will.

J. T. MAWSON.

What thinkest thou of Christ?

WHAT thinkest thou of Christ? I ask thee not
For a pronouncement of His lineage;
It may be thou hast not one certain thought
Gathered concerning this from Sacred Page:
But like the once blind beggar blest with sight
Thou hast not learned the greatness of the One
Who put an end to thy long lone dark night,
Nor dreamed that THOU HAST LOOKED UPON THE SON.

What thinkest thou of Christ? nor do I ask
For answer, the dead dogma of a creed,
Which serves a guilty ignorance to mask,
But strangles conscience and the cry of need:
Like Judah’s scribes who wist not He must die
To break the cruel power that man oppressed,
Nor His resurgence understood, nor why
David his Son in spirit LORD confessed.

What thinkest thou of Christ? nor ask I thee
His excellencies wondrous to dilate—
But tell me that without Him heaven would be
An arid waste, a region desolate:
Like one to whom the Creditor in grace
A multitude of trespasses forgave,
THY HIGHEST HEAVEN—THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS FACE:
THY GREATEST GLORY—THAT THOU ART HIS SLAVE.

J. BOYD.
The Saviour's voice was hushed. Jesus had ceased teaching "the many things," and the rays of the setting sun were falling athwart the faces of that awed and subdued multitude. A strange thrill subdued those eager, restless breasts. Time had sped by unnoticed, and nature's wants were all unfelt, when the still silence was broken by words strangely in contrast with the sweet scene where divine love and tender pity were making poor weary hearts feel their potent sway. "This is a desert place, and now the time is far spent, send them away," the disciples urge, "that they may go into country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat."

Little thought they that the One that they thus addressed, whose lowly grace made such intrusion possible, was He who long before, in His own divine fulness, had said, "I will satisfy the poor with bread" (Ps. 132. 15). "Give ye them to eat," was His gracious rejoinder.

Uncongenial servants as they were, He would associate them with Himself in the service of His love. True enough they were little up to the privilege conferred upon them. Small heart had they for the weary multitude around them. Less knowledge had they of the heart and "fullness" of Him who gave them this command. Completely taken aback, they look at the hungry crowd, the dearth desert, they think of themselves, and the difficulties appear unsurmountable. His glory they see not, and their faith falls entirely short of the task imposed upon them. The old heart of unbelief that before had questioned, "Can the Lord provide a table in the wilderness?" was still there; and to the "Give them to eat," they oppose, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

It is very wonderful this communicat- ing to His disciples of His own power, all unwilling and unworthy as they were to have it. More touching still to watch the grace rising above their ingorance and unbelief, that presses them into a service they were so slow to enter upon. But "the poor" must be fed, and they should feed them.

"How many loaves have ye? Go and see," He says. Quickly returning they tell Him, "Five, and two fishes," adding, as we learn elsewhere, "but what are they among so many?" The helplessness of unbelief could go no farther, nor does the Lord parley longer; so, without reply, He commanded them to make the multitude sit down on the green grass, be it noted, in ranks by hundreds and by fifties. Then, blessing the loaves and fishes, He breaks them and gives them to the disciples to distribute.

One can imagine the feelings, of wonder and doubt, with which the disciples began their distribution of those, but just now despised, "five loaves and two fishes."

What, say, must the eager and impetuous Peter have felt, as in silent awe he took from the Saviour's hands that small portion of bread that was to feed those waiting companies of a hundred hungry mouths, fifty times told, "besides women and children"? How his doubt must have given place to amazement, and awe to adoration, as he broke and gave a piece to this one and that one, here to a strong man, now to a timid woman, then to a light-hearted child, till every mouth was satisfied, and more remained after all had eaten and were "filled" than there had been at the beginning.

What an acquaintance with Himself, and what an education for a future ministry, was the Lord here giving to
His disciples! True, the impression, at the moment, may not have been deep, and not long after, when again called upon to feed the multitude, they were as unbelieving and unequal to the occasion as before, but when the Holy Ghost had endued them with power from on high, with what force and encouragement would these scenes recur to their memories, as they went forth to minister for Him who “is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,” and had assured them that, not only was “all power given to Him in heaven and on earth,” but that He Himself would still be with them, “always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28. 20).

And surely all this is left on record for our encouragement and instruction in any humble service we may seek to render to the same blessed Lord as His servants. As servants we have specially to keep near HIM, and draw upon the resources of that same Jesus, now at the right hand of God in glory, and Head over all things to the church which is His body,” who, having led captivity captive, “has given gifts to men,” for the blessing of souls and the edifying of His body.

The scene we have been considering makes Him manifest. Christ Himself fills the vision of the soul whilst contemplating it. The “desert place,” the absence of all resources, save Himself, the slowness and hardness of heart of the disciples, as it were, forms the background that throws Him into relief. It manifests forth His glory, and so should our service, while waiting for Him to come and take us to Himself in the Father’s house above.

C. WATERSTON.

Paul’s Farewell to the Elders of Ephesus.


The thoughtful reader will readily perceive the peculiar and affecting interest of this incident in the life of the Apostle. Three years of strenuous and devoted service at Ephesus lay behind him, the climax of his evangelic labours, whether we regard the power exhibited (chap. 19. 11, 12) or the results achieved (vers. 10, 18, 19). Before him lies, not the return of His Master to receive the saints to Himself or set up the kingdom in power, but his own decease and the corruption of the assembly in which he had laboured as a wise master-builder. Now he has before him those to whom the Spirit had committed the oversight of God’s assembly, and from a heart through which the love of Christ freely flowed he tells out in these few words the burden that lay upon it. His purpose is to preserve his beloved children in the faith from the snares which his prophetic vision plainly beheld. In giving heed to them we too may be kept in the path of God’s will, or it may be restored to it. We shall see as we proceed that the portion we are considering may be divided into seven sections, beginning with the Apostle’s

(I) MANNER OF LIFE AND MINISTRY (vers. 19-21).

In relation to testimony before men conduct is of the first importance, for it is the manner of life which commends the doctrine; for the latter the world cares little, but manifestation of the truth in the life of the one professing it reaches the conscience and renders the ministry effective (2 Cor. 4. 2).

In the scripture before us, the first characteristic of Paul’s manner was “all humility of mind.” That this was no mere natural quality we learn from 2 Corinthians 12. 7, which reveals the cost of its acquisition. The troubles in the assembly at Corinth and in many
modern companies sadly testify what confusion the lack of lowliness will produce. Exactly the same words are found in Ephesians 4. 2 as the first requisite for keeping the unity of the Spirit, a further evidence of the importance of maintaining this quality in our relations with one another. In Paul's case at Ephesus, the humility of mind had been exhibited with tears and trials, bearing witness to the serious character of the conflict he was waging; moreover, he kept back nothing in his ministry of the word that would be profitable, but pressed on all both publicly and privately the great essentials of faith and repentance.

We find next the declaration of his

(2) PURPOSE (vers. 22-24).

Immediately before him was the apparently needless visit to Jerusalem, where bonds and afflictions awaited him: these were only by the way, his purpose was to finish his course ("with joy" should be omitted), whatever sufferings or vicissitudes lay in the way, and the special ministry of the gospel he had received. The goal of the race was before him, as he says a little later, "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead."

He next refers to his

(3) TEACHING (vers. 28-31), repeating the words "and now behold" from verse 22 to mark the beginning of a fresh subject. Here it is interesting to note that our first three subjects are found again, but in a different order, in 2 Timothy 3. 10. Timothy had fully known his teaching, manner of life, purpose, etc., a fact which enables us to understand why so many points we should like to know more about are omitted in this important epistle, which will only be rightly appreciated by those who possess Timothy's knowledge. At Ephesus Paul had declared the whole counsel of God, and hence was pure of the blood of all men. God's judgment as well as His grace had been made known, and all those purposes in the second Man concerning the church and the kingdom. From this section we should learn, whether teachers or taught, to possess ourselves of the whole scope of divine revelation. Mere knowledge, however, will not suffice, with it our loins must be girt if we are to stand in the evil day. We must also give heed to the

(4) WARNING (vers. 28-31).

This was only a continuation of what had been previously given during his sojourn among them, "night and day with tears"; for his prophetic foresight discerned the incoming of a power of evil, hostile to the welfare of the assembly he loved so well. The evil was certainly coming, and the responsibility of those overseers was placed before them, to feed and watch over (the word in the original means "to shepherd," a character of service which includes both supervision and the supply of food) the church of God, the value of which is proved by the cost of its purchase, for only thus fortified would the saints be able to overcome the dangers threatening them. Dangers which would reach them by persecutions from outside, not sparing the flock, and more insidiously from inside, men from their own company speaking not perverse, but perverted things, with the object of securing followers and thus rending the assembly of God into sects. The subtle character of this snare is shown in Romans 16. 17, 18, where we learn that the deception would be attempted by "good words and fair speeches." Therefore "WATCH and REMEMBER."

Very briefly in verse 32 we have

(5) THE RESOURCE,

"God and the Word of His grace." Not God without His Word, nor the Word without its Author. The assumption that we can know the mind of God apart from His Word leads into all kinds of pretentious error and leaves us without
the true defence against "the good words and fair speeches" just referred to; while the assertion that we can understand and make use of the Word independently of being right with God has given rise to sects in their endless variety, which exposes the Protestant bodies to the not unjust reproach of the Catholics, who point to the divisions among their opponents, and attribute them to an open Bible. To make right use of our resource, we should seek to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in order that our walk might be according to the truth and acceptable to the Lord. But another point should be noticed here, the word to which the saints are commended is "the word of His grace," not so much to supply force and reason to defeat opponents, as to be a means of personal edification and thus secure an inheritance in the coming kingdom. It is the word of God's grace which affects this, and we should see to it that the Scriptures are that to us.

(6) EXAMPLE (vers. 33-35).

"I have showed you all things" is the key to this section, and the Apostle seeks that what they had known of his ways should become a pattern for these overseers to follow. Three times elsewhere he exhorts his children in the faith to be followers or imitators of himself (1 Cor. 4.16; 11.1; Phil. 3.17). In the first of these he is pointing out the pathway suitable to the followers of a rejected Christ, which had been livingly illustrated in "us, the Apostles." In the second he is showing the careless Corinthians how a walk unseparated from defiling associations brings reproach on the truth. He was careful to give no offence to the Jew, the Gentile, nor to the assembly of God. In the third, writing to the Philippians, who were not walking in happy fellowship one with another, he bids them "be followers TOGETHER of me," for if each had one object they would necessarily be found in harmony together. In our passage, as in 1 Corinthians 4., he refers to his custom of maintaining himself by manual labour, and presses his example upon the hearts of his hearers that they too "so labouring ought to support the weak." They would thus acquire the more blessed portion spoken of by the Lord in this hitherto unrecorded utterance, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Finally, we have

(7) PRAYER (vers. 36-38).

"He kneeled down and prayed with them all." No petition is recorded; but the analogy between this scene and the circumstances under which the prayer of our Lord, given us in John 17., was uttered are striking. Death was before both speakers, and the danger to the flock in their thoughts. The means of preservation, as given in verse 32, we have already considered, they are not really different in the prayer of our Lord, though much enlarged. But is there not something to be noted in the record of the weeping and its cause, given in verses 36, 37? In the case of the Apostle (vers. 31) and his Master (Luke 19. 41) tears were shed on account of the danger threatening the people of God, as His witnesses on earth. We are living in the days of the fulfilment of what was then imminent and foretold. The tears of the earlier prophets were from the same cause (see Isa. 22. 4 and Jer. 9. 1; Lam. 3. 48, 49). On the other hand, the elders of Ephesus sorrowed most of all for the loss of their spiritual father. Only a few years later Paul is obliged to record, "All they which are in Asia are turned away from me." Their tears and sorrow, evidence of sincere affection for the Apostle, were lacking in that deeper spring of divine affection, which would have been appropriate to such a moment, and consequently when put to the test they failed in overcoming. Like the morning cloud and the early dew their goodness (shall we not say "our") passes away, teaching us that all hope for blessing that depends on our perseverance is vain (cf. Hab. 1. 12).

C. E. H. Warren.
Put to Sleep through Jesus.

In assuring the Thessalonian believers that their loved departed ones would not lose any part of the blessing in the coming kingdom, the Apostle wrote, "If ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14).

The marginal reading "through Jesus" is most in keeping with the teaching of Scripture, because the saints are nowhere else said to be "in Jesus" but always "in Christ." Jesus is His personal name and its usage indicates the inspired writer's desire to emphasize the Lord's humanity, either in His earthly life or in His present position in the glory of God. It is well to observe the niceties of scriptural expression because otherwise the niceties of scriptural thought are often missed.

The particular thought in this passage is exquisite. Just as a mother in putting her child to sleep at night, tucking down the coverlet, bids the child rest sweetly till the morning, Jesus is shown with a touch of surpassing tenderness to put the believer to sleep in view of his rising fresh in the glory dawn.

The purpose of this revelation was to comfort sorrowing hearts, and it took wonderful hold on the minds of the Christians in the latter half of the first century. So much so that they called their burying place "koimeterion," which was the name for "a house of refuge," where a traveller sought a night's rest, rose in the morning and went his way. The name has persisted till the present day in our "cemetery" which literally means a "brief sleeping place." So weeping is only for the space of a night, there will be great joy in the morning when the Lord Jesus comes.

Two verses further on we read of the rising of the "dead in Christ," not even death can sever the living link which connects us with the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rev. 8. 39). "Out of sight, out of mind" is the usual experience of human ken, but no one can escape God's memory.

The visible part of what will yet form the bride of Christ in the coming day of glory must always bulk more in our thoughts than the invisible part. But the former is really insignificant compared with the latter. The literal description in this passage is, "We (the living, left over) shall not forestall the sleeping ones." At least sixty generations of saints have passed away since these pregnant words were written and there is always a remnant or part of a generation being left over in view of the Lord's coming.

For example, if a clothier buys a fifty yard piece of cloth he proceeds to cut off suit lengths for his customers: if he cuts exactly 14 lengths of $\frac{3}{4}$ yards, he has a yard left over. This remnant, often soiled, is really not of much value, yet it represents the piece. We, the living, are much like that odd bit of cloth. But, unlike the cloth remnant, our identity will shortly be merged in that of the glorious entity which will respond from the tomb and earth to the Lord's shout of command. The dead shall rise first, but then the living remnant will be caught up "together with them" to meet and to be for ever with the Lord. Could any other prospect inspire comfort like those words? Well might the poet Montgomery burst forth in the following lines:

"Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him we roam,
Yet nightly pitch our moving tent,
A day's march nearer home.

Our Father's house on high—
Home to our hearts how dear—
E'en now, to faith's transpiercing eye
Thy golden gates appear."

T. OLIVER.
Living in God’s Thoughts.

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely” (Hosea 14. 4).

The prophet is insistent on the great fact that Jehovah’s love is not changed by the cold neglect of His people. The people did not appreciate the desires of this love for them, whilst walking contrary to it; but Jehovah, knowing all that has caused their backsliding, pleads His readiness to heal and love them freely, if they will but return to Him. What love but divine love could so act or so plead, whether in regard to His earthly people of the past or His heavenly people of the present? For we must remember that Israel were an earthly people, called to an earthly inheritance; whereas Christians are an heavenly people, called to a heavenly inheritance.

The love of the blessed God never deviates from its purpose, though it may be compelled to use chastening, if we hearken not to its pleadings, to bring our hearts into accord with its purpose, which is one of infinite blessing for us.

“What shall I do? what shall I do?” said a lady to the preacher at the close of a gospel service, “for I find I have been living outside the thoughts of God for me.” Alas, how many souls are to-day similarly situated! Converted truly; but living morally in the round of this world’s ways, so that the wonderful revelation of heavenly grace is without result so far as communion therein is concerned—they are outside God’s thoughts. The infinite love of God, the sacrifice of Calvary, and the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit, all nominally acknowledged, but unknown in the soul’s communion! Truly it is by the word of God that we have been born again, if we are Christians; and as new-born babes we are exhorted to desire the sincere milk of the word that we might grow thereby to salvation (1 Peter 1. 23-25; 2. 1-5); and this must be so if we are to taste the realities of a new nature and another life, for it is only as the Word of God is fed upon and the soul is nourished by the revelation of God’s grace, that there will be spiritual growth in divine things. The Bible is a living book, for in it is declared the wonderful love of the living God; but if it is neglected and the light contained in its pages shunned, how can the soul’s growth to proceed?

Jehovah, by Hosea, reminded the people of their beginning thus: “When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 2. 1). His love was the beginning and pledge of all their blessing. And our salvation, our life, our all rest upon the revelation of what God is? “God is love” (1 John 4. 8-10). “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3. 16). We owe all to eternal and divine love. We belong to a new world and have received everlasting life; and shall we continue to live as though we still belonged to the death-stricken scene in which this love found us that it might save us out of it?

The love of God never changes. We begin with that. He could not have loved us more; He will never love us less. Neither will God ever go back from the purpose of His love, which is to bring us into the actual home of eternal life in heaven; hence how real the Apostle’s word becomes, when, having solemnly outlined the inroad of evil into the Christian profession, he reminds us of the activities of the Christian faith: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20-21).

D. R. Hunter.
God's Voice to the Nations.

"At what instant shall I speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and so destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I had thought to do unto them" (Jer. 18.7, 8).

The question to-day is: Has God spoken? Has not the voice of God been heard in the heart-rending national convulsion which is desolating the face of the earth, and bringing bereavement and bitter sorrow to nations and kingdoms by the war? The "instant" of such a speech cannot be denied, for it has come, but, whether the separate nations, or even their leaders, have recognized that voice is more than questionable.

The particular cause may be attributed to very different things. As to these we need not here speculate; but the plucking up, and pulling down, and destroying of nation after nation is only too plain. The ear may be deaf, but God has "pronounced," and, in sore chastening, has allowed evil to fall on every nation and kingdom.

Yes, God has allowed it, and why? That is a question for each nation concerned to solemnly and seriously answer for itself. A reason there must be. It is impossible to think that He who has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked"—nay, who in love for a guilty world spared not His own Son, can find it in permitting affliction and misery to come upon His creatures without a very sufficient cause. That were incredible.

What then is the prime cause, the terrible root of this convulsion?

It is national unrighteousness. It is the specific "evil," as seen by God, of each separate nation.

Why the Flood of Noah, by which the "old world" was destroyed, or the fiery deluge whereby the iniquitous Sodom and Gomorrah were burned to ashes? We know the cause full well.

Each of these judgments was a divine protest against the abominations of that day.

Are things better to-day? Do you think so? Did not Roosevelt, the ex-President of the United States of America, tell us, some years ago, that "our present civilization would end in a cataclysm"? That prediction has been verified. There must have been something radically wrong in this civilization—something intolerable in the very idol that cultured, educated, philosophic and scientific man had set before him as the goal of his ambition. If this be true of man "in his best estate" what of his lowest?

It is surely not difficult to reason back from effect to cause, or to see that the reaping must agree with the sowing. We may therefore safely conclude that seed of a desperately bad kind has been sown, freely and long, by these suffering nations, ere the frightful harvest of to-day could be reaped. It is, like the Flood, a divine protest against some form, or forms, of evil grievous to the Majesty of Heaven. The saving grace of God, though it marks His way throughout the period of Christianity, does not set aside the holiness of His government; that holiness must be conserved at all cost.

What then is to be done—what should be done? "If that nation," says God, "turn from their evil I will repent of the evil that I had thought to do unto them." That is as plain as it is gracious.

"Turn from their evil!" Who, which will do that?

Will prayer suffice? No, not alone. Add fasting to prayer; proclaim a day for both together. Will not that
Scripture Truth.

avail? Intensify this, add, still further, humiliation in the acknowledgment of sins both national and personal. Can more be done?

Yes, the conditions are more stringent than all these things, however becoming. They are that the nation or kingdom should “turn from its evil.” Such a turning would prove sincerity in a way that mere lip-confessions could not.

What nation has turned, or is turning from its evil as the effect of this chastening? You cannot tell; you despair of any such result; you fear that “evil” has got such a grip on the nations that turn from it they will not.

Your fears may be well founded, for there is, alas, no common evidence of any such “turn”; so that the present convulsion only paves the way for a greater, and speaks of an Armageddon of blood to which the slaughter of today bears no comparison.

A prophet’s voice was heard in the street of Nineveh. It was the voice of God to that proud and guilty city. The king rose from his throne, laid aside his robes, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He charged his subjects to cry to God, and to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence of his hands. They did so, and God saw their works (what were they?) that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them; He did it not.

The king set a noble example, and exercised the rightful authority of his throne to enforce a line of practical conduct in his city which would counteract the threatened judgment of God. He acted like a king, and Nineveh was spared. Would not something similar happen to these distracted nations if only they too turned from their evil ways?

J. Wilson Smith.

A Little While.

“For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10. 37).

This scripture is a quotation from Habakkuk 2. 3, but with this difference.

The prophecy of Habakkuk 2. 3 is run into an Old Testament mould.

Hebrews 10. 37 is run into a New Testament mould.

Habakkuk 2. 3 puts before the earthly believer a Jewish hope, glorious indeed, but earthly.

Hebrews 10. 37 puts before the heavenly believer a Christian hope, even an heavenly hope.

Habakkuk 2. 3 refers to “it.”

Hebrews 10. 37 refers to “He.”

It stands as a comfort for the believer to-day. The Hebrew believers in that day were tested, and were inclined to give up and yield to the pressure of the hour. They had need of patience.

And is this not just our need to-day—patience. Things are difficult.

The apostasy is fast setting in. The love of many is waxing cold. Departure and breakdown are everywhere. The things apparently most stable are shaking.

What then is the believer’s hope?

The Lord from heaven. What a cordial to our fainting hearts, “a little while.” It never was such “a little while” as it is just now. The Lord comes quickly. His coming never was so near as when you read these lines. Are you waiting for Him?

A. J. Pollock.
Victories in the Holy Land and their Lessons.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55, 8).

The series of operations so skilfully planned, so brilliantly executed, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem by the British forces, cannot fail to gain universal attention—to demand worldwide admiration. The triumph in the Holy Land is a pleasant relief in the prevailing gloom and a bright break in the overcast sky.

Reflections on the scenes of the recent British successes in Palestine raised in my mind thoughts of battles of by-gone days and recalled victories, great, astounding and divinely given, marvelous in contrast with those gotten by the arm of the flesh alone.

Joshua 5.

It took no mean leader of men to take command of that rebellious, stiff-necked nation, Israel. It needed a stout heart and a firm hand, but above all unswerving confidence in God to assume that charge immediately after the death of Moses. The moment of Joshua's appointment was a critical one in the history of that people—they had come to Jordan, were on the verge of the promised land and were on the point of entering enemy territory. He, as a wise leader, took his followers into his confidence, and delivered in person an order of the day in which he conveyed to them his divinely given instructions, and assured them that their miraculous passage over Jordan would be not only a token of the presence of Jehovah, but of the complete overthrow of their every foe.

What display of power could inspire them with a more unconquerable confidence? The God who could arrest the course of nature—who could hold up the flowing waters, cutting them off before the Ark of the Testimony, was their God. What event could be more calculated to make the men of war keen for conflict, eager to encounter the foe? And consider the effect on the enemy: "When all the kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the Children of Israel, their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them anymore because of the Children of Israel." It needs no shrewd knowledge of affairs to see how to snatch victory for Israel out of such a situation. To strike hard and at once while the moral of the enemy is low is the key to success. But Joshua delays to strike. Not subtle strategy but faith in God is his way. Wise leader, he was also an obedient servant, and more concerned about attending to the precepts of the Lord than about anything else.

Now here was faith of a high order! Confident that the Lord would undertake for them, he has all the males circumcised and that in the enemy's country. When one remembers the horrible slaughter so easily executed by Simeon and Levi amongst the Shechemites, the action of Joshua might seem to be nothing short of a betrayal of the forces under his command. This sufficed for Joshua—it was the Lord's command. Read Joshua 5, and you will find that the Children of Israel had to be circumcised, had to remember the Feast of the Passover, to eat the old corn of the land, and to have the Lord as Captain before proceeding to encompass the city of Jericho. In God's own time and in His appointed way that city fell. The story is familiar to all. Here is the record—the official communiqué if you will: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were en-
compassed about seven days"—strange but sublime! The triumph is the triumph of obedience and faith—the victory is God-given. His time and His way are best.

There is here, I believe, a most salutary lesson for us. God expects a certain state of soul in those who would go forth to encounter the enemy of God and souls in a public way. Those who would serve Him must first be obedient to His word; not circumstances, not the counsel of men, but the Word of God must control and guide them. The result of subjection to the Word is that the heart is circumcised; for God has called us unto holiness. In celebrating the Feast of the Passover, the children of Israel called to remembrance the ground of their deliverance from Egypt—and the remembrance of the Lamb slain for us, the ground of our deliverance from darkness, bondage and Satan will prove a marvellous asset in the spiritual fight. Then with the Lord Himself as Leader, we shall be able to serve Him acceptably and to fight for Him valiantly. Glorious band of workers who are thus equipped! Going forth at His command, triumphant victory is assured to them as it was to Joshua.

** Judges 7. **

The triumph of Gideon was no less wonderful.

As a punishment for the evil which they did in the sight of the Lord, God delivered the children of Israel into the hands of the Midianites. This powerful foe encamped against Israel "and destroyed the increase of the earth till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass." But when the people cried to the Lord, He sent them a deliverer in Gideon.

The present war has made it clear to all that men and munitions are two of the most potent factors for success in war. Viewed in the light of such elementary knowledge Gideon seems the most foolish of leaders. His cry was not "Men and more men," but "Too many and yet too many." But God was directing operations, and by His special command all that were "fearful and afraid" were to be excluded from Gideon's ranks. Twenty-two thousand immediately fell out—glad, without doubt, to have the chance. God does not depend on large numbers, massed formations, overwhelmingly superior forces—No! Ten thousand is still too many, elimination must proceed. Self-preservation has long been called "the first law of nature." So it may be; but self-condemnation and self-renunciation are the first elements in the triumphs of faith. "When I am weak then am I strong," said one of Christ's warriors, and that is the principle laid down here. Faith brings God in and shuts self out. Nine thousand seven hundred showed signs of self-indulgence and were excluded, and the fearless, self-denying three hundred, with trumpets, pitchers and lamps in hand—strange munitions!—went forth to encounter the enemy like grasshoppers for number. A mere handful of men, with such pitiful weapons, but the "sword of the Lord and of Gideon" routed the enemy, and Gideon has his name inscribed on the Divine Roll of Honour as one of those who "through FAITH subdued kingdoms."

What wonders can be worked to the glory of God by a band of fearless workers who are out to please Him and refuse to gratify themselves! And who are contented to use the weapons of His choice, who are not ashamed of the gospel, foolish and weak as it may appear to those who believe not? The Lord assures His own: "My strength is made perfect in weakness," the whole of Holy Writ declares *faith triumphs always.*

** Isaiah 37. **

Hezekiah was no soldier. His whole life had been devoted to the service of the Sanctuary; but now he is con-
Scripture Truth.

fronted with a crisis which face he must. The proud King of Assyria was at the gates of Jerusalem with a mighty conquering host, and speaking humanly it seemed that Israel's king had lived to regret his neglect of the Holy City's defences and his own disinterest in military matters. But Hezekiah had found a place of repair for the troubled soul; a calm and sweet retreat in times of anxiety and stress, a sure antidote for care, unknown to Sennacherib. Instead of rushing for his sword and marshalling his forces, he rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the House of the Lord. Strange armour! What a disdainful foe he would have appeared in the sight of the Assyrians had they seen it! Behold Israel's king upon his knees, pouring out his soul to Him who dwelt between the Cherubim—no military preparations, no reviewing of troops, a picture of profound weakness. The enemy is flushed with victory and eager for spoil.

Nothing seems more certain than that all is over with Hezekiah and with Jerusalem. Hezekiah felt himself to be helpless and taking that place of utter helplessness he calls upon God to undertake for him, to vindicate His name, to overthrow the enemy. The Lord answered his PRAYER by leading him into the rich spoils of victory. Sennacherib expected to meet flesh and blood, and sword and spear, but lo! "the angel of the Lord went forth and smote down a hundred and four score and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

God will be no man's debtor. He would never allow it to be said that Judah's king had been worshipping when he should have been fortifying his kingdom. In one night, He accomplished what life-long military preparations might never have achieved.

The day of test comes for all. It is not consistent to turn to God in the day of adversity after ignoring Him in prosperity, but "in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths."

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." May the Lord increase our faith!

"Ah! whither could we flee for aid When tempted, desolate, dismayed? Or how the hosts of hell defeat Had suffering saints no Mercy-seat?"

**The Fear of the Lord.**

"Be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long," is a healthy and necessary word.

The grace of God has done much for us: it has saved us, it has justified us freely, it has redeemed and reconciled us to God, and we do well to respond to the exhortation, "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

This fear of the Lord is not the slavish dread that marks the superstitious. No. It is a reverent trustfulness accompanied by hatred of evil. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. 8. 13). "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." Where this is maintained the presence of the Lord is a reality and joy.

His presence is with the assembly till He comes again to take us to be with Himself in the Father's house. He never leaves or forsakes His own.

"He with His church has always stood; His loving kindness, oh, how good!"

It is, however, one thing for His presence to be with us, and it is another
thing to be in a state to recognize it, and to enjoy the holy peace and blessedness of it. "No flesh shall glory in God's presence" (I Cor. 1:29), but rest, edification, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost are experimentally known there. Here lies the secret of true prosperity, as is evidenced in the early records of the assemblies in the Acts, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," they were multiplied (Acts 9:31). When these conditions are absent the very opposite of this is present. Strifes about doctrines, parties, traditions, distinctive tenets, leaders, along with boasted zeal for the truth are rife, and result neither in comfort nor prosperity, but in schools of opinion, jealousies, disputes, contentions and divisions. Let the Spirit be ungrieved, and self-judgment be maintained in the presence of the Lord and in the fear of the Lord, then these things will flee the field like a flock of night birds before the dawn.

It is touching to read that one reason given why the supplications of our Lord Jesus Christ were heard was because of His piety, or because He feared (Heb. 5:7). Who could claim to be in the path of God's will more than He? Who walked in the truth and was so zealous for it as He? Who loved the good and hated the evil as He did? Yet He was in the fear of God all the day long. "Preserve Me, O God," He prayed: "for in Thee do I put My trust"; and again, "Thy law is within My heart," and "Thy word have I hid in Mine heart." If we put the acrostic Psalms 111. and 112. side by side, we see how those who belong to Christ take character from Him. The former speaks of Christ and the latter of the one who trusts in Him. The former ends by telling us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom": in verse 3 of the other the same thing is said of the believer's righteousness, and that must be so because Christ is his righteousness. God has made Him his righteousness as well as his wisdom.

It is this divinely granted attitude of heart and mind which the Spirit enables the true remnant to maintain. Grace is given to them to follow that which is good. In the closing moments of the present period they follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who sincerely have the Lord before their hearts (2 Tim. 2:22). Himself and His love have won their affections, and out of "a pure heart" they call upon the Lord Himself. Thus they approve themselves to be of the assembly which Christ is building upon the revelation which the Father has made to them of Him, the Son of the living God (see Matt. 16).

The remnant at the close of Old Testament days were marked by the same characteristics. We are not told that they busied themselves with reconstructing or correcting anything. But a deep and real revival was theirs. The unreal would not care for their company; for they would have no heart for the theme that filled them with untold joy—"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. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels" (Mal. 3:16).

Great was the delight that this remnant found in their meditations upon "HIS NAME," but greater was the delight of the Lord in them.

It is the happy business of the assembly to delight in what He is, even though He graciously permits her to know what pleasure He finds in her. The spirit of the false assembly, Babylon, says, "I sit as a queen"; that of the
true, seen in the remnant, says, "HE is altogether lovely." Where He is all the assembly is: where He is displaced by the exaltation of the church, or man, or any other thing, the assembly is not. It is Christ and the assembly: not the assembly and Christ. In all things the pre-eminence is His. "And rightly so," says the remnant. "Our desire is towards Him." This is the holy exercise of the true bride in the presence of the Lord. She reverences her husband (it might read, "Fear the husband," N.T. Eph. 5:33), while she knows that he loves her as Himself.

Whilst feeling, but not being engrossed with the failure around them, how brightly would the glory of the unfailing One, the unchanging One, shine before the happy hearts of the remnant who feared the Lord, for they spake often together; and what He is—His Name, was their holy theme—they thought upon HIS NAME." And this is the theme of those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart to-day; and that in a deeper sense even than in Malachi's day, for the full revelation of God has since been made known to us in Him. It is also the theme of the Holy Spirit, even as it is of the Holy Scriptures which are inspired by Him. "When He is come," said the Lord Jesus, "He shall glorify Me." What an exhaustless subject of glory and love is provided for our conversation and meditation.

"No subject so glorious as He, No theme so affecting to us."

What seasons of refreshing and edification were and are the precious portion of those who fear the Lord and think upon HIS NAME. Has not the reader proved this? Has He not also proved the subtle religious pride and workings that rob the heart of such seasons? Shall we not with purpose of heart, then, pursue in the future the way of first love, the way of the Spirit, and the way of the bride?

Soon He will come! THE BRIGHT, MORNING STAR will quickly shine out! Those who have heard the testimony of Himself in the assemblies are ready in true love to welcome Him. To Him "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." What a welcome awaits Him! What a contrast to His first coming! Ah, great and glorious shall be His joy when He takes us up to present us to Himself!

"The Bridegroom and the bride Are seen in glory ever, And love is satisfied."

He will come and He will shine forth eventually as the Sun of righteousness in view of millennial, earthly blessing. A star may be larger than the sun which is set in immediate relation to the earth. The sun looks greater because of its nearness. One far-off star, beyond the planetary system, called "the king of the heavens," is a thousand times larger than the sun, and a million times farther away from the earth. Certainly the Morning Star, the heavenly Bridegroom, involves greater glories than the Sun of righteousness for the earth; yet all centre, in this case, in our glorious Saviour, in One and the same Person; but, relatively speaking, a vaster cluster of glories encircle Him as the bright, Morning Star than as the Sun of righteousness, although both are indeed glorious. To the earthly remnant at the end of the Old Testament, in view of a future day, it is said, "Unto you that fear My name shall the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). To the real in the assemblies, it is said at the end of the New Testament, "I, JESUS... am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright MORNING STAR... I come quickly" (Rev. 22:16-20. N.T.). Meanwhile the last word breathed by the Spirit is, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with ALL THE SAINTS" (last verse of the Bible, N.T.).

In the sense of this grace, and of the presence of the Lord with us, we are to walk in the fear of the Lord all the day long. This will preserve us in a condition which is agreeable to Him, as we wait His return.

H. J. VIne,
Correspondence.

The King of the North.

A CORRESPONDENT, whose criticisms and suggestions we value, writes to us regarding the paper which appeared in our January issue under the above title. He questions whether we were right in saying that this personage acts independently of any other power, and supports his view by quoting Daniel 8. 24, where we read that “the king of fierce countenance shall be mighty, but not by his own power.” If the king of fierce countenance is the King of the North of chapter 11. 40-45, then our correspondent is right and we are wrong, and we know that many able and spiritual-minded expositors take the view that he puts forward.

We should like, however, to give our reasons for thinking that “the king of fierce countenance” is ANTICHRIST and not the King of the North. “He will stand up when the transgressors are come to the full.” Are not these transgressors the great leaders of an unbelieving Jewry restored to Jerusalem, “the scornful men” who rule this people which is in Jerusalem? These boast that because they have made a covenant with death and are at agreement with hell, the overflowing scourge—probably the King of the North—shall not come unto them (Isa. 28. 14, 15). This covenant is surely that spoken of in Daniel 9, 27, which is undoubtedly made with Antichrist. And will it not be by “dark sentences,” and “causing craft to prosper,” that he will deceive these “scornful” unbelievers, persuading them by his works and miracles that he has the power of death and hell on his side. Antichrist will exercise extraordinary spiritual powers, and by them alone he will “prosper and practise.” Not so the King of the North of the end of chapter 11. He seems to be purely a military genius.

Again, the king of fierce countenance “by peace shall destroy many”; i.e. he makes a treaty with the Jews, with the intention of throwing them off their guard and eventually getting them into his power, this Antichrist does, but not the King of the North, as far as we can see from end of Daniel 11. Again, “He shall magnify himself in his heart,” claiming divine honours along with his great ally—the head of the Roman Empire (see description of “the wilful king,” who is Antichrist, Daniel 11. 36-39). “And shall destroy the mighty and h:ly people.” This is Antichrist’s special work, for he will be their chief persecutor during Jacob’s trouble, when he will repudiate the treaty that he made with them: “He shall make it desolate” (Dan. 9. 27).

It is not likely that Antichrist will have an army of his own, as the King of the North will, though he will honour the god of forces, personified in the Beast, The Jews will not need one if they are to be restored to Palestine under British or Allied protection, and Antichrist will establish himself after that has taken place, and he will be maintained and made mighty there by the protecting power or powers. So that this description, “mighty, but not by his own power,” fits him well. While the energy with which the King of the North acts, “like a whirlwind,” and the way in which he makes himself complete master of Egypt, point to his acting independently of any other power.

Finally, “He shall stand up against the Prince of princes; and shall be broken without hand.” This Antichrist will certainly do, and his complete overthrow and awful doom are given us in Revelation 19., where, under the designation “false prophet,” he is cast alive into the lake of fire.

If the King of the North is the Turk, it is not difficult to see the probability that, being driven out of Palestine, he will watch for an opportunity of recovering that land, and it may be that the European revolution and continent-wide anarchy out of which the league of the ten kingdoms with the Beast at the head emerges will cause the withdrawal, the time being, of the power that gi
protection to the Jewish nation, and so give him the opportunity for which he will wait. A similar reason may account for the King of the South invading Palestine at the same time. Evidently there is no army in the land to meet these two invaders and they fight each other. But this is more conjecture than the interpretation of prophecy, so we proceed no further.

"Impotent folk . . . waiting."

Another correspondent writes. "The paper by Dr. Deck, entitled "Impotent Folk . . . Waiting" (Dec. 1917 issue), has been a great help to me. I notice that you remark, "It is an application of that wonderful incident in John 5. and not the exact interpretation of it." Will you please give us the interpretation?

If we understand the passage rightly, the Pool of Bethesda represented the law that came by Moses, and all the system of approach to God which was introduced by him, with which there was an admixture of mercy; but whatever blessing that system yielded, it was not available to those who needed it most, like the impotent man, and so they lay helpless and unblest. But Jesus came, He, the Lord dwelt among us FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. He brought the grace of God, of which He was the very personification, not to those who thought they had no need of it, but to the hopeless and the lost. Grace is the love of God in its activities towards the most needy and undeserving. This came into evidence in its fullness in the person of God's only-begotten Son, and John 5. is an illustration of it, and the Lord's comment upon it was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

But in saying this we had no wish to take off the edge from Dr. Deck's striking application of the incident; it was a timely and useful paper.

"With Christ."

Dear Sir,—In your "Editorial" section of "Scripture Truth" (page 3) for Jan., you have drawn the attention of your readers to three scriptures, viz

Luke 23. 43, "With ME" (i.e. JESUS).
2 Corinthians 5. 8, "With the LORD."
Philippians 1. 23, "With CHRIST."

If you have not already remarked the fact you will be interested to know that a different preposition is used in each of these verses.

To the thief, the preposition is "META."

To the Corinthians, "pros";
And to the Philippians, "sun."

The change in circumstances suggested by "META" (for speaker and hearer); the direction to be taken by Paul or the Corinthians in the event of his or their dissolution (whether considered in relation to the place to which they were going, or, the LORD to whom they were going), of "pros"; and, the union, companionship or concomitance of "sun," find a common centre in I Thessalonians 5. 9, 10: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with (sun) HIM."

Thus has the Spirit of God "joined all these Glorious Names of wisdom, love, and power," and given us (whether at home in the body or absent from it) their present values.

"LORD, now we wait for THEE to come
And take us to THY FATHER’S home:
O what ecstatic joy ‘twill be
To spend eternity with THEE."

"And so shall we ever be WITH (sun)
the LORD" (I Thess. 4. 17).

Believe me, dear Sir,
Very truly yours in His great love,
J. C. M.
Jewish Hopes as expressed in their Liturgy.

[We reproduce the following from Palestine, the organ of the British Palestine Committee. It is interesting as showing how Jewish hopes are still centred in Jerusalem and the coming of God's Anointed. Before these hopes can be fulfilled, however, we know that the veil which is upon their faces (2 Cor. 3.) must be removed. They must acknowledge the despised and crucified Nazarene as their Lord. Then, and not until then will the word be fulfilled: "And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."]

( Isa. 25. 7-9.)

WHEN a Jewish child is circumcised they say, "For Thy salvation I have waited, O Lord; I have hoped, O Lord, for Thy salvation," and men pray that God "may send us His Anointed, walking in His integrity, to give tidings of consolation to the people that is one, though dispersed and scattered amongst the nations."

At a Jewish wedding the prayer is uttered that "soon may there be heard in the cities of Judæa and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, the jubilant voice of the bridegrooms from their canopies and of the youths from their feasts of song." When a Jew dies and is buried his children pray that God "will rebuild the city of Jerusalem and establish His temple in the midst thereof."

When a Jewish lad is confirmed he is reminded that God "has planted eternal life in the Jewish people," and he prays that "He may have mercy upon Zion, for it is the home of our life, and that He may save her that is grieved in spirit speedily even in our days."

Thus in all the important stages of the pilgrimage of the Jew through life the consciousness of the exile from Palestine and the assurance of the return to Palestine are brought before him and insisted upon. But it is not merely at the important stages. The prayers throughout the day, the prayers for every festive occasion are prayers for the Jewish restoration. It should not be forgotten that the God of Israel in the Commandments is the "God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Perhaps the most moving expression of this passion for Palestine and this living faith in the ending of the exile is to be found in Maimonides, the great Jewish philosopher and scholar. Maimonides had known the bitterness of persecution and the glory of a great professional and scholarly reputation. Fortune, good and bad, books and nature, and the cities of men—he had tried them all. When he came to compile the thirteen fundamental articles of the Jewish creed this is what he wrote for the twelfth: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though He tarry I will wait daily for His coming"; and to the whole thirteen Articles he appended this passionate outburst, which he repeated not only in Hebrew but also in Chaldaic, "For Thy salvation I hope, O Lord; I hope, O Lord, for Thy salvation; O Lord, for Thy salvation I hope."

But indeed no extracts from the Liturgy can give more than a hint of the place, of the sense of exile, and of the conviction that the exile will end, in Jewish devotional literature. The whole of the Liturgy must be read to get any just measure of it.
THAT blessed hope! What is it?

It is not the improvement of the world, for “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3. 13).

It is not the conversion of the world by the gospel, for the Lord Himself asked the question, “When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18. 8). And when He does come back to the earth He will not be welcomed by glad and enraptured multitudes but “all tribes of the earth shall mourn” (Matt. 24. 30), “and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him” (Rev. 1. 7). He will come to judge, and terror will take hold upon the dwellers on the earth because they are not ready.

It is not universal revival of divine life and energy in Christendom, for “the love of many shall wax cold,” and “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim. 4. 3), but they shall have the form of godliness but deny the power (2 Tim. 3. 5).

“That blessed hope” is not centred in either the world or the church, it does not draw its inspiration from anything on the earth, it turns the eye to heaven, and amid the encircling gloom below the light of it glows with increasing splendour before the soul. It is centred in Christ—“THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE” (1 Tim. 1. 1).

It is the hourly expectation of seeing Him and being with Him and like Him. But it is not through death and the grave that we look for the goal of this “blessed hope.” Multitudes have travelled that way and they shall as surely triumph in the glad realization of this hope as we that are alive and remain, but it is not through death and the grave that we are told to look for it. The way of its fulfilment is most definitely and clearly described in 1 Thessalonians 4. 15 to end.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

And these words of the Lord are confirmed to us by a glorious passage in the resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15. 51-57):

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Unless we are prepared to argue that words do not mean what they stand for, we must believe that the moment is coming when the dead in Christ shall arise, and with them millions of people—the whole of the blood-bought church—will be caught up from the earth, and without dying will meet the Lord in the air to be ever with Him. They will disappear suddenly and completely from
every place, position, and pursuit in which the world has known them, to be seen no more until they return with Christ to reign over the earth.

That this appears an impossibility to the human comprehension of things we admit, and we are quite prepared to hear the scoffer contend that the law of gravitation will prevent it. But by the word of the Lord it is revealed to us, and faith lays hold of that and says, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." And what says the Word? "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." The shout of the Lord is mightier than the law of gravitation. Notice how this comes out in Philippians 3. 20, 21:

"For our conversation 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."

The power that will bring this marvelous thing to pass is that power by which He will subdue all things unto Himself, until from His throne to the uttermost bounds of His infinite universe every force in every realm within it obeys His will. The power that was put forth when He rose from the dead, the power that has quickened us and delivered our soul from the bondage of sin: this is the power of His working.

The law of gravitation did not prevent the translation of Enoch; it did not hold Elijah when the time had come for God to take him up; it did not prevent the ascension of our most blessed Lord. How could it? He is the Creator of every law, and the power by which He went up is the power that will catch us up when He descends from heaven with that wonderful shout of triumph and set up love for His church. We know not the hour when this shall be, but waiting and watching we should be, we must be, for His last word to us upon the sacred page is, "Surely, I come quickly."

The Gospel and the World.

We have met Christians who have been rudely shaken in these cruel days. They had hoped and believed that the gospel was sent into the world for its conversion, and that it was about to accomplish its mission, but now the world seems less converted than ever in its sad and sinful history, and in consequence they feel that the gospel has proved a failure, and they are perplexed and depressed thereat.

We must maintain with our utmost power that the gospel is for all the world, and that whosoever amongst its one thousand five hundred millions believes in the Son of God, who is its most blessed theme, receives eternal life and is brought into God's family. But while the blessing is for all, for every individual that hears the most wondrous gospel offer, we are nowhere told that God sent it to convert the world, He knew from the beginning that men would not receive the truth in the love of it, and so, instead of converting the world, the gospel calls out of the world those that obey it.

It is by the gospel that the members of Christ's body are secured, and this body is the church, the ekklesia, which means, that which is called out. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that He had chosen them "out of the world" (John 15. 19). Simon Peter declared, "How God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15. 14). And the new song in heaven is, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5. 9).

The church is to meet the Lord with rapture as the heavenly Bridegroom; the world out of which the church is taken will meet Him with terror as its
judge. When He comes in the latter character "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn" (Matt. 24. 30); "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1. 7). They will say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come and who shall be able to stand" (Rev. 6. 16, 17). Solemn, indeed, it is to contemplate it, nevertheless it ought not to shake our faith in the gospel. Instead, the state of things in the world, ripening as it is for this judgment, ought to strengthen our confidence in the Word of God, for it is all plainly predicted there.

Not of the World.

We fear that not every Christian realizes what we might call the antithetical place and character of the church of God to which they all belong. And yet no note is struck more definitely and constantly in the New Testament than this.

HEAR WHAT PAUL SAYS, "Our Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1. 4). And he closes that same Epistle by this moving declaration, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (chap. 6. 14).

HEAR WHAT JAMES SAYS, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (chap. 4. 4).

HEAR WHAT JOHN SAYS, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Eph. 2. 15).

HEAR WHAT THE LORD HIMSELF HAS SAID, "I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14).

We have been made "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3. 1). And God according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us (1 Peter 1. 3, 4). How deeply the consideration of such statements of God's Word should affect us, and how gladly we ought to take up our antithetical place and character. And yet while being unworldly, we are not to be unpractical or regardless of our obligations in this life. God in His providence has set us in certain relationships: we are husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and all of us are subjects of the State, and we must in the fear of God fulfil all the obligations that these relationships impose upon us, and yet in them all and through them all maintain our heavenly character and be constantly LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Onward!

Upward! Homeward! Heavenward!

"Looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2. 13.)

ONWARD! Christian, onward! His coming draweth nigh; The upward path is homeward, though sorrows round may lie; Heavenward let us hasten, keeping the goal in view; "That blessed hope" o'er-filling a heart that's fixed and true.
TRIBULATION teaches. He that is not tried, what does he know?

If tribulation takes all away from us, it still leaves us God; for it can never take away God. Nay, indeed, it brings God to us.

Let no one choose a trial. But if one comes on us, let us suffer it, and know absolutely that it shall be good and profitable to us.

Whoever earnestly from the heart humbles himself before God and acquiesces in His chastening has already won the victory. God is merciful, gracious, patient, of great goodness; and His own prerogative and work it is to have pity on the wretched, to comfort the sorrowful, and to draw near with solace to the anguished, smitten heart.

Our Lord is like a printer; we see and feel Him setting the types here, but we are not skilled to read them. When we are printed off yonder, in the life to come we shall read all clear and straightforward. Meantime we must have patience and pray. If all went according to our will, we should become lazy, untamed creatures. Trials are our best medicine and work for our good against our evil. Our God knows best how to order the lives of His saints.

The Lord afflicts all His saints; they must all drink that cup. All dear to Him must learn to endure. Christians conquer when they suffer; when they resist they lose the day.

In your sorrow and weakness let your heart be fresh and comforted, for we have yonder, in that life with God, a sure true Helper, Jesus Christ, who for us has overcome sin and death, who is seated there for us. His power over sin and death is too great that we should fear lest we should sink or fall. He is so heart-true and good, that He neither can nor will forsake us. Then let all our doubting cease.

Herewith I commend you to Him who holds you dearer than you hold yourself, and has shown you such love that He has taken your sins upon Himself, and atoned for them by His own blood; and has let you know this through the gospel, and has given you to believe it through His Spirit. Whatever happens let Him care. He will make all right; yea, He has already done all things for the very best—far better than we can comprehend.

If trial makes us impatient then the devil laughs and is glad.

Often God withdraws from us the consolations that earthly relationships give that the comfort of the Scriptures may find space to work in us, and may no longer be kept standing vainly outside, as a mere alphabet without practice. We must turn our backs upon the visible things that we may grow used to leave them. Patience and consolation are God’s works, and in His school we learn them.

Whoever sees and feels the Father’s love to us as revealed in the Scriptures can bear any sorrow on earth, and he who knows not this can never be truly glad though he were bathed in all the delights and joys of the world.

Henceforth.

My secret inner life, blest Lord, I'd henceforth live to thee;
Whilst outer, God-allotted toil, shall happy service be;
A quiet sweet communion hold from Earth’s wild tumult free;
And in the radiance of Thy face, see henceforth nought but Thee.
The Eternal Love of God.

"Can you fix the time when God began to love you?"

"No. I do not see how anyone could do that, for His love is eternal."

"Can you fix the time when the love wherewith God loves you will end?"

"No. It will never cease. It cannot have an ending."

"If you cannot fix a time for its beginning or its ending, can you tell when it expressed itself towards you in all its infinite perfection?"

"Yes. When my precious Saviour and Lord hung on Calvary's cross for me. There the love of God fully told out its perfectness in Christ Jesus: 'God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5. 8).

"That is right; and we are also told, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4. 10). It is as we take these great facts into our hearts in faith, and in the power of the Spirit, that our appreciation of them is deepened, and our joy in them increased."

The eternal God knew us and loved us before time began, "before the foundation of the world," therefore no time for its beginning can be fixed. His love, like Himself, is eternal, therefore there is no ending. The cross, however, appears in between and tells out, at a fixed time, the great love of God. "In the due time Christ died for us" (N.T.). He died for our sins. Blessed be God. What a sight! The love of God telling out its greatness to me in Christ putting away my sins and bearing my judgment at Calvary! How eloquent is such a scene! How perfect and divine is its "commendation" of itself!

"Love that on death's dark vale
Its sweetest odours spread."

Let its holy blessedness fill thee, O my soul, and cause thee to overflow in praise and worship before Him who loves thee; before Him who from eternity to eternity is God.

H. J. Vine.

A Little While.

Just a few days—and our tears will have ended;
Just a few hours—and our task will be done;
Yet still hear them calling,
From darkness appalling,
While we rest in the light of a setting sun.

Just a few days—and then nought will avail us,
The thought of the crown that we might yet have won;
And ah! what the sorrow
If we miss on the morrow
Our share in that joy, when He whispers, "Well done!"

Just a few days—Oh Lord, strengthen our courage;
Just a few moments—to publish Thy Name.
In our weakness enfold us,
Through darkness uphold us,
"Till He Come," make us faithful Thy love to proclaim.
The Way of Joy and Liberty.

"How can I be filled with the love of God?"

"My failure in the past and gloom in the present weary me."

"My life is full of failure, and each day is perhaps a little worse than the one preceding. As I review each day it is always failure, failure in every way conceivable, until one feels driven to despair."

"I feel as though I must give up, but I dare not and in reality have no desire to do so."

These are extracts from letters received recently from young Christians. And we are sure that many are passing through similar exercises. We shall be glad if we can help them, and it maybe a few simple words may do so even before they express the desire for it.

Are you childlike enough to sing a child's chorus? If so, sing:

"Yes, Jesus loves ME!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, JESUS loves me!
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO."

Sing it over and over until the music of the truth of it awakens the dumb chords in your soul. Search the Bible to find out where it tells you this great fact; consider how He has proved it, still proves it, and will yet prove it. There could be no subject more precious than the past, present, and future of the love of Christ.

When you have to mourn the coldness of your love, think of His love that the many waters could not quench (Song of Sol. 8. 7). When you have to confess your forgetfulness and faithlessness, give thanks to Him that He cannot forget (Isa. 49. 15), and that He loves His own unto the end (John 13. 1). When your selfishness and reserve fill you with shame, bless His name, that He held back nothing, but sold all that He had (Matt. 13. 45), and gave Himself for you (Gal. 2. 20). Take up the very words, they are divinely given and throb with a wonderful power: "THE SON OF GOD LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."

"Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus LOVES me!
The Bible tells me so."

Here is the Master key that will unlock every cell in Doubting Castle, the strong chain that will bind giant Despair in impotency, the angel hand that will lead you out of your captivity. Here is the sunshine that will bathe your soul in your liberty, the air that you will breathe for your constant invigoration. Here is the philosopher's stone that will transmute the base metal of your own life's efforts into the pure gold of acceptable service at your Saviour's feet. Here is your motive, your boast, your song:

"Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, JESUS loves me!
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO."


Of course we rejoice greatly in what Christ does in our lives. But how much more we rejoice in what HE IS. The true secret of unfailing joy is to remember continually what our Lord Jesus Christ IS. What He does often gives us cause for rejoicing,—but not always, for sometimes He has to chasten us. But even when the rod smites most severely, and the cup He gives is most bitter, if we turn and think what He is in Himself, we cannot fail to rejoice.

The secret of continual joy is in all that the Lord IS.

"Rejoice in the Lord always!" (Phil. 4. 4).
Of all the facts of history it may be honestly questioned if one of them has been so well authenticated as the resurrection of the Christ has been. That the witnesses were neither plotters nor schemers, but men of the strictest integrity, their writings, their lives, and their sufferings for the truth of what they had seen and heard, convincingly demonstrate. Their evidence is given without sign of stammering or stuttering, without confliction or contradiction, without rant or reserve. There is no attempt to occupy people with the marvellous. If we take into account the amazing subject of their testimony, their sobriety is miraculous. They are not carried away by their unearthly topic into the realm of unreality, in which a fertile imagination may disport itself.

Nor were they men who had been accustomed to esoteric influences, upon whose imagination it was easy to work, and who had little else to do than to dream away an idle and barren existence. Their Lord had told them during His sojourn with them that He would be put to shame by the leaders of the people, and that they would kill Him, and after that He would rise again from the dead. But it seemed never to have taken hold of their minds. That He was dead and buried they knew, and their sorrow was that of despair. But when told that He was risen they believed it not; and even when He came into their midst when they were gathered together they still doubted, until He showed them His hands, feet, and side, appealed to them to handle Him, and ate food given to Him by their hands.

And Stephen in the very hour of his martyrdom declared that he saw Him at the right hand of God, and to Him he committed the keeping of his immortal spirit. Did he see Him? or did he not? Did he with the prospect of having to meet God before his soul invent, as his last contribution to the upkeep of the devil's kingdom, a lie that for downright audacity and consummate wickedness might well have staggered the father of lies himself?

And Saul of Tarsus, a man of prodigious intellect, of extensive scholarship, and of unbounded religious zeal and hatred against all that called on that Name, was privileged to hear, see, and receive his ministry from, the glorified Nazarene; and in his subsequent life on earth to bear reproach, poverty, hunger, nakedness, for His name's sake, and at last to seal his testimony with his heart's blood.

These men were not liars, they were not easily deceived, nor were they afflicted with a credulousness that readily gives assent to everything that approaches the miraculous. Neither the Athenian ear nor the Cretian tongue was part of the endowment of any one of them. They were plain simple men, most of them apparently possessed of ordinary intelligence, a few of gigantic intellect and learning. And to refuse their testimony concerning that which they saw and heard is to manifest a determination of self-will and hatred against everything of God that is simply appalling. On the truth of that which they have testified every true Christian stakes his immortal soul for all eternity, and in this there is no mere venture; it has been well authenticated, and itself is the authentication of the whole revelation of God from the first of Genesis till the last of Revelation. Destroy this witness, and you have demolished all that is found in Old Testament and New, and you have proven prophet, priest, and apostle liars and of their father the devil, and wilful deceivers of the human race.

But what about the resurrection of them that are Christ's? What does the
Word of God say regarding this most important subject? A resurrection of both just and unjust is most clearly taught. There are those who would make the resurrection of Christ the exception, and would deny it of all others. We will therefore, with God's help, examine the statements of Scripture on this point, that we may know with certainty what it says.

But it might be better to inquire in the first place what takes place at death. Paul tells us that death would be gain to him (Phil. 1. 22), for it would mean being absent from the body, and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5.). The body would go to corruption, and the spirit to Christ. Our Lord when giving up His life on the cross commended His spirit to the Father, and Stephen when he was being stoned to death commended his spirit to Jesus (Luke 23. 46; Acts 7. 59). When Stephen expired he was present with the Lord, that is, as identified with his spirit; but we are also told in the next chapter that devout men buried him, and made great lamentation over him, that is as identified with his body. As I have said, the body goes to the grave, the spirit to Christ, so that it is perfectly right to speak of a departed saint as with Christ, and it is just as right to speak of him as in his grave.

Now resurrection refers to the man viewed as in the grave: "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" (John 5. 28, 29). Also, we have in the gospel: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15.). We do not read that He went into Paradise and was raised. Resurrection is not associated with that which goes into Paradise, but with that which is laid in the grave. Our Lord went to the grave of Lazarus, had the stone removed, and called the dead man out of the tomb. It is so in every other instance of resurrection in Scripture, the subject of resurrection is the individual identified with his body.

But I may be asked if I believe that the body which is laid in the grave is the one that is raised again. That is exactly what I mean, for it is just what Scripture teaches on the subject. But to this it may be replied that our glorified body is said to be out of heaven (2 Cor. 5. 2). The point in that verse is the change that the living undergo, and not the resurrection of the dead; but I would ask if it is meant that myriads of new bodies come down out of heaven, and that with these we are clothed? And if this is what is meant I would ask again, What about these bodies in which we tabernacle at the present moment? what becomes of them? Some have gone so far as to affirm that the world will have them to bury, but I doubt if the madness of this has ever before been equalled. "From heaven" simply means of heavenly origin, and the way in which this is brought about is very plainly brought before us in 1 Corinthians 15. The dead shall be raised in incorruption, power, and glory—a spiritual body; and we, the living, shall be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Our body is changed surely, but it is our body that is changed (Phil. 3. 21.). It is not an exchange of bodies, one body left in the grave and another raised.

But I may be told again that the very chapter from which I am quoting says that it will not be the body that is buried that is raised. But the chapter says nothing of the sort. In speaking of that which is a figure of resurrection it says: "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." But like every other figure taken from nature to set forth divine verities it is not to be taken as presenting the truth in every
It is a very striking figure of death and resurrection, so is day and night, summer and winter, or better, spring and autumn, but none of these can be taken to set forth the truth in every single detail of it. Therefore when the Spirit of God comes to the reality of the thing itself, we find that the thing that is sown is that which is raised, only in another character. It is sown in corruption, dishonour, weakness; it is raised in incorruptibility, glory, power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. But it is the thing sown that is raised. At the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2.) the Lord turned the water into wine: it was water one moment, but wine the next. And in the resurrection of saints the natural will be made spiritual.

Nothing was left in the sepulchre in which the Lord was laid once resurrection took place, except the grave clothes, and nothing will be left in the graves of God’s people when the dead come forth at His command, except the garments in which they were laid to rest.

It is a marvellous truth, easy to be believed, but impossible to be understood. But it is little that we do understand at best, and the best way to arrive at the understanding of the Word of God is first to believe what it says.

J. Boyd,

Answers to Correspondents.

“I pray not for the world” (John 17. 9).

S.C.P.—This request of the Lord did not mean that He was indifferent to the blessing of men. For what God is He is, and God’s will is that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2). But it has reference to Psalm 2. 8. There God, addressing His Son, says, “Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” But in His prayer to the Father, the Lord says, I do not ask for that; for the time had not yet come for Him to break the nations with a rod of iron. Evil was to run its course, but meanwhile He prayed for “His own,” you and us, that they might be kept from that evil of the world that He will break in pieces as a potter’s vessel when the time comes.

“We shall be like Him (1 John 3. 2.).”

We should say that our being like the Lord is connected in the first place with seeing Him as He is. But it will be publicly manifested that we are the sons of God when He appears and we appear with Him. He will appear as the Son and if we are like Him it will be because we are sons. The world does not know us now in this character and relationship, but it will when it sees us in the glory which He gives us, as the Lord says in that wonderful prayer in John 17: “And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world might know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” Seeing Him as He is has reference to His place at home as the supreme and ever worthy object of the Father’s eternal love. The world will never see that; it is our privilege and portion, and we shall share it with Him,
The thought of revival is as happy and as possible as the idea of reconstruction is hopeless and impossible. The church has ever been the subject of gracious revival throughout her long sojourn here, just as Israel of old was frequently visited of God in mercy, until “there was no remedy.”

Our living Head in glory is the life of His saints—the members of His body—and it is because He lives that they live also. How comes it that the church is here to-day, spite of two thousand years of opposition, persecution, seduction, failure, and temptation by a trinity of hostile powers, but by the wonderful and ever blessed support of her Head on high, and of the Spirit of God by whom she is animated here?

Her course has been marked if, alas, by many a failure, yet, also, by far more grace on His part; so that, not only has individual faith been reinvigorated all the way through, but seasons of glad and special revival have been granted frequently and generally. There have been times of spiritual refreshment enjoyed deeply and consciously by myriads of weary saints, to whom truth, in varied fullness and power, has been ministered by the Holy Spirit.

This is proof positive of the life and grace of Him who knows our need and fails not to meet it for our good, and His own glory. It is the church, the living organism, in which life already exists, that needs and receives reviving at the hands of her faithful Lord. Her life is constantly sustained by revival—daily, hourly revival! What a wonderful fact it is that there should be such a body possessed of vitality and power, light amid darkness, salt where all else is corrupt, truth where falsehood abounds, love surviving the hatred and enmity and degradation of the world! Oh! it is wonderful, and but for constant revival that wonder would cease.

But it is not reconstruction. How can such an organism as Christ’s mystic body be reconstructed, or how the family of God? The thought is impossible.

That saints already possessing life may receive fresh energy, so that, detaching themselves from ways and habits and associations unworthy of Christ, and who, under the influence of the Word and Spirit of God, gain further light and a clearer apprehension of the mind of the Lord, with a corresponding line of conduct, is easily understood. This is true revival; but not reconstruction. Such revival draws hearts and souls together in the name of the Lord, and in true testimony to Him, as a mere construction or reconstruction never could.

But this is the movement that is needed to-day. Then a reconstruction that is according to God, and of His making, would inevitably follow a divine revival. Hence, I do not think that we need devote our efforts to such a thing as a reconstruction of Christendom, or even to any part of it. It would be only a waste of time and bitter disappointment at the end—the labour of a Sisyphus. The tares and wheat grow together till the harvest in their common field. The fowls of the air are not driven from their lodgement in the mustard tree, nor is the leaven removed from the three measures of meal. Things are left as they are, in the administration of the kingdom, for the adjustment of the Lord at the close. The reconstruction of all this is for Him.

Our part, that of the church, is to devote ourselves to the development of the divine life and nature that every saint possesses, according to the marvel-
lous prayer at the end of Ephesians 3, and which precedes the injunctions as to practical life and conduct in the chapter following. This is gloriously positive and sets the heart on the accomplishment, not of a hopeless reconstruction, but of that to which the whole work of the ministry, appointed by Christ on high, is devoted, 'in view of the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' This is His structure and will be completed without fail. It is for us, in all lowliness, to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, and that alone, but that most surely; and to see to it that, by the help of God, we have no other structure, great or small, in our minds, or for our object. This one is sufficiently large. It was the life-work of the Apostle Paul to whom Christ Himself was everything; and then, necessarily, the church which is His body.

Our business is neither the construction nor the reconstruction of organizations; but it is the practical recognition of the Name and Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in Philadelphia, whose distinguishing mark was faithfulness to the Lord and love to His saints.

In cultivating this grace we may leave all the building and construction with Him.

J. Wilson Smith

The Secret of Progress and Power.

I HARDLY think it needs any words of mine to show that the days in which we live bear a striking resemblance to the times in which Samuel's lot was cast. They were dark and trying times. The word of the Lord was precious, or rare, in those days. He could no longer make frequent personal communications to men as He had done in the former patriarchal times. It was very rare for Him to reveal Himself by word. And then we read, 'There was no open vision.' In former times God had come and talked with men. He had talked with Abraham, so that Abraham could be called the friend of God. He had talked with Isaac, with Jacob, and with Joseph, but now all that had ceased—there was no open vision. God had, as it were, withdrawn His companionship from men. Then we read that Eli, the high priest, the representative of God in Israel, was stricken with blindness. His eyes were waxing dim, so that he could not see, no doubt portraying the condition of the people spiritually. Even the religious leaders of the people could not see. Their perception was dimmed. They could not discern the true value of things. Then we find the lamp of God was about to go out, and we know that in the national history of Israel they were on the very threshold of that moment when the word 'Ichabod' would be marked, as it were, upon the whole nation—'The glory has departed.' I am very strongly convinced that we are on the threshold of that moment when the professing church is going to have that word written upon it, and when the body of Christ having been taken to heaven, the professing church will be spued out of the mouth of Christ, as something utterly nauseous to Him. Am not I right, then, in saying that we live in dark and perilous days?

Now I want to call your attention to something that remains open, and that, in the mercy of God, always will remain open to the child of God, however dark the day in which he lives. There are certain things that may be withdrawn
from us. We in a land like this enjoy many privileges. There are open doors of service for the Lord. But it is possible to conceive of their being withdrawn. The hand of persecution might make it impossible for us to meet together like this. The law might say, "You shall not preach the gospel; you shall not continue your Christian service as you have done." We can see that the door of many a happy service might be shut against us, but the door of this to which I want to call your attention to-night can never be shut, either by man or demon. Nothing but the coldness of our own hearts can deprive us of the privilege. It is what we get in the first verse. "The child Samuel" (not the old man Eli, but the little, feeble child Samuel) "ministered to the Lord." It does not say he did something wonderful for the Lord. Poor little child, he had not the strength or the ability to do that. He was not in a position to do any great thing, or perhaps, even a little thing for the Lord, but in spite of his youth, in spite of his feebleness and little knowledge, he could in an acceptable way minister to the Lord.

This is a privilege which must always be open to each one of us. No persecuting power can ever prevent its exercise. We might, like John, be cast upon a desert island, but, whatever our lot, nothing can keep from us this privilege of ministering to the Lord. A wise man used to say that it is better to drive one good tenpenny nail home, and clinch it, than to drive in a whole box of tin tacks. Now the nail I want to drive home is the immense privilege of ministering to the Lord in secret, to be in that attitude of soul and walk that we shall afford pleasure to the heart of Christ.

May I give you one or two illustrations of what I mean from the Old Testament? In 1 Chronicles 10. 14, we read, "The Lord turned the kingdom to David." The day of David's rejection and persecution was ended at last. Now when David came into his glory, he associated with him those who had linked their fortunes with his, those who had identified themselves with him in the day of his rejection. In chapter 11. 22, it says that Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, was a valiant man who had done many acts. He slew a lion-like man of Moab, he slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day. He was honourably mentioned over the thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. Then it says that Abishai, the brother of Joab, was the chief among three. He lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, but he did not attain to the first three. Here were these valiant men who attained honourable mention by name in the day of David's glory, but they did not attain unto the first three.

Would you like to know who the first three were, and what they did? It tells us in verse 18. "David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate," and the three broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David." What did they do? Did they leave the field strewn with the bodies of the dead Philistines? No. Did they achieve a mighty, epoch-making victory for David? No. They just got a jug of water for his refreshment in the day of his thirst. There were these thirty honourable men, who performed great exploits for David, and there were these three who ministered to David. They heard what he wanted, knew what he longed for, and set themselves at the risk of their lives to minister to his pleasure. It may be a very great privilege given to some of us to do things for the Lord in the Sunday School, in the preaching of the gospel, in the giving away of gospel books, in the writing of a letter to a friend. All these things we may do for the Lord, but I am not talking about that. I am talking about something different,
Scripture Truth.

ministering TO the Lord, bringing refreshment to His heart in secret.

Take another illustration, from the Song of Solomon 3:7: "Behold his bed, which is Solomon's, threescore valiant men are round about it . . . because of fear in the night." Here again we find some valorous men, great warriors, faithful servants of the King. But mark, their number is limited; it is only threescore. We cannot all have a place among such. But it goes on to say, "King Solomon made himself a chariot . . . the midst thereof was paved with love, by (as the word should be) the daughters of Jerusalem." It does not say there were only threescore of them. There was no limit to their number. We cannot all be amongst the threescore public servants of the King, but we may all of us be among the number of those who contribute to paving with love and devotedness the floor of His chariot!

There was another thing that marked Samuel, and that is that he was in the secret of the Lord. The Lord had a certain communication to make, but He did not make it to Eli. He told Samuel what He was going to do. He let Samuel into the secret, and thus made a confidential servant of him. He trusted Samuel with the knowledge of His plans and purposes. I think it is wonderful, that in a day of darkness and national disaster such as that, a child like Samuel should be taken up in his youth and feebleness, to have these two things set forth in him, ministry to the Lord, and being let into the secret of the Lord. No wonder we read in verse 19 that Samuel grew. There was progress, no standing still with him. There was growth in the things of the Lord. Then it says, "The Lord was with him." He made it his business to be much with the Lord in secret, and the Lord manifested Himself with him in testimony and service.

Then we come to a scripture which I always feel greatly humiliated to read: "The Lord did let none of His words fall to the ground." A great many of our words fall to the ground. How often we are like the poor disciples, who toiled all night and took nothing! How often our words seem to be but broken shafts! Our words seem to make no impression upon people's souls. But not one word that came from this little lad missed its mark. Not one failed to produce its effect. Not one thing he said was ever said in vain. "The Lord let none of his words fall to the ground." Methinks if in private we were more like Samuel, if our principal business was ministering to the Lord, and if we set our minds to learn the secrets of the Lord which He confides to us, there would be a far greater power with our words.

Then, finally, besides his progress, besides the presence of the Lord with him, besides the power that accompanied His words, we have the scope of his testimony. He did not confine his testimony to the tribe of which he belonged. We read, "The word of Samuel came to all Israel." He had a heart that comprehended all the people of God, whether they were Reubenites or Simeonites, whether they were of Naphtali, Gad, or Asher. They were the people of God, and his testimony in the name of Jehovah was addressed to all. His word came to all Israel, and God used him as one of His choicest and greatest servants. But, remember, it all began when in the days of his early youth he ministered to the Lord in secret. God help us to do likewise!

For not here doth mine eye turn for rest,
But far hence, where my heart finds her home,
In that Strong One in Whom I am blest,
Who has passed through this world to His Throne.
The Spirit of Christ.” No. 5.

Sealing.

We will now consider the operation of the Holy Spirit in sealing believers. In the Scripture use of the term, one of the meanings of sealing is the concluding of a transaction as in Romans 15. 28, the putting into a person’s hands of something that has been designed for him and prepared for him, so that he can possess and use it. A second idea connected with it is the closing up for safety of something important and vital, as in Jeremiah 32. 10, 11; Revelation 20. 3. A remarkable illustration is found in Job 41. 15-17, where the scales of “leviathan” are compared to a close seal, and are described as impenetrable even to air. A third meaning is illustrated by the letters and books said to be sealed; they were to be opened at their destination by competent persons, or the persons for whom they were intended (see Dan. 12. 4, 9; Rev. 5. 1). Yet another and additional application of the seal was to ratify a certain resolution or determination (Neh. 9. 38 and 10. 1). We may add the thought of proof of a mission or service, as in 1 Corinthians 9. 2. And there is in its use by high personages the undoubted thought of authority, so that no one who feared the power of the high personage would dare to break the seal. Such seems to be the bearing of passages like Daniel 6. 17; Matthew 27. 66; and those which refer to Christians. Finally, the seal expresses claim in the sense of title to possession (Song of Sol. 8. 6; 2 Tim. 2. 9; and Ephes. 1. 13, etc.).

It is helpful to study the history of certain of the saints at Ephesus which has been recorded for us, because in their case we learn more clearly than elsewhere the process of soul which leads up to Christian sealing. While we have the fact stated also in Corinthians, we are in the former shown what experience they passed through before they received the Holy Ghost. In hardly any place was the contrast between Christianity and all else so emphatically shown.

In Acts 16. 6, Paul and his companions were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, the Holy Ghost very definitely leading him at that moment to the then heathen Europe. But after his years of service there, he called in at Ephesus, the capital of the province called Asia, and reasoned with certain Jews in the synagogue which had been erected in that place. The Scriptures — i.e. such as the Jews had at the time, the Old Testament as we call them — were evidently known and taught even in that centre of idolatry. God as Creator and Lawgiver, and the Messiah as the hope of Israel, were of course known to the minds of those in that limited company. Evidently they appreciated Paul’s talks, but he would not be persuaded to stay with them at the moment. He moved on to Judæa and was for a time occupied in other labour. But he had left a Christian couple in Ephesus (chap. 18. 18, 19); a man and his wife who appear to have been a quiet plodding yoke of oxen, not eminently gifted but toiling privately and painstakingly with individual souls. They had, as Christians, more light than the Jews of the synagogue, but patiently waited till God showed them how they might help them into further light.

Such was the situation when a notable preacher came along, who had been the subject of blessing under John the Baptist’s ministry. Just how he had been reached we are not told; possibly, and even probably, he had been among the throngs who listened to John himself at the Jordan. The truth as preached by the Messiah’s forerunner,
with its terrible exposure of Israel's state, his appeal to their consciences, his demand that they should repent, had all told—either directly or indirectly—on Apollos; and he had bowed in the confession of his sins, awaiting along with hundreds of others similarly reached the coming in of the expected Messiah of Israel. Nay, John had even gone further; for when multitudes had been reached by his ministry, had been born again, and led up to a right and true sense of their sins, confessing them, he went so far as to point out to them who the Messiah was, the lowly Jesus of Nazareth (John 1).

This we must understand in order to appreciate the exercises of Apollos and his service. He had been at Alexandria, and now came to Ephesus with the deep desire to lead his Jewish brethren into the same position and hope as himself. For him it was not enough that a man was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham; the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and if even a Jew did not bring forth fruits for repentance he would meet with judgment and would perish. We can picture with what earnestness he would proclaim the kingdom of God in its moral bearings, showing his startled hearers their sins against God, proved, as the Old Testament had too clearly foretold, by their dispersion among the Gentiles. Moreover, he may have informed them too that the Messiah had actually been seen in Judaea and Galilee, for this was true, and formed part of John's own testimony before he was beheaded. But even if he included that much, beyond it he could not go. Nor could he lead his hearers further than John had led him. He was then a new-born soul, a confessed sinner, repentant, and hoping to be saved sooner or later.

Among those who felt his earnestness were Aquila and Priscilla, the godly couple whom Paul had left behind. Perceiving an opening to show kind hospitality to the devoted preacher they took him under their roof, and while giving him every attention, showed him clearly how things had moved on since the time of John's preaching; and how the Saviour-Messiah pointed out by the Holy Ghost and through the Baptist's voice, had completed his earthly course of humiliation by suffering for Israel's sins, and indeed making propitiation in view of the sins of the whole world. Thus the atonement foreshadowed under the law being effected, God had raised the Messiah from the dead, and given Him the place of glory and honour also foretold in the sacred writings; from whence He would in due time bring in Israel's blessing, and fulfil all the purpose of God. Apollos evidently was greatly helped by these quiet talks, and when the time came for his itinerations to be extended to other districts, he carried with him the very definite help that he himself had received.

But in the meantime his ministry had been so far owned in Ephesus that some of the Jews there had taken the same step that he had taken long before, i.e. they had been baptized with John's baptism. They do not seem to have been swept off their feet by any popular craze; they were plainly good solid men who had seen how John was the forerunner of the Messiah, and that his appeal for the repentance of Israel was indeed God's trumpet voice to them. They then had owned their sin, publicly confessed it on the lines of John's baptism, and were now quite ready to receive any further light God would vouchsafe. In point of fact many we suppose who are called Christians in our days are just where they were in the state of their souls; earnest, pious, devoted souls, who yet would be unable to say definitely that they were saved. The preaching which they had heard was sound enough as far as it went, and they knew they had been led forward by it in a right direction; but they were too honest to go beyond what they really knew; and they were waiting, and while waiting, very earnestly hoping, to be saved. They were not yet
assured of forgiveness from God, and they were not yet sealed by the Spirit. They may have heard the name of Jesus, and have looked to Him to be their Saviour; but the spiritual benefits of His death and resurrection had not yet been declared to them, the "full gospel" had not been preached, and they were neither saved nor sealed.

At this stage in their history, Paul returned (Acts 19. 1–7). Meeting at an early moment with the little group of earnest, longing souls, he swiftly discerned—as might some skilled physician with his patient—that underneath their earnestness there lay a craving not yet satisfied, and that they had not yet apprehended the first lessons of Christianity proper. Oh how tenderly and yet fully he laid bare their lack, while quickening their desire to have it met, by his searching question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Or, (as our Revised Version puts it), "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" He knew that the true gospel of God when believed does not leave the believer in the mere expectancy of salvation, but clenches the possession of the forgiveness of sins by the gift of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer.

Their defect, however, was not wilful. Blessed as it had been to be the subjects of a work of God, blessed to be awakened from any trust in the mere formalities of their Jewish religion, and to be concerned about their soul's welfare in the desire to make their calling and election sure, they had never yet heard the emancipating gospel of Christ. The coming of the Holy Ghost was a consequence of the accomplishment of redemption, and the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the right hand of God (John 7. 39; 16. 7; Acts 2. 32–38). They had not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost had come. The tidings of redemption as God presents it in His gospel, of the complete and eternal settlement of sin's desert in the death of Christ, the absolute defeat of Satan, the break-up of his claim for eternity on the soul who trusts in Christ, the right of God to every believer, the establishment of blessing and eternal life in Christ, never to be contradicted or annulled, for all who believe in Him, the consequent gift of the Spirit with all that His entrance involved—all this was as yet unknown because it had as yet been untold; they had not so much as heard. Oh how many thousands of converted souls, pious and devoted, are void of the peace and power that they all are entitled to by grace, because they have never been told of Jesus glorified and the Spirit given.

How pleasant it must have been to "our beloved brother Paul," as Peter called him, to tell these men of Jesus. They had willingly gone as far as John's teaching could carry them and were earnestly hoping for salvation. Now just as willingly did they listen to "the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation" (Ephes. 1. 13). It presented Christ to them as the object of their faith, outside of themselves, in whom their redemption had been wrought out through His blood. His atonement is not an uncertain factor, to leave the believer in a wretched poise, a neutral position, between certainty and uncertainty. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, absolute and eternal, for it is according to the riches of His grace. There is a wealth of grace in the heart and purpose of God as opened out in verses 3–14 of Ephesians 1., in accordance with which He has bestowed upon the believer the forgiveness of sins; it is not of some sins, nor sins up to a certain time, but absolute and eternal—forgiveness of sins. And this is intelligible, for it is in Christ that this has all been wrought out and in whom it subsists. Had He remained in some way under a cloud, had there been in His case any reluctance on God's part to clear Him when He had once charged Himself with our liabilities, we could
have harboured some uncertainty as to our relations with God. But when we see that God has first wrought out our redemption in Christ, and has then raised Him from the dead and greeted Him in resurrection with unalloyed satisfaction, and has awarded to Him the highest place in the heavenlies—where does uncertainty come in? I no longer look at myself, for it is not in me that redemption has been wrought; but I look at Christ, and Christ glorified, in whom it has been wrought out, and I am saved. It was to the Ephesians the gospel of their salvation, not the hope of it, but the good news of all accomplished in Christ.

Paul, in Acts 19. 4, connects what they had previously learnt with what he was telling them, implying that John’s preaching was a necessary preliminary, but leading them up to Jesus that they might believe upon Him. It was enough. They had been hoping to be saved before; now they learned that they were saved, and saved by Jesus. The forgiveness of sins formerly longed for was now possessed; and the happy believers at once took sides openly and out and out for the Lord Jesus (ver. 5). Further, seeing that they had committed themselves definitely and for ever to the Lord Jesus, Paul had no hesitation about committing himself to and identifying himself with them. It is at this point, where they definitely committed themselves to the Lord Jesus, the risen Saviour, that the Holy Ghost took possession of them. The taking possession by the Holy Ghost is common to all who thus believe the gospel of their salvation; the speaking with tongues and prophesying is particular to their case and is not referred to in the epistle (Ephes. 1.13,14). Thus is the believer sealed. When the sovereign action of God, at work in a man’s soul, has produced the fear of God and the burden in the conscience of sin, there will be a true turning from sin, and exercise as to what is good and evil, right and wrong; there will be piety and earnestness and often much zest and activity. But it is not till there is definite committal to the risen Saviour, it is not until the forgiveness of sins is truly enjoyed (Acts 10. 43, 44) that the Holy Ghost is given. And this is learnt when we see the Saviour risen who bore them all, and put them all away. It is when the believing soul is seen under the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ that the Holy Spirit at once enters—God’s seal upon the work of Christ—God claiming for Himself the now redeemed one, and thereby challenging and refuting all rival claims. In the wisdom of God Paul was used instrumentally at Ephesus to communicate the Holy Spirit to them; but in Acts 10. even when Peter was present the Holy Ghost ignored him, and came directly to Cornelius and the believing company in his house. The laying on of an apostle’s hands might be an accompaniment but it was plainly not a necessity; the essential thing was faith in Christ to the forgiveness of sins; and that, God owned. This is helpful to us in these days when apostles are no more.

A reference or two to the Old Testament may help us to see what is included in the idea of sealing.

In 1 Kings 21. 8, Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, sending the letters to the elders and the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. Those to whom the letters were sent read the contents as being Ahab’s commands, and the seal showed that Ahab’s power and authority were behind the sealed contents.

In Esther 3. 12, and 8. 8, are found two letters of King Ahasuerus, the one written under Haman’s influence and intrigue, for men to rise up against and exterminate the Jews; the other under Mordecai’s guidance, authorising the Jews to exterminate every one that dared to lay hands upon them. Both letters were written in the king’s name and sealed with the king’s ring, and neither was cancelled; for the writing which is written in the king’s name,
and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse. The sealing, therefore, implied the unalterable purpose and will of the one whose seal it was. No man could reverse it.

In Ezekiel 1. 4 (to which may be added an explanatory reference to Rev. 7. 2, 3) we see that ere the Lord brought in judgment, He secured for Himself those who owned their sin and were humbled because of it. The judgment was terrible, as will be also God’s judgment upon the unbelieving and the sinner; but verse 6 is explicit: “Come not near any man on whom is the mark.” Explaining the “mark” by the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 7., we see that those who are sealed or marked are immune from the judgment of God.

These three elements connect themselves with sealing. First, the power and authority of the one whose seal it is are behind the thing sealed. Secondly, no man may reverse what is declared under the seal. Thirdly, when the day shall come for the execution of the judgments of the Lord, there is no judgment from God for those who are sealed and so have God’s mark set upon them.

Now dear fellow-believers, let us read a verse in 2 Corinthians 1. 22: “God, who hath also sealed us.” In verse 21 is shown where we are seen in God’s eye, whether apostles or ordinary Christians, i.e. in Christ. God gives us our new footing there, and loves to settle us consciously into our new position. But I will ask, “Who is it that has sealed us?” The answer is “God.”

We have seen that it is by His Spirit that He has sealed us, taking possession of us for Himself on the ground of what Christ is, and His work for us. Let us then understand that HIS power and authority are behind our sealing: that He repudiates every other claim to us; that He guarantees our safety against all comers. Further, He will allow no interference with His will and purpose in sealing us; no man may reverse it. Try as the devil may to upset our blessing, greater is He that is in us than He that is the world; and we can with joy say, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Finally our being sealed by God’s own Spirit is God’s guarantee that no judgment will fall upon us. There is a day coming, awful in the extreme for all whom it concerns; a day when the long restrained wrath of God must fall upon all who know Him not and believe not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But that day has no terrors for us who are saved and therefore sealed; we have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world. We move through this world but are not of it; God looks down on His beloved redeemed ones here, and loves to place His hand upon us, uttering His great secret to our stilled and happy hearts. “You are Mine.” Do we not look up gratefully and gladly, and in quiet rest in Christ’s atonement for us, knowing we are sealed by His Spirit, say reverently, “My God, I am Thine?”

In this hearty recognition that we are God’s we have the support of the Holy Ghost. For of course He is not anything less, even as the seal, than a living, acting, Divine Person. He comes into us to convey to us the sense every moment and every day and in every circumstance, “You belong to God.”

For of course He is not checked and ungrieved in us will He constantly assure us of the results of Christ’s work for us, and engage us with the thought of God being for us, the infallibility of His purpose, the impossibility of any reversal of His claim to us or His will for us, and the blessedness of His unchangeable favour. It is the fact He is prepared to do all this in us that gives such weight to the important exhortation in Ephesians 4. 30. Saints are sealed truly until the day of redemption; i.e. the day when Christ will publicly claim what is lawfully His even now (1. 14). Naught reverses or changes this blessed fact.

W. H. Westcott.
God’s House.

The question has been asked, “That seeing the church is spoken of as a building in course of construction and not yet completed, how can God be said to dwell in it, for nobody lives in an unfinished house?”

The allusion in the mind of the questioner is doubtless to Ephesians 2. 21, where it is said that “all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.” Like Solomon’s temple, stone is being added to stone, silently but surely; imperceptible as the growth of a tree, the Divine work is proceeding, and when the last living stone is added He who is the top-stone as well as the foundation, shall be brought forth with shoutings. Christ shall appear in glory, grace shall be acclaimed, and the church He has founded and built shall be filled with the glory of God: her light like to a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. This is the future aspect of the dwelling of God in His house, but then Ephesians 2. 22 immediately gives us the present; in which the church is viewed as complete at any given time: “In whom also we are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit.”

Blessed and holy privilege it is to know that the saints are already the habitation of God, the place where His honour dwelleth. At the same time great responsibility flows from such knowledge, the responsibility of walking worthy of such a calling and of behaving ourselves aright in the house of God which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth; set here to be God’s witness in a world of sin. But has the church been true to that for which it was constituted the habitation of God? Alas, no. The evidence is only too plain that instead of bearing witness for the Lord, in holy separation to Him, the church has formed an alliance with the world out of which it was called, and has lowered its heavenly testimony to efforts and schemes for the social improvement of that which is guilty before God of the murder of His Son. Yes, its testimony as set up in the world in responsibility is ruined.

But here our questioner asks, “Does any one dwell in a ruined house, still less does God abide in that which is unsuitable to His presence?”

The answer is a solemn one, He does. In a former day, when Jerusalem had failed to be God’s witness, and before the glory had departed, Zephaniah wrote, that she was filthy and polluted, disobedient to the voice, trusted not in the Lord, drew not near to her God. That her prophets were light and treacherous persons, her priests polluters of the Sanctuary, doing violence to the law, but that nevertheless, the just Lord was in the midst, every morning bringing His judgment to light (Zeph. 3. 1-5). In like manner the Holy Ghost is still here, indwelling every member of Christ’s body and moving and working in the midst of the surrounding departure, corruption, and apostacy of the present day. Could anything be more solemn?

But He remains, for He has His precious things in the midst of the vile, and the moment has yet to come, when He will gather the wheat into His garner and leave the chaff for judgment. Then He will disown the house that has borne His name, it shall be left desolate and become the hold of every form of spiritual wickedness (Rev. 18. 2), and finally destroyed by His judgment. But God still dwells in His house, and 2 Timothy 3. 13-17 with Jude 20-23 show clearly the path that all should tread who seek His glory while they abide with Him in the midst of the ruin.

James Green.
The well-known Zionist movement has unified and made articulate Jewish sentiment the world over. Its great object is to secure Palestine as the home of the nation. It is not the only movement afoot with the same object in view, but it is the greatest and most expressive of the hopes of Jewry. There can be no doubt but that in it is seen the fulfilment of the first part of Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones (chap. 37.). For centuries the nation has been scattered amongst the Gentiles, with neither country, flag, nor king, nor national life. Their bones were very dry, and their hope was lost, and they were cut off from their parts (ver. 11). But God has not forgotten them. He has said, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (ver. 12). God's clock seems to be about to strike the hour when this word shall be made good to them. "'As in the vision, bone is coming to bone and flesh and sinews are coming upon them, the unity of this people is appearing and they are speaking out their demands with no uncertain voice. The second part of the vision in which the nation is seen throbbing with life towards God will not be fulfilled yet, not until they have travelled the rough road of Jacob's sorrow which will bring them to full repentance for the rejection of their Messiah.

The first Zionist Congress was held in 1897, when the Jewish flag was raised, and Theodor Herzl of Vienna declared that the only solution of the Jewish question was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. This declaration was taken up with great enthusiasm by the younger Jews, and organizations were formed all over the world. The awakening is a national one, and of intense feeling, as can be judged by their rallying songs, of which the following lines are a sample.

"My brothers, my brothers! O wandering, aimless hordes!
A clarion from Zion is speaking for the Lord!
The thundering heavens command: Arise a mighty band,
With heart and voice make now the choice—
And straightway seek your land."

But as long as the Turk held the land there seemed small hope of the realization of this great object, and colonies elsewhere were tried, notably in Argentina, but though millions were spent on these schemes they came to nothing. At the 1903 Congress, Dr. Herzl announced that the British Government had offered to send a commission to inquire into the practicability of establishing an autonomous Jewish state in the East African Protectorate. But the project was dropped at a subsequent Congress. Nothing but the land of their fathers would satisfy their national hopes.

Large numbers of Jews, chiefly from Russia and Roumania, helped by their richer compatriots settled in Palestine, and considerable progress was made in colonizing, and the cultivation of the land. The fields waved golden in summer breezes, the grapes hung plenteous in the glorious sun, and the olives yielded their precious oil. But the war came and many of these immigrants fled the country or were banished; the land was laid waste and those who were left upon it reduced to the direst straits, and Zionism seemed to be set back many years.

But now has come General Allenby's victory and the British declaration that "His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of its object."

Early in February of this year a Congress of the English Zionist Federation was held in London, and it was then stated that before the war negotiations had been opened for the securing of a site upon the Mount of Olives for the
building of a Jewish University. The war compelled the suspension of the negotiations, but so keen are these Zionists in the matter that the very day after Jerusalem was occupied by the British the negotiations were resumed and have been brought to a successful conclusion. "Not tarrying for peace, but within the sound of the guns, Jewry asks His Majesty's Government to permit full investigation in the feasibility of the scheme for founding a Jewish University in Palestine, and should military and political exigences permit to take steps for the initiation of the undertaking. The British reply of God speed is at once a tribute to the petitioned and the petitioner" (Extract from Palestine). Losing no time in the matter, the Government has authorized the Zionist Federation to send a commission to Palestine and has appointed a capable officer to join it.

The very definite pledge on the part of the British Government seems to mark it out as "the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia," spoken of in Isaiah 18. It has been pointed out that the "Woe" at the commencement of the chapter should be "Ah," and that it is an exclamation of compassion. The land in question is evidently a maritime nation and has given protection to the Jews; for "the shadowing with wings" speaks of this, it is a well-known figure in Scripture. No land has given such a refuge to these downtrodden people as England has, and now she is taking them especially under her wing and that with the view of putting them into Palestine. But whatever is done in this way, and whoever does it, all the inhabitants of the earth shall see it (ver. 3); it is to be a matter of international politics, probably one of the chief questions at the settlement when the war ceases.

But what will the outcome of it be? Most promising at first, for the bud will be perfect and the sour grape ripening in the flower, when God shall cut off the sprigs with the pruning hooks and take away and cut down the branches and they shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer on them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them (vers. 5, 6). In these vivid sentences is described "the great tribulation" through which they must pass ere they reach the blessing and rest of Messiah's kingdom.

But why must this unspeakable sorrow come upon them? Because they will go into the land proud and unbroken; they will glory in the WISDOM of the professors who will be installed at their university, and the legislators who will frame their constitution; and in the RICHES of the great financiers of their race which will be poured out freely to make Palestine great, and in the MIGHT of whatever power or powers support and protect them. Not of such material as this will God build up His kingdom, for "thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth."

But these proud leaders of this proud race will take their own way. They will seek the honour that comes from each other and not that which comes from God; consequently as they refused their true Messiah who came to them in His Father's name so they will receive Another, who shall come in his own name (John 5. 43, 44). And he, their devil-inspired Antichrist, will be the plague, until there is left of them but a poor and afflicted people, who cry, "Some trust in horses, and some trust in chariots, but we will trust in the name of the Lord. . . . Save, Lord: let the King hear us when we call" (Ps. 20.).

(To be continued.)
The Devoted Servant.

In the midst of days of Laodicean lukewarmness and of lack of devotedness to Christ, it is ever refreshing to the Spirit to give oneself to the contemplation of His own pathway in the world, as the absolutely devoted servant of God. He has left a golden track of perfection across the dark desert of human failure. The sense of our own personal shortcoming and of that which may be judged of in others around, make the study of His glorious goings increasingly attractive and tend to draw the heart nearer and nearer to Himself.

Many passages of the Word of God present His unfailing faithfulness whose every footfall was for the glory of God. For the present let us occupy ourselves with one where it is viewed prophetically, Isaiah 49-50.

The first of these introduces Messiah and opens the prophet's plaint against Israel for rejecting Him, the previous portion of the book having dealt with Israel's idolatry and sins in general.

In the opening of the chapter (vers. 1-3) Israel claims the place of being Jehovah's servant in whom He was to be glorified. And it was true that that people had had a position of distinguished favour and had been called to stand as witnesses to the true God. They had failed lamentably in every period of their history, but they still held the position outwardly and took honour to themselves on account of it.

Then, as One whose ministry has been unavailing, Messiah Himself speaks (ver. 4), saying, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and in vain; yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." His service for God has been apparently profitless among the chosen people, and yet, confidently, He can commit it all to the Lord and leave His reward in His hands. And Jehovah's reply is given immediately, "And now saith the Lord, that formed Me from the womb to be His servant"—(He is the true—the devoted servant of Jehovah's interests)—"to bring Jacob again unto Him" (and this will be effected in a later day), "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength." And the answer continuing says, "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord the Redeemer of Israel, and His holy one, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose Thee."

Blessing rich and full shall yet flow, not only to Israel but to the nations at large, through Him—and with this the rest of the chapter is occupied. For the present, however, He is despised, rejected, abhorred among men.

In the fiftieth chapter Jehovah's indictment of His ancient peoples is continued. He had not turned from them—they had turned from Him—He had not sold them—for their iniquities they had sold themselves. Thus they have for the time lost their exalted position as head among the nations. Their refusal to listen to His voice has resulted in the condition in which they are found to-day. They are the people of the weary foot, scattered to the four winds and wandering hopelessly over the face of the globe.

Then the following verses bring before us in beautiful detail the pathway
trodden by their Messiah, who is their only hope, in the days when He was outcast and refused by them. A galaxy of His glories and graces shines out in brilliancy.

Verses 2 and 3 declare His Godhead. His creatorial and providential powers are before us. The sea, the rivers, the heavens are controlled by His almighty hand. He ruleth all things in all domains.

Verse 4 finds Him incarnate. He has stooped to manhood's state. The tongue of the learned—the taught one—the disciple, has been given Him in order that He may know how to speak a word in season to the weary one. He is able to aid the distressed by the message of comfort—to succour the downcast and the disconsolate. He knows what the heart's longings are and can so speak as to encourage the needy soul.

It was to such He called, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your soul. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11. 28-30).

To minister to these He had come. To do the will of God in the blessing of His fallen creature.

And "morning by morning" His ear was wakened to hear as the learner. Divinely instructed day by day, He was ever attentive—ever awaiting direction for His goings. His ear had been opened—a body had been prepared for Him in which to carry out the divine pleasure, and now He is perfect in subjection—unswervingly obedient throughout His course. Never deaf to the teaching and never deflected one hair's-breadth from the ordered way.

And we are given ears to hear—how little we hear and answer to the communications of our Father and our God. Perfection is only with Him.

"I was not rebellious neither turned away back" (ver. 5). Within and without He was perfect. There was no working of a contrary will within—there was no turning from the path without. Amid all the violent antagonism of man, subjected to wrongful punishment, to brutality, and to shame He would not go aside. "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." If it were God's holy will that He should be beaten He would yield his back for the scourge. If it were God's holy will that the hair should be torn from His cheeks He would give them up to it. If it were God's holy will that His face should be covered with man's vile spittle He would not turn it away. In perfect devotedness He bowed to everything while absolute confidence in God maintained Him in the midst of it all.

"For the Lord God will help Me" (ver. 7). This was His trust. "Therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face as a flint and I know that I shall not be ashamed." The end was in view, the dark tunnel would be passed—the brightness and sunshine of eternal day and everlasting triumph lay beyond.

God would not fail the One who did His will and glorified Him, for His delight is in the man who confides in Himself in the midst of contrary circumstances. "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. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man, Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Ps. 19. 31, 32). Perfect thus in His trust He was hidden in the pavilion and pursued His journey undaunted and undismayed. His face was set like a flint. He would never turn to another way than the way chosen of God for His servant. At all costs He would carry out His good pleasure even unto death, knowing that God's help would come in the appointed season.
What triumph rings out in the words: “I know that I shall not be ashamed!” And we know how that utterance has been vindicated. He who was in the midst of man’s Golgotha is in the midst of God’s glory—the sorrow is past and the eternal joys are known never to be clouded again in the sufferings of earthly journeying.

“He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me? let us stand together: who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me.” “Behold the Lord God will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me?” (vers. 8, 9). In conscious integrity of personal faithfulness He could utter these words. Absolute rest was His in the assurance of God’s ultimate intervention. None could condemn Him. God would abundantly justify His every act and word.

These words, in the spirit of them, are quoted concerning the Christians in Romans 8. Wonder of wonders, we stand now with Himself in the circle of sunshine. He stands there because of personal perfection. We stand there because of His perfected atonement. God has justified Him, who shall condemn or lay aught to His charge. He has the highest place in the universe, who once for the glory of God and for our eternal blessing took the lowest place in death. But He brings us to stand with Himself as the outcome of the work accomplished by Him for the glory of God. God is our Justifier, who can condemn us? Who shall lay aught to our charge? We are “in Christ Jesus,” and there is no condemnation possible to those in that place of infinite and eternal blessing. And standing there it is that in peace we behold His glory.

And in verse 10 the call comes to us to follow His steps of confidence in God and absolute assurance that He will not fail those who seek Him: “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon His God.” The Lord will manifest His power on the behalf of such and thoroughly maintain their cause.

What a pathway we have contemplated! What devotedness! What faithfulness! What subjection! What confidence! It began with the glory of God. It was trodden for the glory of God. It has ended in the glory of God. The perfect servant knew no halting, no hesitating throughout His course. It was the path of life throughout never marred by failure.

I Fleming.

Be Still.

Be still, oh heart, cease fearing, fretting,
About the future, all unknown,
Nor think the Master is forgetting
About His own, His purchased own.

Be still, oh heart, the Lord of Glory,
Was once a Man acquaint with grief;
He bends to hear, tell all thy story.
He loves, He cares, He’ll send relief.

Be still, oh heart, thy God shall send thee
The cloud or sunshine, as is best;
His own right hand shall e’er defend thee,
Then trust His love, and know His rest.

CORRECTION.—Page 55, second paragraph, third line, read “Apostate” for “Apostle.”
The Midnight Cry.

It is evident that God is graciously reviving in the hearts of His saints, at the present moment, that which the enemy has sought so long and diligently to becloud and obscure; the great truth of "the Lord's coming," to take His people home. Amid the dense darkness of this world's midnight gloom the clarion cry has rung out loud and clear: "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him." Into what state of things has this challenge come? Listen, "while the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." Solemn statement! Those who had oil in their lamps and those who had merely the lamps without the oil, real saints of God and lifeless professors, all alike in a state of insensibility—wrapped in a death-like slumber. And what has been the response to the "midnight cry"? Thank God, many of His children, when the cry was raised, "arose and trimmed their lamps." If it be true that the darkest hour is that which immediately precedes the dawn, then, surely, everything around us proves that we are in that hour. The mighty torrent of evil, energized by Satan, is rising rapidly to its height; and a deadly soul-stupor is settling down upon that which outwardly bears the name of Christ. The world is in a state of chaos. Lawlessness, infidelity, and demon-worship enslave the masses. God's Word is boldly denied, and His claims ignored. Surely the dawn is near. May we not expect, at any moment, to see Him who is the "bright and morning Star"; blest harbinger of that "day of glory," when "universal dominion" shall be His? Shall we need to grieve when we bid farewell to this world which cast out, and still rejects, our Lord? There will be no clouds yonder to dim our soul's horizon. Pain, sickness, sorrow, sin, and death, tears and partings, will be unknown in the "regions of the Blest." The discordant sounds that greet our ears in this Christ-refusing world will be heard no more: and we shall be in the unsullied light and joy of the Father's House for ever. All honour and praise to Him who went under the surging billows of God's holy judgment that He might have us with Him, and like Him there. Shall we not gladly respond to His thrice-repeated word in Revelation 22: "I come quickly": and with worshipping hearts reply: "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus." G. F. Edington.

What "Going Forth" Means.

The Bridegroom is absent, but coming. It does not say who the bride is. A company exists during His absence whose responsibility it is to be ready to meet Him. Instead of making His return the pre-eminent consideration and seeing to it that all was in order, they slept though half were unready. The ready while waiting became criminal in this, that the wise who were ready did not concern themselves to see if their companions were ready too. And the unwise put the thought of their own ease and comfort first, intending maybe to get ready at the expected warning cry. The sequel proves that there was not time.

"Going forth" involved their quitting the seclusion in which they had taken their ease. It showed that one only business was now before them, to meet Him. To apply it to ourselves as Christians, what a tremendous soul-movement, quitting and getting rid of all that has to be left behind at His return. Some leave the ecclesiastical entanglements so contrary to God's word, to be simply separated unto Christ. Some leave the comforts of an
easy-going home life, to serve His interests. Some clear themselves of worldly friendships and earthly ambitions in devotedness to Him. Some drop their cherished hobbies that they may spend and be spent for the Lord. All who hear and act upon the cry calculate—not how much may be clung to without final loss but—how much that is unnecessary may be dropped that they may be exclusively for Him. It is the actual result of Christ's coming anticipated in the soul. What shall I part from and leave behind when He comes? Let me go out from it now.

Whatever association, influence, friendship, bond, circumstance, affection, pursuit, there be which would hinder my entire practical readiness to meet Him, let me "go forth" of all.

The 24th and 25th of Matthew include the subjects of the kingdom even after we who form the church are gone. We cannot apply chapter 25. exclusively to ourselves. But its moral teaching applies to us.

Chapter 25. teaches that three things will be considered when Christ comes. Verses 1–13, loyalty of heart to Himself during His absence; verses 14–30, the right use of opportunities entrusted to us; and verses 31–46, loving service rendered to Christ's people.

The meeting Him is the main thing in the going forth, I suppose, and involves our moral suitability to Him Who is coming; our correspondence in effect with every bit of the truth we have ever learnt of Him.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

"Behold the Bridegroom."

Omit the word "cometh." The emphasis is upon "Behold the Bridegroom."

These words occur in the last parable of the kingdom of heaven. They set forth the last cry of the Spirit to a sleeping church, to revive in the hearts of those who bear the Lord's name the hope of His coming in the character of the Bridegroom. Such a call went forth at the beginning of the previous century, when the long-forgotten heavenly hope of the church was revived, and in consequence believers were practically separated from the world, they went forth to meet the Bridegroom as at the first. Since then years have rolled by, but the last call of the Spirit is still heard and will not cease until the Bridegroom comes, and they that are ready go in with Him to the marriage.

There is no other true centre but Christ. When He was here on earth, God called to men, "Behold my servant" and "Behold the Lamb of God." Pilate called attention to our blessed Lord, as He stood thorn-crowned and bound with fetters before the people: he said, "Behold the man" in ignorance of the meaning of his words, for the man Christ Jesus was about to give Himself a ransom for all, and lifted up from the earth would draw all unto Him. To the remnant of Israel in the coming crisis it shall be said, "Behold your King," and they will look for His appearing to reign. The Christian today is called to "Behold the Bridegroom," in order that the attractiveness of Christ in this character may quicken his affection towards Him and cause him to trim his lamp in the surrounding darkness and be filled with eager anticipation of that trysted meeting in the air (1 Thes. 4. 15–17). Christ bears all these precious names, but there is a name above all which shall bow every heart in worship, in the contemplation of His Divine glory: "Behold your God."

JAMES GREEN.
Are We Responding?

THOSE who are best acquainted with Eastern life tell us that the parable of the virgins exactly represents marriage customs which prevail to this day.

The ten virgins “went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” Such is their profession—the part they play in the ceremonies. Assembling at the bride’s house they await the Bridegroom, who does not appear before midnight. Overcome with drowsiness they all slumber and sleep. At midnight the cry is raised, “Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him.”

The virgins of the parable represent not the church in its corporate capacity but the saints in their individual capacity as disciples of an absent Lord. Their original place and profession was this:

“They went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” They were God’s called out ones. Out of Judaism, out of heathenism, they went into the church’s separate place: “to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven” (I Thess. 1, 9, 10).

As time wore on they declined from this, however, and in the shelter of the house they lapsed into the unconscious and lifeless condition indicated by sleep.

The midnight cry and the words “go ye forth to meet Him” are a call to us to not only awake to the original hope of the church—the coming of the Lord, but to revert to the original position of the church—outside the world whether viewed in its carnality or its religiousness.

F. B. Hole.

“Jesus Wept.”

The fear of death filled the dear home at Bethany with anxiety, and there was only one hope for them, and that was the Lord Himself. “Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick” (ver. 3). Now it was a very simple message, but a very touching one. Those sisters would say to each other, He will be sure to come as soon as our message reaches Him. But He did not come. Perhaps you have been praying for something and the answer has not come. Something else has come. The very reverse of what you were praying for. God does not always answer our prayers according to the terms of them. And I think it is an immense mercy. I believe the greatest mercy we shall find by and by is the way in which God has answered them. He does not answer them in our way. They wanted Him to come in and stop the sickness. They knew that He had only to speak the word, and their brother would be well. And why did He not come and do it?

The reason was this, for the glory of God. But they did not know it. How anxiously they watch for the Lord coming, but He does not come. Presently the brother dies, and in their hearts there was probably the thought, “He seems not to have cared for us.” Has such a thought gained a lodging-place in your heart? Have you been assailed by a bit of distrust of His love and His care? Look at verse 5 of our chapter: “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” There is something very touching in that little parenthesis. To me there is something very sweet in this. He loved each of the sisters, and they are named personally. Get hold of this. He loves you. You will never come right and everything will appear wrong if you do not. It is not a kind of general idea, He loves us; but this, He loves ME. It was Paul who wrote, and I know his heart glowed as he wrote it, “The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal.
2. 20). Has it been wrought into your soul that you are the object of His deepest and tenderest affection? If so, rest in this, perfect love always does the best for its object. That will help you through many a difficulty. That will comfort you in your heavy sorrow. You know this world is not a fair garden, it is a vale of tears, and more than that, it is the place where all the consequences of man's sin are necessarily met with as we go through it, and consequently if you have not got the sense of the love of Christ in the difficulties and disappointments and sorrows that come upon you, you will find you will lose your balance, and you will be thrown into want of confidence in God. Your soul will chill down and get entangled in the world; but if you have got this in your heart, "I am loved by Him with a perfect love," you will be kept. No matter what happens, no matter what comes, and if the most crushing sorrow that you can know is rolled in upon you, you will know how to drop at His feet and learn the comfort you never learn except in sorrow, and you will learn the love of Christ then as in no other way.

The hearts of the sisters were broken, their hopes were smashed, death had rolled in upon them. And then the Lord comes and Martha meets Him. And she said to Him words exactly the same as Mary said afterwards, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (ver. 21). Was she betrayed by her bitter sorrow into implying, "You know you are too late, You are surely not as deeply interested in us as we thought You were."

The way the Lord meets her is divinely perfect. And there comes out of it truth for us of the richest and sweetest character. Ah, He stayed away that she might learn what she never would have learned in any other way.

Presently she goes and tells her sister. And "when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet." Ah, Mary was right. That was the place of comfort and of blessing, and there at His feet she could pour out her sorrow. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (ver. 32). "He could not have died if You had been here, Lord." I do not think there was complaint in it. I think it was a simple statement of a soul that was under the sense of the glory of His Person in a very beautiful way, and it takes this form in her soul. For He is the Resurrection and the Life.

If you are in sorrow let me urge you to get to His feet and lay your burden there, and if your heart has been broken He will heal it. The day will come when you will say, It was worth while having it broken, to learn the ministry of His heart, and the tender way in which He bound up my broken heart. Oh, how He can sympathize. Look at it here. He goes out to the grave with her, and we read, "Jesus wept." The shortest verse in all the Bible. Am I wrong in saying the sweetest? "Jesus wept." What, Jesus? My Jesus. The Jesus that I know. The One who is now the glory-crowned One at God's right hand. The same Jesus. Oh, thank God for those words, "Jesus wept." Do you weep? Are you in sorrow? He has gone up on high as the Priest, and He knows how to hold you up and to support you and sustain you in the wilderness circumstances. And the next thing will be, you will find yourself lifted up in thought to where He is. And the result will be, you will be transformed from a mourner into a worshipper, wholly absorbed with Him, whose love you know as a great reality, as Mary was in chapter 12, when she broke her box of precious ointment and poured out its contents on His feet. "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." To me there is something very touching in that. He groans in fellowship with God as He sees what sin has brought into God's creation. And He weeps in tender, touching, blessed sympathy with man. Man in sorrow, and man under the pressure of death. And do not let us forget He is the same Jesus to-day.

W. T. P. WOLSTON.
The eyes of many to-day are turning to the future. The present, resonant with the din of murderous strife, is dismal enough. It is natural that men should think of what will follow, and that "after the war" should have become almost synonymous in their minds with all that is good and desirable.

Plans are made for a rosy future, along lines which are indicated by the popular phrases that one is constantly hearing. These phrases have become veritable catchwords. The newspapers ring with them. Statesmen repeat them in their speeches. The man in the street echoes them. In some quarters they are wellnigh exalted to the dignity of a religious creed. The expressions we refer to are such as "a league of nations"; "the triumph of democracy"; "universal peace"; "general disarmament.".

The Christian, if "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," will, of course, bring all the ideas connected with and underlying these phrases to the test of the Holy Scriptures. These sacred writings, the very Word of God, are for him the unerring standard whereby he judges of everything. To refuse submission to this criterion would be the act not of a Christian but of an anti-Christian, an apostate. The object of these papers is to assist the reader in doing this very thing. It aims at applying the touchstone of the Word of God to the ideas that are current and the plans that are being formulated for the future.

* * * * *

In the first place, have the Scriptures anything to say as to the proposed League of Nations? We venture to affirm that it is positively foretold as coming to pass in the last days, in terms that are unmistakably clear to every serious student of prophecy.

It may be asked why, if the matter is so clear, is it so little understood among Christians? The reason is that so many, alas, are "unskilful in the Word." Even where the Scriptures are read, they are too often treated as if they were a mere collection of disconnected passages instead of being studied, not only in dependence upon the Holy Spirit for light as to their meaning, but with the care and diligence that are given to the study of secular subjects.

Let us first turn to Daniel, that book that has been so bitterly attacked, and so brilliantly vindicated as being beyond all doubt the authentic record of the startling events and visions which it narrates. In chapter 2, the whole course of Gentile world-supremacy from Daniel's day to the final supression of the empires of men by the kingdom which the God of heaven shall set up is portrayed. A vision is recorded which took the form of a great image whose head, breast and arms, belly and thighs, legs, feet and toes set forth the successive phases of imperial rule. The final phase is symbolized by the ten toes, which stand for ten kings, or kingdoms, for we read that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall . . . consume all these kingdoms" (ver. 44). Bear this in mind as we pass on to another scripture, that the final stage of Gentile world-rule is to take the form of ten kingdoms. Will these kingdoms have any link with one another? Will they form a "league of nations"? We shall see.

Turn now to Daniel 7. Here again we have the course of Gentile government throughout the world's history portrayed under the figure of four wild beasts. The last of them was seen to have ten horns, which are explained as meaning "ten kings that shall arise" (ver. 24). Evidently this beast with the
ten horns corresponds to the feet of the image in the first vision, with their ten toes. But in the vision of the wild beasts there is a further development. Among the ten horns another horn arises, “before whom three of the first horns were plucked up.” The interpretation of this is given: “Ten kings... shall arise, and another shall rise after them... and he shall subdue three kings.” Then, we read, “they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it.”

Now observe this difference in the two visions. The first one speaks of the ten kingdoms being “consumed”; the second speaks of one dominion being “consumed.” May we not draw the conclusion that the ten “kingdoms” of the earlier vision, and the one “dominion” of the later refer to one and the same thing, namely, the final phase of world-government that immediately precedes the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ?

If it be objected that in the vision the unity of dominion only extends to three out of the ten kingdoms, and that it was achieved by conquest rather than by negotiation and diplomacy, I reply that we have not yet finished our inquiry. We do not learn everything at once in Scripture. Things are unfolded line upon line.

Let us now refer to Revelation 13. Again we have a vision of a beast with ten horns, and the fact that crowns are on the horns would indicate that they represent kings, or kingdoms. Of the great personage symbolized by the beast we are told that “power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations.” So that while Daniel 7. shows us that he obtained the rule of three kingdoms by conquest, here we find that by some means or other he wields sovereignty over all nations. By what means does he achieve this?

Look at chapter 17. Again we find the beast with ten horns. And the interpretation reads thus: “The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. THESE HAVE ONE MIND, AND SHALL GIVE THEIR POWER AND STRENGTH UNTO THE BEAST.”

Here we have the league of nations! Ten nations combined under the rule of a great president, or emperor, or whatever he may be styled. Is this what men are striving for? Their aim will most assuredly be achieved, whether in the way they imagine, or by some other means. Whether the number “ten” is to be taken literally or not, the Scriptures undoubtedly show us, as occupying the place of world supremacy just before the end of this age, a union of nations under one powerful head. God Himself, moving as He does, behind the scenes, will bring it to pass. “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their kingdoms unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Rev. 17. 17).

Three questions now present themselves.

(1) What will be the religious policy of the predicted league of nations? Its attitude to the church, and towards God?
(2) For how long will the league of nations endure?
(3) What will be its final fate?

(1) A careful analysis of the book of Revelation will show that the rapture of the church, though not expressly mentioned, takes place between chapters 3. and 4. In the first three chapters churches are spoken of as still on earth. Chapter 4. begins with a door opened in heaven, and the redeemed are seen there, casting their crowns before the throne, and worshipping Him who sits thereon. Not that God will leave Himself without witnesses on the earth; He will raise up many from among His ancient people of Israel and make shining saints of them.
The "church," bereft of all true Christians at the coming of the Lord, ceases to be a witness for Christ. She is spued out of His mouth (Rev. 3. 16), and becomes utterly apostate. The attitude of the beast with the ten horns to the fallen and apostate church is set forth in Revelation 17., where she is called "Babylon the great," and is likened to a woman, false and unclean, "drunken with the blood of the saints."

At first, the "beast" carries the woman (ver. 7). The league of nations will patronize and support the great religious amalgamation that is destitute of every spark of vital Christianity. But this goes on only for a time. The united nations will not long endure even this semblance of religion. "The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall . . . burn her with fire." The final policy of the league will therefore be one of pronounced hostility to the corrupt and spurious religion of the day.

But what about its attitude to God, and to those of the people of Israel who become His saints? We are left in no uncertainty as to this.

We read that the beast with the ten horns "shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7. 25).

Again: "He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them " (Rev. 13. 6, 7).

That this is the policy, not only of the great President, but of the nations that compose the league whence he derives his power, is evident from another passage which says: "THESE shall make war with the Lamb " (Rev. 17. 14). The attitude of the whole union of nations will be one of pronounced hostility to God and to Christ. How awful to think of Christians in any way lending themselves to the promotion of this union, or league!

(2) For how long will the league of nations exist? Not for long. "They receive power," we are told, "one hour with the beast." This does not mean at the same time as, but for the same period as. The existence of the league will not outlast the life of its great head. "One hour" must not be taken, of course, as meaning an hour of sixty minutes. It denotes a limited period. In fact, the whole state of things as existing under the rule of the beast and the union of nations will only "continue a short space " (Rev. 17. 10). And this "short space" is defined as "forty and two months " (13. 5). That is, after the beast has thrown off the mask, and has committed himself and the league of nations which has accepted him as its head, to a course of opposition to God, he has but three years and a half in which to pursue his career, to work, or to act.

(3) What will be the final fate of the league of nations and its head? Let the answer be given in the very words of inspiration:

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; . . . but it shall BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THESE KINGDOMS " (Dan. 2. 44).

"I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war . . . and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet. . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone " (Rev. 19. 19, 20).

Thus we have set forth, in language of great simplicity and force, the end of the vaunted "league of nations." Infidel and antichristian in character, it will be overthrown at the appearing of the Lord, whose kingdom of beneficence, righteousness and peace shall be established under His personal rule, in
the place of the tyrannical, selfish
dominion of godless men. For He is
the true "Desire of all nations" 
(Haggai 2. 7). All that the nations
profess to want, and all that they cer­
tainly need: justice, peace, wisdom and
equity in administration; the know­
ledge of God, goodwill among men and
cessation of jealous rivalries will be
brought to the world when Jesus comes.
None but He can bring them.

We have so far only considered the
league of nations which is formed by
the ten kingdoms, those of Western and
Southern Europe, no doubt. "Ten "
either means ten, or a definite, limited
number.

But what of other nations? What
of Russia? What of Germany and
other European nations that never
formed part of any of the ancient world­
empires? What of China, Japan, and
other Asiatic powers?

The Scriptures show, clearly enough,
that there will be another league of
nations, a rival union, to which we may
give the scriptural name of "the con­
federacy," to distinguish it from that of
the ten kingdoms. We cannot pursue
this subject exhaustively, great as is its
interest. The leading power of this
confederacy is Russia, easily identified
as such in Ezekiel 38. 2, especially when
we learn that the true rendering is not
"chief prince of " but "prince of Rosh,
Meshech and Tubal," names which in
their modern form are manifestly
Russia and her ancient European and
Asiatic capitals, Moscow and Tobolsk.

It is significant in view of recent
happenings in Russia that Scripture
does not speak of it as a single power,
but as a kind of trinity of powers, prob­
ably bound together more or less loosely
by a federal tie. Allied with Russia in
the great confederacy of the north will
be certain Asiatic nations, Persia and
others mentioned in verse 5, also Gomer
(probably the region now known as the
Ukraine) and Togarmah (probably Ar­
menia). There is nothing to indicate,
as far as I know, whether Germany will
form part of the confederacy. It cannot
be said to be unlikely.

The armies of this great confederacy
meet with a final and catastrophic over­
throw in Palestine. Ezekiel 39. graphi­
cally describes this.

There will also be a lesser confederacy
of peoples in the immediate neighbour­
hood of Palestine, then reconstituted as
a Jewish state. This association of
western Asiatic peoples will be under
the leadership of "the king of the
north," otherwise known as "the Assyrian." The 83rd Psalm describes
the formation of the association, also
its wicked aims; its object is to subvert
the restored Jewish state, to " cut them
off from being a nation " (ver. 4), and
to take to themselves " the houses of
God in possession " (ver. 12). Their
enmity is really against God Himself.
"They are confederate against Thee,"
says the Psalmist.

Still another pact, or alliance, of the
last days remains to be noticed, that of
"the kings of the East," probably
China, Japan, etc. They are mentioned
in Revelation 16. 12, as having their
way prepared, that they too might, with
"the kings of the earth and of the whole
world " be gathered to "the battle of
that great day of God Almighty."

We have thus four different groupings
of nations set before us as existing in
the days that immediately precede the
Appearing of Christ.

All are finally brought to nought, and
the kingdom of Christ established, with
Jerusalem as its earthly metropolis, and
Israel as the central nation, "a third
with Egypt and with Assyria, even a
blessing in the midst of the land "
(Isa. 19. 24). Christ becomes the Head
of the nations (Ps. 18. 43), and all
nations shall serve Him (Ps. 72. 11).
Thus will Satan’s machinations be
defeated, and the peoples of earth
brought into blessing under the peaceful
sceptre of Israel’s great Messiah.

H. P. BARKER.
"The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

NOW that the church is rapidly nearing the Home-call and the longed-for moment, when the Lord will fulfill His promise of coming again and receiving us to Himself, so that where He is we may be also, does it not become us to raise our thoughts and enlarge our expectations in view of the mighty translation that must be so near at hand?

"Hope deferred," we read, "maketh the heart sick," and there is more than the possibility of that sickness so depress­ing the spirit that hands begin to hang down, and knees to become feeble.

Not, however, that the Lord delayeth His coming; for, what seems long to us is not so to Him, to whom a thousand years are only a day; but as time is the great test of endurance, so, as weary years drag on, we become impatient and ready to droop. So it was with Israel in Egypt when the deliverance expected at the hand of Moses failed to reach the suffering people as quickly as they had hoped. But the mills of God, in grinding slowly, did their work on Pharaoh in their own good time, if not in that of Israel.

So, again, when the people had lost sight of their leader when receiving the "lively oracles" on the fiery mount, becoming impatient, prepared to return to Egypt, saying, "As for this Moses we wot not what is become of him," the sickness of deferred hope had stricken them.

For a like impatience of spirit King Saul forfeited his crown.

The loss of patience and of hope is the sign of coming collapse; and against such a thing we, to-day, must contend.

Never was a day so truly full of hope; never was the coming of the Lord so near; never, throughout these dreary centuries, was there a time when, with yearning hearts turned heavenward, the church of God, as a concrete whole, should be looking thence for the Saviour —the longed-for Deliverer—to accomplish, in a moment, that glorious trans­lation, according to the power (a wonder­ful power indeed) whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3).

Let our earnest gaze be heavenward while our hearts, more than ever, await their divinely implanted craving of seeing Him face to face.

"How will our eyes to see His face delight, Whose love has cheered us thro' the dark­some night."

Oh! but the night has been dark and drear, and the road steep and long, and the bride of His heart is weary and travel-stained! She feels His absence; she longs for Himself; she finds no home here below; she pants for the ineffable joys of the Father’s House—its rest, its comfort, its love and light; its full unison of heart and hand; its sacred circle undivided for ever; its immunity from every form of evil, its unfettered enjoyment of full spiritual power in such worship as shall be to the glory of the Father and the Son for ever!

Gladsome prospect!

But is the longing all on her side? No, no, most surely not. It is stronger far on His.

Consider His closing words to her as He says, "I am the bright and Morning Star"—herald of day and of Home!

A star so long hidden from view by the shades of night, breaks at length in the distant sky to cheer the weary watcher and tell him that his vigil is over. That star is the star of morning! The night and its testing is past; no need for patience and hope now.

"The eye at last beholdeth What the heart hath loved so long."
The expectation is gratified; the heart is at rest. And that star calls Himself a "bright" star!

But why "bright"?

Just in order to place Himself in contrast with the signal failure of that profession of His holy name which has, alas, sunk down from its pristine power and separation to God (as we see in the Acts of the Apostles) to a condition so nauseous that it has to be utterly ejected, as we read in the address to Laodicea.

Whilst He remains "bright," the profession has dropped into fearful moral pollutions until He can only describe it as wretched, blind, and naked.

To this profession He is nothing but the Judge, and it doubly guilty before Him; but to the bride He appears, at the soon coming close of her long and tremulous vigil, as the Star of the Morning, as bright and glorious and unchanged as ever!

How bright her prospect; how bright her hope; how bright the Star of that hope!

To Him "the Spirit and the bride say 'come.'" And our hope, so long deferred, will, very soon, give place to sight, and our feeble faith to glad fruition.

Meanwhile, as the shore is nearing, and the perils of the voyage are almost over, may we say the one to the other, "Be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

"Let not your heart be troubled . . . I will come again."

J. Wilson Smith.

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The Fateful Hour.

His hour was not yet come:
And all the hate of scornful men
And all the plans of malice born
And all the power of Hell opposed
Could nought avail—
His hour was not yet come.

And since the hour was come
With force unchecked the tempest broke
And all Hell's legions sprang to arms.
Out from His own the traitor slunk
To sell His Lord.
For now the hour was come.

But when the hour was come
Calmly He sat with those He loved
And spread the Eucharistic feast,
Speaking of love supremely proved
In death itself—
Now that the hour was come.

Another hour is come:
He speaks with power as Son of God,
And all who hear, though dead in sin,
Are quickened by that mighty voice
And live anew.
The gospel hour is come.

W. H. Wescott.
The Spirit of Christ. No. 6.

The Earnest.

THERE are three references to the Holy Ghost as the Earnest. From these, with the contexts in which they are found, we gather some most helpful food. But let us study two things.

It cannot be too strongly urged that the Spirit is a Person, just as our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a Person. We may consider the Person of Christ on the Divine side as the Son of God, or on the Human side as Man. But while both Divine and Human, He is one Person. So also the Spirit is the Comforter, the Seal, the Earnest, etc., and may be considered in these different functions separately; yet is He one in the unity of His Person. We cannot possess Him as Seal and be without Him as Earnest. He who is the Seal is also at the same time the Earnest. But these are two different services rendered by Him, and require to be distinctly apprehended and used.

Secondly, every passage of Scripture to be rightly apprehended needs to be taken in its own context. We lose greatly if we read one idea only into each verse where the earnest is mentioned.

Let us now read 2 Corinthians 1. 18-22. We find there three different preachers, Paul, Silas, and Timothy. They all had peculiar abilities and varying modes of service. But their theme was one. They preached the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Their education, their travels, their environment, had never furnished them with another Person to preach. They knew of the first Adam, but he had broken down. They read of Noah, but he failed in self-control. They were connected with Abraham, in whom the Israelites boasted after the flesh; but he denied his wife, and was reckoned righteous with God on the principle of faith. Moses would not do as the one on whom to rest for eternity, for he came short and could not, in his earthly lifetime, enter the Promised Land. David was likewise a true saint but a bad foundation, for he committed adultery when he got out of communion with God. Solomon made a fine start, but broke down in the race. The whole nation of Israel as such could no more be trusted or preached than any individual amongst them, for they were either carried into captivity because of their sin, or else were guilty of the murder of their Messiah under the direction of their religious leaders, and with the sanction of the ruling Gentile power. Nor did the Gentile world offer any one who could be all that God required or that man needed, still less be a Redeemer for sinners and bring men back to God, sin expiated, God glorified, enmity removed, and a nature given that could boast in God and abide in communion with Him. But all this the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was and had done, so they preached Him.

This involves His Deity (Son of God), His Humanity (Jesus), His resurrection, office, and position (Christ).

As to His Deity, He was Son of God from eternity, and as such was the Agent by whom God created all things (Col. 1. 13, 16), and by whom He made all the succeeding ages of the universe (Heb. 1. 2). He was none the less Son of God when assuming human being and condition (Luke 1. 26-35). He is Son of God in resurrection (as Rom. 1. 3, 4 declares), and has passed through the heavens (Heb. 4. 14). Neither the incarnation nor the death of the Lord have tarnished His Sonship in the Deity (1 John 2. 22, 23).

As to His humanity He is the Word become flesh, God manifest in flesh. This involves both being and condition. The reality of His being as Man is
evidenced by the fact that He did not come as Adam did, full grown, but was conceived in the Virgin’s womb by the power of the Holy Ghost—no taint of human generation, though born as human beings are born, in due time—and growing up as we all grow up, from infancy to youth, and from youth to maturity. It was no mere assumption of a condition, but the growth of a Being; He increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man. His Name was called Jesus. Jesus is not the name of a condition but of a Person, a real living Being. By that name henceforward known He passed through the conditions and circumstances familiar to us, but in all the moral excellence brought by His Deity into humanity. The three cardinal features of dependence, obedience, and love, were seen in all their perfection and completeness in Jesus. He awakened the delight of heaven, and the faith and love of His people; but the hostility of Satan and of the world under Satan’s power. He was rejected here and hung upon a tree; but in so doing suffered for men the curse of the law, the judgment of God, the sting of death. He took in grace our sins with their burden, their shame, and their righteous due, and atoned for them by the blood shed at Golgotha. He maintained at full height the truth of God which says the sinner must die, the holiness of God which puts sin at unutterable distance from Him; the righteousness of God which brings condemnation and infinite punishment upon the guilty. In so doing, He also became the full expression of all that God is in love and wisdom, meeting our deep need in such a fashion as to overcome every difficulty, and to reveal God’s every attribute in brightest rays, so that He has set out all the glory of God—has glorified Him. He submitted to death so that, rising again, He annulled its every power, and removed its sting for believers. He allowed Satan to do his worst, and then rising quietly and victoriously from the grave has triumphantly emerged with the keys of hades and of death in His hand; the foe defeated, his power broken, the way open now to the full and absolute fulfilment of every purpose and promise of God.

As to His Position, He ascended on high to the throne of God, by God’s right hand exalted, and is there made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2.). In Him is the YEA to whatever promises of God there be. The promises of God involved the overthrow of Satan (Gen. 3. 14, 15), the bringing in of secure blessing for men (Gen. 22. 15-18), the establishment of the purposes of God (1 Chron. 17. 11). None other ever stood forward to do all this. All other failed before Satan, failed before men, failed before God. But even in coming into the world, the Lord Jesus had all this before Him, knowing it all beforehand and coming to do it. He shouldered the responsibility of all these promises, said “Yes” to them all, and set Himself to their accomplishment. His death in all its infinite value, eternal efficacy, and far-reaching effects will result in these three things: the complete defeat and confusion of Satan and all who side with him, the securing of infallible and boundless blessing for men, and the accomplishment of the will, the establishment of the kingdom and the glory of God through the whole universe and throughout eternity. No single promise of God will fail of its uttermost fulfilment. Even as Christ has undertaken it and has said “Yes” to it, so in the end will it be found that all is completed and fulfilled, and He will be able to say “Amen” to it. It is as good as done already, so absolutely certain is it of accomplishment, and so absolutely secure for it is every one who is in Christ.

Such is the One whom the Apostles preached, such is the Person, such the work, on whom and on which all depends, such the foundation on which all the superstructure of blessing rests. Is it any wonder that on this ground of what Christ is to God, He gives believers
the Spirit as the Earnest of it all. The "earnest" is a pledge given to show that a contract will be carried out, an engagement fulfilled. It also enables us to discover now what the future fullness of blessing will be like, for it samples the whole. Herein, by the gift of His Spirit, God has pledged Himself that He is going to see this thing through. As surely as He has saved us through Christ and by faith in Him, giving us the Spirit as His seal upon the efficacy of Christ's work done for us, so surely will He secure the end for which Christ died and for which God has saved us. It will not be mere charity to do so; it is an engagement to which God binds Himself by all the stability of His own purpose and according to all the infinite value He sees in Christ and His work. It will all terminate to the glory of God by us. Not only to the glory of God, but by us. We are a necessary part through grace of the display of that glory.

Is it not significant in this connection that it is said: "He hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"? Does not the Holy Spirit love to stir our affections in response to all this grace? The mind is necessarily enlightened and enlarged beyond anything that man could do for it; but especially is the heart touched and warmed and drawn out Godward as the Holy Spirit shows us the stability of everything which depends upon Christ.

Our second passage speaking of the Earnest is 2 Corinthians 5. 1-5. From the point in the third chapter where the face of Moses was said to be affected by the glory of the first covenant, the effect upon Christians of the glory now revealed through Christ is considered. In chapter 4. 7 it is said that the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is like a treasure in earthen vessels, the weak old-creation body being not compatible with the marvellous nature of the blessed light communicated to us. The result of this knowledge in our souls is that though the outward circumstances are unchanged as yet, and the Christian's body is still as frail as ever, the inward man is sustained and empowered in spite of the environment. If the eminent naturalist's theory is that in nature a created being adapts itself to, and is formed by, its environment, here at least is a living and constant contradiction to it in grace. Troubled on every side — there is the earthen vessel; yet not distressed — there is the effect of the light. Perplexed — but not in despair; persecuted — but not forsaken; cast down — but not destroyed; here we have in alternation the outward circumstances of the earthen vessel, and the effect of the treasure in it. We bear about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. Though the outward man perish yet the inward is renewed day by day. Thus we learn that though the human being feels and is affected by the external pressure in the temporal scene around us, the renewed soul is fed and strengthened and encouraged by what is eternal in Christ.

But it will not always be that we shall have bodies so easily worn out. Chapter 5. introduces us to a new figure, in which the outward man is compared to a tent, and the glorified body to a settled house: "If our earthly tabernacle house"—here we have indicated the present body of flesh and blood in all its frailty, and its temporary character — "be destroyed" — the dissolution of the body — "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The new and glorified body for which we are destined will be like a house of God's workmanship, in which none of the frailties introduced by human origin will exist, capable of sustaining all the joys and services of the heavens for eternity. It would in a way be a poor thing if we were introduced into the heavens in the company of Christ, into all the brightness of the Father's house, with bodies that would grow tired and
weary. Look at Peter and his companions in the Mount of Transfiguration. Overcome by sleep they might have missed much of the brightness of the scene. Look at John in Revelation 1., seeing the glory of the Son of Man, and falling at His feet as dead. Dear fellow-Christian, when you and I are for ever with our Lord we shall have these frail bodies changed (or if dead we shall be raised) into a condition suited to the glorious scenes of eternity; never to be weary again, never to need intervals so to say for refreshment or sleep, nevermore to feel the pressure of outward circumstances, or to be overcome by the weight of glory.

At present, and as long as we are down here in existing conditions, we groan, and Scripture recognizes it. It does not suppose that we are dead to nature, but very much alive to the realities of the scenes through which we pass. But while so feeling them, we are said to be earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. When the mighty power of Christ is put forth to undo the work of death, it will (so far as Christians are concerned) result in our appearing in perfect suitability for the heavenly glory for which we are destined. (Alas! for the unsaved, the same power will be put forth to take them out of death, but when they assume the bodies in which they are to suffer the judgments of God, they will appear in a condition exposed to those judgments, naked, uncovered, unsuitable to God.) But though Christians, who are regarded as living in temporary structures, at present groan under the burden of existing trials, yet our desire is not exactly to lay aside the frail body and to die, so much as it is to undergo the change referred to at the end of verse 4, not to be unclothed (i.e. to die; the body to be laid aside in the grave, and the spirit to go to the Lord), but clothed upon (the spirit to be invested with its new habit, clothed with its new abode, the glorified and heavenly body, at the coming of the Lord). In this latter case, instead of the frail body being swallowed up for a time by mortality, mortality itself will be swallowed up of life. Life, in all its might and fullness, will invade and overflow every fibre of our beings, and we shall (without dying) partake in the mighty victory of life, our glorious and eternal conformity to the image of God's Son. This is referred to in Romans 8. 11: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is also spoken of in Philippians 3. 21: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." It is the consummation so far of God's purpose that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8. 29). The operation itself is described in detail in 1 Corinthians 15. 51-57.

But to return to our text: "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5. 5). For nothing less than this has God secured us, and in view of its absolute fulfilment is the Spirit given to us as the Earnest. He is the Pledge on God's part that we shall be in the heavenly glory with and like Christ, in perfect suitability to all the light and power of the glory of God, never to be exhausted by it nor wearied in it; always to be and to feel at home in it without any sense of pressure or unfittedness to bear more. It is the certainty of this which is conveyed to, and which gladdens, our hearts now. No occurrences on earth, not our weakness, not even death itself, can alter the purpose of God by a hair's-breadth or delay it by an instant; and we are always confident by reason of it (ver. 6). Every care is awakened to be well-pleasing to the Lord, for we are so certain and so soon to be in His company; and so absolute is our likeness to Christ to be that we are to be allowed to look out over our own life-story, and to, see our own course as He has seen it;
we are to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, to weigh our every action here in the balances of His judgment, we ourselves being first transferred there in bodies like His own.

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

"Knowing as we are known—
How shall we love that word;
How oft repeat before the throne,
'For ever with the Lord.'"

The last reference to the Earnest is in Ephesians 1. 14. It is almost with trembling that we approach the grandeur of the grace of God unfolded there. Perhaps we might be tempted after thinking of 2 Corinthians 5. to imagine that nothing could be finer or higher than that. But will the reader remember that our subject has largely been the magnificence of what God will do for us, how He will conform us to the image of His Son, how we groan now, and how we shall appear by and by. But in Ephesians 1. we are let into the deeper secret of what God will do for His own glory in connection with Christ. True, we are told that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, but everything is in accordance with something that lies behind; something that is greater than our blessing, though that was needed to carry out the greater plan. His will has determined it (vers. 5, 9), His grace is giving effect to it (vers. 6, 7), it will all result in His glory (vers. 12, 14). Having saved us through Christ, and made our every blessing secure beyond loss or recall, He now takes us into His confidence (see ver. 9, etc.) as to this plan. Christ is not only our beloved Lord and Saviour, but He is the One who is God’s Centre for the heavens and the earth. All that has witnessed sin’s sad history and that has been tainted by the entrance of sin into the universe is to be recovered by God through Christ. Evil will be subjugated and eventually removed, all its disorder and chaos reversed, order will be brought into it for God, and God’s will will be effectuated in every part of it. If we think of our individual blessing only it is but a very small part of the vast universal scheme that God is working out, of which Christ is the Centre, not we. The whole vast creation is to be put under the administration of Christ; not the earth only but the heavens also. Christ as Man will regulate the universe for God, and will secure His good pleasure in every part of it to its outermost bound. The heavens will be populated according to God’s eternal counsel with the subjects of redemption and reconciliation, and all under Christ; every throne, every principality, every power under Him, the church, the other heavenly saints in their families, the angels, owning His blessed sway; the earth also, Israel, the Gentiles, the very beasts of the field, and indeed all creation, blessed under Christ. The One whom we know in our personal relations with Him as Saviour and Lord is found to be the One who is competent to hold everything for God, and adequate to secure the accomplishment of God’s will in the whole blissful universe; evil cast out, Satan overthrown, death removed, blessing brought in, God’s will done.

But verse 11 brings in what is developed later in the Epistle, that the saints who form the church, i.e. the saints of this present dispensation from Jew and Gentile, redeemed and indwelt by the Spirit, are destined to inherit this portion in association with Christ. Eve had no separate dowry which she brought to Adam, but in Adam she inherited all that was his. Rebekah brought no dowry to Isaac, but in Isaac she inherited all that Isaac had. Oh, the riches of God’s grace, that you and I, dear fellow-believer, are to be together with Christ; we and all God’s redeemed of this church period are to be together with Christ in such sort that we are to be His companion, His bride, in His exalted position as Head over all, and centre of God’s counsels, and of all
this vast plan of blessing. This is not fancy, but solid truth, plain unvarnished fact, soon to be realized. We are to be associated with, and united to Christ in all the splendour of this glorious place, brought there according to God’s determined purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will; suitable to Christ even in His most exalted position and character as Man, capable of entering sympathetically and intelligently into all the interests of His vast domain in heaven and earth, the subjects of His love, the companions of His heart for evermore, even to the ages of the ages. The mind almost reels, imagination fails, the reality of it can be understood only by the power of the Spirit of God who searcheth all things, yea, the depths of God.

It is in this connection then that the Holy Spirit of promise (not the promised Spirit) is said to be given, connected, that is, with the whole purpose of God which He has promised shall be fulfilled in Christ. By Him we are sealed for it, marked off as belonging to God individually in view of it; but He is also the Earnest of our inheritance. He is bestowed upon us, and indwells us as God’s pledge that He will carry out to the last detail all that He has planned for Christ, and for us as belonging to and sharing with Him. All this again will not be mere charity to us, but it is part of God’s counsel for His own glory; we shall be there in the plan as God’s workmanship, not to disgrace it, or to be in any sense incompatible with it. By the work of God, and through redemption, we shall be with Christ without any disparity. You might have a prince marrying a commoner, and whatever of love there was in it, the prince’s honour would be somewhat tarnished, while there would be almost surely a disparity between the two. But not so the church, for every individual in it is formed in the nature of Christ as Man, holy, and without blame in love (ver. 4), and is of His lineage, accorded the position and affection of sonship to the Father (ver. 5), and will be capable of enjoying to the full, and sharing, all the confidences of God, all Christ’s glory, and all His interests in this scene of blessing beyond compare.

Putting our three passages together, we see then that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as Earnest in these three connections. In 2 Corinthians 1. it is in connection with the stability of the foundation on which we are set in 2 Corinthians 5. with the certainty of the prospect which lies before us; in Ephesians 1. with the vastness of the blessing God has planned for Christ. The sinner saved by grace and sealed by the Spirit finds that God guarantees the fulfilment of every promise, and in token thereof has given him the Holy Spirit as the Earnest.

W. H. Westcott.

The Wherefore of Sorrow.

The most puzzling question which comes to Christian people at a time of great sorrow is, Why?

There is little use in telling us we ought not to ask it. It is true we may not be able to find a full answer, yet there is more answer than we find, for most of us look for it in the wrong place. We look back to find what precedes our experience to learn the reason which God had in letting us have it.

The best reason for God’s greatest deeds, so far as we know them, lie after the deeds themselves.

Most of us will find the best answer to our question by looking forward.

It is not so much what has preceded the sorrow as what shall follow it; not what the sorrow follows, but what shall follow the sorrow.
CHRIST is the great theme of all Scripture, and, in its several parts, the Holy Spirit delights to set forth special aspects of Christ and His glories. Here, in the Song of Songs, His great object is to present the love of Christ for His people.

To set forth this love the Spirit of God has employed the bridal relationship as a figure. In a series of Canticles we have unfolded to us the love of an exalted Bridegroom for a Bride of low degree, together with the varied experiences by which she is brought into full relationship with him, and the enjoyment of his love.

Few will question that in the Bridegroom we have a figure of Christ. Some may have more difficulty in the interpretation of the Bride. Strictly, however, there can be little doubt that the Bride is used as a figure of God's earthly people Israel (or more exactly the godly remnant of the Jews in a future day, who will represent Israel) and the experiences by which they will be finally established in relationship with their Messiah.

The Bridegroom and the Bride are figures frequently used by the prophets to set forth this relationship. The prophet Isaiah, looking on to this time, can say, "As the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. 62. 5). The Lord, speaking through the prophet Hosea, and looking on to Israel's future restoration, touchingly says, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart," and then, her affections having been awakened, He can say to her, "I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hosea 2. 14, 19, 20.) In the Song of Songs it is these very wilderness experiences, wherein the Lord speaks to the heart of His people, that pass before us in figure.

But while the prophets are concerned mainly with the exercise of conscience by which the godly remnant of the Jews will be led to repentance for having rejected and crucified their Messiah, it is reserved for this one book—the Song of Songs—to present their exercise of heart, and the awakening of their affections by the unfolding of Christ's devoted love—the love which once they had spurned.

This interpretation requires for its acceptance some acquaintance with the future history of Israel as set forth in the Old and New Testament prophecies. Therein we learn that the Jews will go back to their land in unbelief, hoping thereby to find deliverance from oppression, and rest from persecution. In result they will find themselves in such trouble as never was since there was a nation, and never will be again. The northern powers will press upon them from without, and the Beast will oppress them within. Having rejected Christ, they will accept the rule of Antichrist, who, not regarding the God of his fathers, will set up "a god whom his fathers knew not." With the "abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place, they will fall into the grossest idolatry, their last state being worse than their first.

But in the midst of the apostate nation there will be a remnant with whom the Spirit of God will work. This
remnant will be afflicted, killed, and hated of all nations for the sake of Christ's name which they confess. Because of these persecutions many shall be offended, and the love of many shall wax cold. But God will work on their behalf, and for their sakes the days of the great tribulation will be shortened.

Now it is this remnant that comes before us, under the figure of the Bride, in the Song of Songs, and the way in which God, in the midst of all their sorrows, will speak to their hearts and awaken their affections.

But while such is the strict interpretation of the Song of Songs, this by no means hinders its application to the church—the heavenly Bride—or to the individual believer. For in God's dealing with all His people there are principles in common. Speaking of the Canticles another has said, "Christ loves His Assembly, He loves His earthly people, He loves the soul that He draws to Himself so that there is a moral application to ourselves which is very precious" (J. N. D.). It is this moral application to the individual believer that is mainly in view in the following papers.

The Song can be divided into six Canticles, the subjects of which may be summarized as follows:

- **Canticle I.** (chap. 1. 2–2. 7): The assurance of love.
- **Canticle II.** (chap. 2. 8–3. 5): The awakening of love.
- **Canticle III.** (chap. 3. 6–5. 1): The communion of love.
- **Canticle IV.** (chap. 5. 2–6. 12): The restoration of love.
- **Canticle V.** (chap. 6. 13–8. 4): The witness of love.
- **Canticle VI.** (chap. 8. 5–8. 14): The triumph of love.

Thus, it will be seen, LOVE is the great theme of the Song of Songs—the love of Christ. Under the figures of the Bridegroom and the Bride it speaks of all those sweet affections that Christ kindles in the hearts of His own. What more important than having the affections drawn out to Christ! We often mourn that there is little love among the Lord's people, but, alas, this tells a tale of little love to the Lord Himself. And if there is little love to the Lord, is it not because there is little appreciation of the Lord's love to us? Herein is the great value of the Song of Songs. It awakens our love by unfolding His love. There are other songs in Scripture, songs that celebrate creation, songs that speak of victory, and songs of praise and thanksgiving, but the theme of this song is LOVE—the love of Christ—and therefore is it called **THE SONG OF SONGS.**

**"Go Ye out to Meet Him."**

Typified in Rebekah's journey to meet Isaac (Gen. 24).

WHERE the desert sands were stretching,
Far and wide in dreary haze;
Where the feathery palms were stretching
Landsapes fair on which to gaze;
Onward pressed Bethuel's daughter
By the faithful servant led.
She was going to Isaac—Laughter,*
Joy for her was all ahead.

Isaac is a type of the beloved Son of God, the risen Man, and Rebekah of the Church, His Bride.
What is the Power of Gathering?

"Two tracts, which I have read, make me in my ignorance send you this question. One tract by the late J. N. D., entitled, 'Grace the Power of Unity and of Gathering,' and the other tract by the late C. H. M., entitled 'The Assembly of God,' where, on page 32, it reads, 'As Jesus is the only centre, so the Holy Ghost is the only gathering power.' I do not suggest that there is any disagreement in these two statements, but would be glad of a little help in Scripture Truth."—B.

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ having closed the door upon the old state in which the believer once was, removing at the same time his sins and the judgment they called for, a new thing has been brought to pass upon the earth by divine grace; for, Christ, having ascended to God's right hand, has sent the Spirit to form us into one body, Christ Himself being the glorified Head. This must be grasped to rightly understand the true gathering power to-day.

The national gathering of God's people, Israel, was brought about by the law system, given after their redemption from Egypt, and was maintained by a mediator, king, high priest, and ordinances. The new order established on the ground of an eternal redemption is not international, but unnational. It is called, The new man. Christ "has broken down the middle wall of enclosure (around Israel), having annulled the enmity in His flesh, the law of commandments in ordinances, that He might form the two in Himself into one new man" (Eph. 2. 14, N.T.); reconciling "both in one body to God by the cross." It is therefore added, "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." The principle of grace, and not law, has effected this, and the power of the Spirit has formed the unity. "In the power of one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond men or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13, N.T.).

Having spoken of the characteristic truth which has to do with the gathering together of saints to-day, we will turn now to some well-known scriptures which present various aspects of gathering.

1. Matthew 18. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them." (N.T.). This states an abiding fact, covering the whole period of Christ's bodily absence. The gathering is to His name, in His interests. That is the object, and He is the centre. Grace has made this provision even for two or three. There is no mention of the Spirit here, though the fuller revelation of which we have spoken would give character to it till the assembly is caught up at Christ's coming again.

2. John 20. 19 relates an historic fact. The risen Lord was visibly and bodily present in the midst of His gathered disciples. A "therefore" (N.T.) connects the gathering with the message of grace in the verses before brought to them by Mary. That was the immediate cause of this gathering of which Christ was centre, making their hearts "glad when they saw the Lord."

3. Luke 24. 49–63; Acts 14. 15; 2. 1; 4. 2 show us the disciples gathered together in various ways. They are seen "praising, blessing God"; waiting upon God in prayer, expecting the baptism of the Holy Spirit as promised; and after He had come, constituting them one vital organism, one body, we are told, "They persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers."

4. 1 Corinthians 11. 17 to 14. 40 treats of assembling together, as the section begins by stating—"Prescribing to you on which I now enter on . . . when ye come together in assembly." (N.T.). The immediate object is to
remember the Lord Jesus (chap. 11.); then the truth of the one body is brought in to regulate the local gathering (chap. 12.); the "way of more surpassing excellence," divine love, is shown in chapter 13.; finally, the order for edifying ministry in chapter 14. The Lord as the object, the Spirit as the power, and God as operating all in all, are distinctly brought before us in these verses. It must, however, be pointed out, that Christ as the Head of the body in glory is not brought in here as in Ephesians; and they are said to be "body of Christ"—the article being omitted; in Romans 12., it is "one body in Christ": nevertheless the truth of one body and one Spirit is clearly taught in these verses.

5. I and 2 TIMOTHY. Gathering together is not spoken of in these Epistles. The assembly is viewed as the house of God, rather than the one body. When, however, iniquity has come in, those who name the Lord's Name are instructed to withdraw from it; and, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, to pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace. This would involve their gathering together in accord with the revealed mind of God.

6. HEBREWS 10. 25 tells us that gathering together is to mark the real as the Lord's return draws nigh, and that specially in view of encouraging one another, as we read, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom is with some; but encouraging one another, and by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near" (N.T.). No principle, power or centre is mentioned here. We learn these elsewhere.

7. JUDE 20. 21. Apostasy and dissoluteness are recognized as abounding in this Epistle. Guidance, however, is clearly given for "the called ones beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ." The faith as it was once delivered to the saints is to be before them, as we read, "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." Here we have "the faith" which is made known to us in other scriptures; "the Holy Spirit" of whom we have spoken; "the love of God" which produces the way of more surpassing excellence; and the Lord's return our bright and immediate hope.

In bringing these remarks to a close just one other verse must be referred to. It is 2 THESSALONIANS 2. 1. Here, we are besought, by "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to Him," to be steadfast. This will serve to emphasize the truth we have already indicated. When He comes again we shall be assembled "TO HIM." He will be our object and centre. The HOLY SPIRIT will be the power that will "quicken our mortal bodies"—raising or changing them, and putting us in glory around our blessed Lord. Sovereign GRACE will glorify itself in so doing. Grace has effected the present unity and gathering of the saints. The Spirit is the power—"There is one body and one Spirit." To Christ, both grace and the Spirit draw all true believers, as their one Object, Centre and Head.

H. J. Vine.

That the Love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.

It is one proof of our poverty and of our riches that Christ has given to us His own love to spend on one another. How lavish we should be of its Divine refreshing, seeming we draw from a Fountain that cannot be exhausted, and we can never share its wealth with others without being ourselves the more enriched: for it is a quality of grace that it multiplies by being divided, even as the five loaves and two fishes, touched by the Master's Hand, supplied twelve baskets of fragments after five thousand first were filled.

A. E. W.
CONSEQUENT on the ascension of Christ, the church has been richly endowed by Him in the way of gifts for the edifying of His body (Eph. 4). But, as things are, many Christians are not able to benefit by these gifts, hence those who are not established in the faith are apt to be discouraged because of little ministry.

But reading a little further on in the same chapter we come to the following significant passage: "From whom (Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth (or rather 'by every joint of supply'), according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

In the human body no two bones actually touch each other; they are separated by what is known as a synovial membrane, filled with a fluid which nourishes and lubricates the joints as required. When this fluid becomes deficient in quantity or in lubricating power, undue friction generates heat, the joint becomes stiff, and rheumatism sets in.

An analogy to the above can be traced in the spiritual body. We may not have very much as to gift; we may be tyros in the work of the ministry; we may be very clumsy in our expressions, but we can all be joints of supply which conduces to the harmonious working of this wonderful body.

As one having local responsibilities I have noticed that occasionally after times of precious ministry things became flatter than before. I have to challenge my own soul as having failed to be a joint of supply. During the "fat" years we ought to be little receptacles of God's nourishment, so that we may be "joints of supply" in the "lean" years which inevitably follow.

To do this does not necessarily involve competent exposition of Scripture. Indeed the expositor, if not imbued with the spirit of Christ, is apt to become a mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water" in the divine economy. Interesting as the elucidation of obscure passages may be, we must always keep in mind that it is but a means to an end, and the end is that the soul may be filled with the sense of the preciousness of the One of whom all Scripture speaks.

Now observe that the above passage speaks of "fitly joined together." In this body there is perfect articulation. In our expression of the truth, articulation is often far from being free. We are often sadly out of joint with each other; spiritual rheumatism is dominant. Lotions of human devices are applied to remove the stiffness, but when rheumatism becomes chronic it defies external remedies. So if relief is to be experienced the internal organism must be set right.

The effectual working of every part "in measure," i.e. according to its capacity and organic function, is the condition of all corporate growth, and comes from the direct connection with the central source of energy.

It is well to observe that there are two modes of edification. First, there is the edification by the special ministry of gift, but, if circumstances place such outside our reach, we are not to become faint-hearted. Because this wonderful organism makes increase spontaneously in the sphere of love. While speaking or holding the truth, not in asperity but in love, we grow up to Him in all things. "Self-edification in love" is the normal function of the body; knit together as a divine organism, sustained by supply from a heavenly source which keeps its several parts in life, it grows as one organic whole, and is built up by the uniting power of love. Truth is the basis of unity, but love is its living power.

T. OLIVER.
The Word of God in the sacred tongues is so alive with unforgettable beauty, so big with supreme significance, that our translations often fail to express the original to an accurate nicety. As an illustration in point, take the Greek word ἕιλικρίνεια. It occurs in three passages of the inspired writings, to wit, 1 Corinthians 5. 8; 2 Corinthians 1. 12 and 2. 17, and it is Englished as "sincerity" in the common versions. Its cognate adjective—eilikrines—is used once in Philippians 1. 10, and again in 2 Peter 3. 1, and no more. The Authorised Version has "sincere" in the former and "pure" in the latter. The Revisers with utter consistency gave "sincere" in both.

It is worthy of remark that this word with its adjectival form is quite distinct from the words done into English as "sincere" or "sincerity" in the other portions of the Sacred Scriptures. A close study of the original word brings to light its real force, which is scarcely expressed by the term "sincere." Dr. Strong’s Concordance of the Bible sheds abundant light on its exact import. He says that the word literally means "judged by sunlight." Dr. Weymouth in his New Testament in Modern Speech gives an extremely helpful footnote. "The idea," he says, "is that of character and thought of crystalline purity, as proved in sunlight; 'sun-testedness' if we had such a word." This is by no means a far-away idea. For consider Psalm 84. 11. It is written, "The Lord God (Jehovah-Elohim—J.N.D.'s Version) is a sun and shield." Malachi (4. 2) speaks of the Sun of righteousness that shall arise with healing in His wings. Again in John's vision the Lord's countenance was as the sun that shineth in his strength (Rev. 1. 16). In the light of these scriptures it would be well for us to weigh and to consider for a brief space the five passages referred to at the outset.

1 Corinthians 5. 8 comes first in order. God there exhorts us to keep the feast—feed upon Christ, our passover, who is sacrificed for us—with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And if we carry this forward to chapter 11 of this epistle, is it not needful that we should be tested by sunlight before we eat of the Lord's Supper? Judge ourselves in the light of Him who is our Sun, and then we shall know to the full the meaning of those fragrant words: "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22. 19). "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. . . . For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11. 28 and 31).

Turn now to 2 Corinthians 1. 12 and we shall find that our conversation or behaviour in this world must needs be adorned with sincerity, and that of God. Is not an insistent examination of our manner of life in His light imperative? Most emphatically Yes! Happy are they that ever walk in the light of His countenance (Psalm 89. 15).

The next scripture is 2 Corinthians 2. 17. If we would speak for God, we must speak with sincerity. We should test our message in His clear light before we give utterance to it—which is to say, we may not impart it unless we are fully sure that it comes from Him. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4. 11).

The last but one passage is Philippians 1. 10. God would have us sincere till the day of Christ. We should therefore seek to be found spotless in His light when He comes. May we seek His face continually (Psalm 104. 4) and abide in Him so that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2. 28).

Lastly there is 2 Peter 3. 1. Our sincere mind must be stirred before we can be mindful of the words spoken by
the prophets and the commandments of the Apostles (ver. 2). Apart from a sincere mind, no heed can be paid to the Word of God. This is a relentless fact. We should therefore, in the first instance, let His strong light fall full upon our mind and then ask for an ear as well a heart that hears (Prov. 20. 12 and 1 Kings 3. 9—R. V. and Newberry). It is said of Ezra that he "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7. 10).

It is fervently hoped that these considerations will lead both reader and writer to be instant in judging themselves by His light.

Jerusalem. No. 4.

JERUSALEM has been trodden down by the Gentiles for long centuries and has been of little account in world-politics since the Dispersion, but it is now emerging from its obscurity and unimportance. Other cities have arisen and grown rich and haughty, rivalling one another for world supremacy in power, commerce, and pleasure, but their days are numbered; they must soon yield the palm in all that is truly great to Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is the city. And as surely as she fell because of her iniquity so surely shall she arise in the mercy and the glory of the Lord, for He will fulfil His word to her: "This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her" (Ezekiel 5. 5). "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion . . . the city of the great King" (Ps. 48. 2).

It matters little how audacious and arrogant the ambition of would-be world-rulers may be, or how vast their preparations for world-conquest, or extraordinary their apparent success in the struggle towards their goal, all lies finally in God's hand, and "when He 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" (Deut. 32. 8, 9). This word still stands good and shall be established speedily when God resumes His special dealings with His people, after the church has been caught up to heaven.

The spirit of the Jews themselves and the energy with which they are seizing the opportunity and pushing the enterprise is amazing. Already large sums of money are being subscribed towards it by Jews in American cities. The English members of the Zionist Commission are already at work in Jerusalem, the chairman of the Commission having been received by His Majesty the King prior to leaving these shores, showing the great importance that the British Government attach to this work. The following is an excerpt from Palestine:—

"The Commission, in its final form, will include, in addition to representatives from English Jewry, representatives of Russian, American and French Jewry. It goes out armed with the highest and the warmest recommendations to the British authorities in Palestine, it is assured in advance of the sympathy and assistance of the Imperial authorities. It has the advantage in possessing as liaison officer between the Commission and the British authorities Major Ormsby Gore, whose devotion to the cause is as admirable as his recognition of its great importance is unqualified. . . . The task of the Palestine Commission is to lay the foundations and to commence the superstructure of a Jewish Palestine as far as this may be achieved during the war. Those who walk about in Jewry note an exaltation, the consciousness of a miracle manifest and mighty, the joy of being caught up in one of the great tides of divine purpose. 'Happy the man who saw it' is the refrain of a beautiful Hebrew hymn describing the glories of the Temple and the Jewish
events which are to take place, not on earth but in heaven, but which have earth directly in view, and especially the destiny of Israel as the centre of it. The first is in Revelation 5., where the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, takes the Book of God’s intentions in regard to the earth and Israel and Jerusalem, to open the seals of it, that all written therein might come to pass. And the second is in Revelation 12., where Satan is cast out of heaven and determines in his wrath to exterminate the Jews and so frustrate the fulfilment of God’s promises to their fathers.

From Revelation 4. onward the church of God is in heaven, and so it will be above all that is to happen in the way of judgment on the earth. The intelligent reader of Scripture will recognize a very definite change in the dispensation in the way in which God is presented to us in this chapter. He is not here spoken of as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which precious name He is known to the church, the saints with the heavenly calling, but He is addressed as Lord, God, Almighty, names in which He revealed Himself of old to people on the earth with an earthly calling and which declare His faithfulness to them. This plainly indicates that His dealings with the earth are about to recommence—the caning out of it of His heavenly saints being completed. Again the ascription of worship at the end of the chapter is, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." The earth belongs to God, for He made it, but men since the Fall have refused the claims of God both in regard to it and themselves, and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus was the casting out of the Heir that all might be theirs. But God is about to take up His rights and make the earth such as He can have pleasure in. How this is to be done and who will do it comes out in chapter 5.

J. T. MAWSON.

(To be continued.)
Our Hope.

Yet still we wait!
But not with drooping heart or weary gait,
For we have seen the first grey hints of light,
And oh! the Morning Star shines clear and bright,
For those who leave the sleepers of the night.

Yet still we stand;
Not far from Home, though in a foreign land,
Not far from joy, although there's many a tear,
Not far from peace, though hearts may fail with fear,
Not far from Him, whose coming draweth near.

Yet still we long
To hear the first sweet notes of Heaven's song,
To reach the land where saints immortal reign,
To add our voices to the glad refrain
Of Glory to the Lamb that once was slain.

By Still Waters.

The 23rd Psalm has ever been a source of comfort and encouragement to the people of God. It breathes of confidence in God and introduces the soul into an atmosphere of restfulness and satisfaction, refreshing the weary, strengthening the weak, and awakening the spirit of thankfulness and worship.

The setting in which it is found is important. Following Psalm 22. and preceding Psalm 24. the three utterances form a section in themselves.

The Lord as Saviour in His sufferings and their results is the theme of the 22nd. The Lord as Shepherd in His constancy and care for His own is before us in the 23rd. And the Lord as Sovereign in His glory and majesty is in view in the 24th.

SAVIOUR—SHEPHERD—SOVEREIGN.

We must first know Him as the Saviour who has endured the cross for us and by His atoning sufferings has blotted out our guilt. Then we shall be able to rejoice in His present ministry as Shepherd and be able also to look forward to the day when He shall be manifested as Sovereign.

His cry of anguish, at the beginning of Psalm 22., "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" has for one of its results our cry of delight, at the beginning of Psalm 23., "The Lord is my Shepherd." He was forsaken that we might be received. All our blessing for time and for eternity rests upon the secure foundation of His glorious atoning sacrifice.

Looking now a little into the detail of this priceless portion of the Word of God:

First of all, we shall find the Lord Himself is prominent in verse 1.

HIS PERSON is before us. "THE LORD is my Shepherd." It is He who has taken this position. He has assumed the responsibility for my wellbeing. No mere man or angel was competent for this. None but the Lord could undertake for me. But He has undertaken for me from the foundation to the top-
stone of my salvation. And with my eye upon Him my trust is established. He who undertook the work of creation, He who maintains the seasons in their order, the earth in its orbit and the stars in their courses, is He who has taken my case into His hands and He will see me through. Thus the note of victory is sounded at the outset in the comprehensive utterance “The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want.” If the Lord is my Shepherd He will see to it that I lack no good thing. He is my source of supply, and all power and wisdom and goodness are His, and He will not suffer me to want that which is for my real blessing. This has been well expressed in the simple lines—

“HE knows, HE loves, HE cares, Nothing this truth can dim; HE does the very best for those Who leave the choice with Him.”

Thus these opening words give the keynote to the music of the whole Psalm. They are all-inclusive and so colour all that follows, and we do well to read each verse in their light.

Before passing on let me ask my reader whether he can in truth say The Lord is my shepherd. Have you made Him your own in simple faith. Have you turned to Him and submitted to His claims and placed yourself in His charge. If not do so now. You may know all about Him and yet miss the blessedness of which the psalmist speaks. It is not enough to know there is abundance of food—that will not nourish you—you must eat of it to get benefited by it. It is not enough to know the medicine by your side will cure the disease from which you suffer, you must take it to secure the healing you desire. It is not enough to know that Christ the Lord is the Shepherd who died for and lives for His own, you must make Him your own by faith. Turn to Him at once. He will receive you and you will be able to say of Him in truth “The Lord is My Shepherd.”

Verse 2 speaks of

HIS PROVISION

for His sheep. “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside still waters.” Pastures of tender grass and waters of quietness are arranged for me by His gracious hand. The provision is abundant—there is no scarcity of supply. Sheep in the midst of plentiful pasture are speedily seen to lie down in order to chew the cud. Those on a barren field will wander up and down restlessly seeking for satisfaction until they weary themselves in their vain endeavours. The sheep of His pasture He makes to lie down. The need of their consciences has been met by His precious blood once shed upon the cross, and now their hearts are at ease in the sense of His care and they are satisfied with favour and full of the blessing of the Lord.

In verse 3 we find

HIS PATHWAY

for His own. “He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.” The peaceful ways of the second verse are those in which He conducts me for my sake, but for His Name’s sake He leads in the right paths of truth and holiness. And we feel that it must be thus and we would not have it otherwise. The glory of His Name is such that in no other path could He lead us to walk. “For His Name’s sake” our sins are forgiven (1 John 2.12). “For His Name’s sake” God has received us into nearness and relationship to Himself. For His Name’s sake He leads us in the ways of righteousness. For this He restores our souls. Recovering us when we have turned aside or fallen among the entangling thorns, and refreshing us when fainting by the way. So He leads us on gently that we may be for His own delight following His steps “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”
HIS PRESENCE

is the theme of the earlier part of verse 4. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." He companies with His own. The verses we have considered have been spoken of Him by the sheep. This verse and the next are addressed to Him. He is close by His sheep now. He is near at hand in the hour of trial and danger. The valley of the shadow of death is not death itself only—though He will be with us if called to pass through it; but it is the whole course of our journey here. The world is shadowed by death and all that comes in the train of that king of terrors. For us, believers, today, it is the place where our Saviour was rejected and slain, "where also our Lord was crucified."

Know ye not that my Lord Jesus died here? enquires a saint of old. The shadow of His death is upon all and affects everything for the one who loves Him and is loyal to Him.

And was there ever a time when the dark shadows of death were longer or deeper than now. Bereavement is invading hearth and home in every land while war takes its toll in millions of lives. Amid it all the believer may firmly say, "I will fear no evil"—"Thou art with me."

Let me illustrate this. Two little boys were in the compartment of a railway carriage when the train with the engine's whistle shrieking dashed into a long dark tunnel. The children had been gazing out contentedly at the various objects of interest which had passed before their eyes. Now all was black and gloomy, for the compartment was not lighted, and the rattle and roar was terrifying to them. Creeping along the seat to their father who was sitting by the other window they placed their hands in his and felt secure because they knew that he was there with them. So we may say today, "Thou art with me." Gloom may fill the valley of this world but He will be with us all through and as we hear Him saying "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" we take courage and say, "I will not fear." Then in this same verse we find

HIS PROTECTION

and it is all sufficient and will never fail. Weak and foolish indeed are the sheep, but the Shepherd is mighty and His care is constant. His heart is filled with love to His own and He leads them according to the integrity of His heart and according to the skilfulness of His hand. He protects them from their foes and from their follies—from without and from within.

A few days since, I was among a flock of sheep, one of which attracted my especial attention. It was feeding with the others but distinguished from them by having a short pole—perhaps five feet long—tied under its lower jaw. The pole was attached to a collar evidently put on to the animal for the purpose. It could feed quite easily and would have no difficulty in lying down. With what purpose then had the pole been fixed? It was not difficult to see. The hedge surrounding the field was not in the best of conditions. Here and there were gaps and the sheep could get through in some places without much difficulty. Probably that sheep was what shepherds call "an awkward one"—given to wandering. Wandering itself it would lead others astray. Thus the pole was fixed to prevent it going out of the field. It might be uncomfortable for the sheep but it was necessary for its own well-being and for the wellbeing of the flock.

Looking upon that sheep I learned a lesson. I said to myself, "The Lord is my Shepherd." I am a "sheep of His pasture." He knows me perfectly. He knows the dangers which beset me if I go astray from His presence, and that if I wander I may possibly lead others away from Him also. Therefore He applies some preventative, in order to keep me from ways of folly and sin. The
Apostle Paul could say, "I will glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may tabernacle over him. The thorn in the flesh was given him lest he should be exalted above measure.—To provide against the sheep straying the watchful shepherd had granted him something that proved trying but was a blessing in disguise. Three times he besought that this "pole" might be removed, but though apparently hindered by it he was really being helped and in the end could boast in that which once he would fain have discarded.

And by and by—if not now—we shall understand the why and the wherefore of our Shepherd's dealings with each one of His own.

Then, knowing as we know, we shall in His light see light and be able to praise more fully Him who shepherded us all the days of our sojourn here.

Thus looking upon His rod and staff we can say "they comfort me." With His rod—the shepherd's crook—He will direct His sheep and raise it from among the thorns or rocks among which it has fallen. And with His staff of Almighty power He will ward off the attack of every enemy which would threaten to harm any one of them.

Then in verse 5 we find

HIS PREPARATION

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. He anticipates my every need and with His own hands spreads the table before me. The enemies of my soul may be and are around me, constantly looking for my overthrow; but He is above all their enmity and prepares for me that which will enable me to overcome every assault. He gives me the present power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me and thus anointing my head with oil. He gives me the sense of His delight in welcoming me to Himself and causes my cup of blessing to overflow." Thus we sing—

"He makes my cup of joy o'erflow From day to day."

It has been asked, quaintly enough, "Who is the saucer when your cup overflows?" Who gets the overflows? Who is the better off because of our being Christians? Would some around us be left disconsolate in the event of our removal? We can test ourselves somewhat by that question. His preparation for us should lead to our being of use to others. Such fulness of supply is ministered that we cannot contain the blessing and the superabundance flows over for the refreshment of the weary and needy on every hand.

Then finally we have

HIS PROSPECT

for His own. That which lies before them. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life." However long our way, however dark or dangerous or difficult it may become—goodness and mercy will ever pursue us. All the days. Not only on the bright sunny ones but on the dark and gloomy ones also. Not only amid the pleasant summer days but amid the trying winter ones goodness and mercy will be found constantly attending us. They are the shepherd's watch-dogs—as someone has put it—bringing up the rear.

And beyond the narrow span of life here—when all its sorrows and sufferings are over "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The Father's house with its many abodes is before us for our eternal habitation. "For ever with the Lord" in His own home of infinite delight—this it is towards which we ever draw nearer as we journey on. If our pathway continue here—goodness and mercy will be our companions. Should our pathway here end, then the house of the Lord, "at home with the Lord" will be the portion of our hearts eternally.

Well may we rejoice in all that is presented in this sweet song. In the light of all that He is and does we gladly cry—

"THE LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want."
Lessons that Christians may learn from the War.

1. The Response to the Call.

In the parable of the unjust steward the statement is made that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Abundant proof has been furnished of the truth of this statement by the way in which this country has waged war against the Central Powers.

No sooner had the fateful hour struck on that memorable day in August, 1914, than an appeal was issued to the manhood of the nation for one hundred thousand men "for King and Country." The response was instant and abundant, and as the need for men increased further appeals were made, and millions of men were ultimately enrolled in the new armies before the Military Service Bill was introduced.

No doubt excitement, the spirit of adventure and the hope of winning fame, mingled with love of country, a sense of national obligations and a desire to relieve the overridden Belgians united in bringing about the marvelous results. But the results were there: the men were forthcoming and the Kaiser's boastful schemes received an unexpected check.

Now let us compare the foregoing with the response to the clarion cry, not "for King and Country," but "for Christ and souls." Or to use the Lord's own words "for My sake and the gospel's" (Mark 10. 29). It is a lamentable fact that the comparison indicates an indifference that might well overwhelm those who profess allegiance to Christ with shame and confusion of face.

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It was the Lord's final utterance before His ascension that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 7). How reluctantly and timorously this worldwide commission was carried out is evidenced by the record of the service of apostles and disciples even in the first days of the Holy Spirit's energy as resident on earth.

Truly the great Apostle of the Gentiles launched out into the deep for souls, and journeyed with ceaseless zeal into the "regions beyond," but after his departure there fell upon the church a slumber deep and long.

Now and then in the darkness of the night the names of apostolic men flash out like meteors in the sky, and in recent years the call has met with more response, but alas! there are hundreds of millions of men to-day who have never heard of Jesus. Vast regions rise before the mind and heart where the feet of the messengers of Christ have never trod. Is the world to put to shame the church? Is the paramount call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" to fall heedlessly upon the ears of the redeemed, or shall there not rather be from multitudes of volunteers the willing answer, "Here am I, send me."

The need is urgent, the time is short, the call is clear, the service is noble, the reward is great. The fight is real, and the powers of darkness oppose, but all power is given to our risen Lord and Master; and greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Much as men undoubtedly owe in Great Britain to "King and Country" for protection, good government, and righteous laws, we who are children of God owe infinitely more to Him who died for us, and whom we own as Lord.

"See o'er the world wide-open doors inviting: Soldiers of Christ, arise and enter in. Christians awake! your forces all uniting, Send forth the gospel, break the chains of sin!"

WALTER B. WESTCOTT.
The Song of Songs. No. 2.

Canticle 1.

Chapter 1, 2; Chapter 2, 7.

The Assurance of Love.

The Bride speaks.

1. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.

The song opens with the voice of the bride. Her first words express the ardent longing of her heart for a pledge of the Bridegroom’s love. This is not the language of a stranger to the Bridegroom, nor of one who is indifferent to his love. These are the words of one who has been attracted by the Bridegroom, and longs for yet lacks the assurance of his personal love.

At the close of this first canticle she obtains the desire of her heart, for she can say, with great delight, “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.” The desire expressed at the outset is realized at the end. She will have other lessons to learn in the course of the Song, but she has obtained the assurance and enjoyment of the Bridegroom’s love. This then is the great theme of the first canticle. The way love takes to confirm the heart of the bride in the love of the Bridegroom.

To lack the assurance of the love of Christ is far indeed from true Christian experience, and yet at the outset of our history with God our souls are not always confirmed in the love of Christ. And when the assurance of His love is possessed it is not always enjoyed; and thus the language of the bride expresses the longing of many a child of God. But the enjoyment of the love of Christ is the secret of all true devotedness. As we trace the devoted life of the Apostle Paul, the persecutions he suffered, the perils he faced, and the hardships he endured, we ask, what was the hidden secret of this marvellous life? And we hear him answer, “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Here was the hidden spring of his life, a heart kept in the assurance and enjoyment of Christ’s individual love. How deeply important that our souls should be thoroughly assured of the love of Christ. There are other loves in this poor world, but His love alone can satisfy the heart,—“Let Him kiss me.” For satisfaction of heart His love must be consciously known, and this is the import of the kiss,—“Let Him kiss me.” But, further, His love must be known as an individual and personal love, “Let Him kiss me.”

2. For Thy love is better than wine.

3. Thine ointments savour sweetly;

Thy name is an ointment poured forth:

Therefore do the virgins love Thee.

Addressing the Bridegroom, the bride discovers to us the secret of her desire for the assurance of His love. She has learnt the preciousness of His love and the excellence of His name. The thought of His love fills her heart with a deeper gladness than “wine which maketh glad the heart of man.” His love is better than wine, and His name is like an ointment poured forth. It is the soul’s discovery of the infinite worth of Christ that creates the longing for the assurance of His love. His love is better than all earthly joys, of which wine is but the symbol; and His name, when revealed, is like an ointment poured forth. In the Bethany scene of John 12.
we see the happy result of the ointment poured forth. In the alabaster box the odour was confined, but, poured forth, "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Prophets, priests, and kings, had foretold the coming of Christ and the names He would bear, but in their day the odour of His name was confined, as it were, to the alabaster box. When, however, Christ became incarnate and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, then indeed His name was poured forth: then the name of Jesus stood revealed as the perfect expression of meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, holiness, and love. Other names may stink in the nostrils of men by reason of the cruelty and wickedness of those that bear them, this name is fragrant with every grace. The odour of this name filled the little company gathered around Him on earth; it will yet fill the courts of heaven with its fragrance; it has become excellent in all the earth; it will fill the new heavens and the new earth. But it is only the virgins—the pure in heart—who value His name, and appreciate His love. "Therefore do the virgins love thee." They love because of His love. "We love Him because He first loved us."

4. Draw me, we will run after Thee!
—The King hath brought me into His chambers—
We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will remember Thy love more than wine.

They Love Thee uprightly.

The preciousness of His love, and the excellence of His name, not only create the longing for the assurance of His love, but also the desire for His company. The bride expresses this desire, as, in company with the virgins, she says, "Draw me, we will run after Thee." She is loved into loving and drawn into running. And, thus drawn, the Bridegroom leads into the secret place of His presence—the chambers of the King. In due time the bride will be a worshipper of the King at His table, and yet a little later she will rest, with infinite delight in the banqueting house of the King, but first she must be a learner in the chambers of the King. In that secret place she forgets herself, rejoices in the Bridegroom, and remembers His love. There the King is loved with a pure love—they love Him uprightly. Thus it is that Christ becomes exceedingly attractive to our souls; He draws us after Him; He brings us into His presence, that, alone with Him, we may forget ourselves and rejoice only in Him and His love.

5. I am black, but comely, daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar,
As the curtains of Solomon.

In the presence of the Bridegroom, the bride can only rejoice in Him and His love; but, as the result of having been in the King's chambers, she gets a true estimate of herself, so that before others she owns her true condition. Discovering what we are in the presence of all that Christ is, we can use the language of the bride and say, "I am black,"—black as the tents of Kedar. But if we learn what we are in the presence of Him who is the King, we also learn what His grace has made us, and thus while owning we are black we can also add but "comely" like the beautiful curtains of Solomon's temple. These are lessons that all God's people have to learn. In the presence of God, Job had to say, "I am vile." In the sanctuary, the psalmist had to say, "I was as a beast before Thee." In the presence of the glory, Isaiah says, "I am unclean"; and, as a result of being in the chambers of the King, the bride has to own, "I am black." The soul will be restless and the assurance and the enjoyment of the love of Christ be lacking, until, in the secret chambers of the King, we have learnt these three great truths: (1) The infinite worth of Christ and His love; (2) the utter vile-
ness of all that we are by nature; and (3) the comeliness His grace has put upon us.

6. Look not upon me, because I am black;
Because the sun hath looked upon me.
My mother's children were angry with me:
They made me keeper of the vineyards;
Mine own vineyard have I not kept.

Having seen the King in His beauty and herself in her blackness, she has no desire to attract attention to herself. If she speaks to herself, it is not to draw attention to herself. "Look not upon me," she says, "because I am black." The heat of this world's trials, persecution from those that were nearest to her, slavery in the vineyards of others and neglect of her own things had all left their mark upon her. And in like manner, having discovered our blackness in the light of Christ's perfection, we realize that we are no pattern for others. As we think of our many failures under fiery trials, how often we have broken down in the presence of the opposition of men of the world, how much we have slaved in the world's vineyards, and how much we have neglected our own things, are we not constrained to say with the Bride, "Look not upon me?" And yet how often our words and ways betray the vanity of our hearts which practically says, "Look upon me." The effort to attract to ourselves tells how little we have been in the chambers of the King.

7. Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth;
Where thou feedest (thy flock),
Where thou makest it to rest at noon;
For why should I be as one that turneth aside
By the flocks of thy companions?

The bride, who has been speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, now turns to the Bridegroom—the one whom she loves. Questions may arise in her heart as to His love for one who is so black, but she has no doubt as to her love for the King. She does not say, "Thou whom my soul ought to love," or even "Thou desires to love," but "Thou whom my soul loveth." And loving Him she desires to feed where He feeds and rest where He rests. Attracted by His love she has no desire to turn aside. And so with ourselves, it is the love of Christ filling the heart, that alone can help us from turning aside. And yet, alas, have we not each to confess that too often, we are "as one that turneth aside" to seek our food and rest in earthly things. And then we wonder why we make such little progress, and yet, if feeding on the husks of this poor world, the wonder would be if we made any spiritual growth. The philosophy, science, and literature, of this world will not attract, still less feed, the souls of the lovers of Christ. If we truly say, "Thou whom my soul loveth," we shall surely desire the heavenly food and the divine rest; and the ardent desire for spiritual food is the best antidote against turning aside to earthly supplies.

The Bridegroom.

8. If thou know not, thou fairest among women,
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Here for the first time we hear the Bridegroom's voice. He addresses the bride as the "fairest among women." Black in her own sight she may be, hated too and persecuted by others, but in His sight she is the "fairest among women." Nothing will alter Christ's estimate of His people. Neither the failure of the saints, nor the slander of
the world, will alter His appreciation of His own. He ever views them in all the beauty of His own work, and according to the counsels of His grace. Would we know where to find food and rest for our souls we must follow in the footsteps of the flock. Christ has His flock and His shepherds in this world. And Christ, the chief Shepherd of the sheep, leads His flock into green pastures. Would we be fed, then let us follow in the footsteps of the flock. But there is further instruction for the bride. Let her feed the lambs beside the shepherd’s tents, and in feeding others she will herself be fed. What is this but the anticipation of that last scene in the gospel of John with the Lord’s touching words to a restored backslider, “Follow Me,” and “Feed my lambs.” To feed the lambs we must follow Christ, and if we follow Christ we shall delight to feed the lambs. The secret of obtaining rest and food for our souls is found in following Christ and feeding His lambs.

9. I compare thee, my love,  
To a steed in Pharaoh’s chariots.

10. Thy cheeks are comely with bead-rows,  
Thy neck with ornamental chains.

II. We will make thee bead-rows of gold  
With studs of silver.

Having answered her questions, the Bridegroom is free to express the thoughts of His heart concerning the bride. Like a horse in Pharaoh’s chariot, adorned with all the trappings of royalty, so the bride was comely, in His sight, with the beauty He had put upon her; as the Lord can say, by the mouth of Ezekiel, “I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck” (Eze. 16. 11). Does not Christ delight to unfold His thoughts of love towards His own? And more, to let us into the secret of things which God hath prepared for them that love Him—things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man? And so the Bridegroom, not only expresses His delight in the ride, but, lets her into the secret of all the glory that is purposed for her, “We will make thee bead-rows of gold with studs of silver,” doubtless referring to the crown she shall yet wear. Beautiful are the saints in His sight even now, but the crowning day is coming by and by.

Hamilton Smith.

To be continued.

Grace and Glory.

TILL the Lord comes, and how soon He may come, bringing His glory with Him, we must be strong in His grace, He gives both grace and glory, and His grace leads to glory. In our sorrows and need in this wilderness world He is proving to us how rich are the stores of grace that He has for us, and heaven by and by will open up before our enraptured gaze how wonderful is his glory into which He will bring us.

God Answers Prayer.

God answers prayer;  
Sometimes, when hearts are weak,  
He gives the very gift believers seek;  
But often faith must learn a deeper rest,  
And trust God’s silence when He does not speak;

For He, whose name is love, will send the best.  
Stars may burn out, nor mountain walls endure,  
But God is true, His promises are sure,  
To those who seek.
The Triumph of Democracy.

Among other things that are confidently looked forward to as likely to result from the great war is the triumph of democracy as a political power. Great Britain, who entered the war because she had pledged her word to maintain the independence of Belgium, has since fallen into line with others of her Allies, who have declared that their object is to "make the world safe for democracy," or in other words, to assure its supremacy.

Have the Scriptures anything to say as to this? Do they throw any light on the question as to what place democracy will hold in the system of world-government that is to be found in the last days? We shall see.

To the greatest autocrat that ever breathed, the coming of democracy was made known, and this, more than twenty-four centuries ago! To Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon it was given of God to see the whole future course of world-government in a vision. Moreover, the interpretation of the vision has been placed by the finger of divine inspiration alongside the record of it.

The king saw a great image in the form of a man, composed of various metallic substances. The head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs and feet of iron, all set forth the various phases of imperial rule under the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman world-powers.

Now there were certain features which were to belong only to the last of these four empires. First, it should be in existence at the time of the end and be directly superseded by the kingdom which the God of heaven would set up.

It will be objected, however, that the empire of the Romans, as a world-power, has long ceased to exist. This is true. But we learn from Scripture that it is to be restored before the "times of the Gentiles" come to an end.

The figure of a wild beast is used to symbolize not only the great personage of whom we spoke in our paper last month on the "League of Nations," but also the empire, or system of government of which he will be the head. Now in Revelation 17. 8 this beast is very significantly referred to as ceasing to exist, but as coming up again, so that men should wonder at "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

The heads of the beast are explained in the following verse to be the "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth," affording an easy identification with the seven-hilled city of Rome. Moreover, according to verse 10 there would be seven kings, probably symbolizing forms of government, of which five had already been relegated to the limbo of the forgotten past, one existed at the time when John wrote the Revelation, the other had not yet come. Nor indeed has it come even yet, but when it does it will manifestly be in the line of succession to those past forms of government in the empire, yet of an entirely new character, the eighth, yet of the seven (ver. 11).

The same truth is brought before us in chapter 13. 3, where we read that one of the seven heads of the great ten-horned beast is wounded to death, but that the deadly wound is healed, to the great astonishment of the whole world.

How strikingly do these chapters in Revelation set forth what will indeed cause world-wide amazement, the re-appearance in the Europe of the twentieth century of the ancient Roman empire in a modern and up-to-date form. It will indeed be like the resurrection to fresh life of a creature that had been slain by a deadly wound, but whose wound had been healed.

The second feature marking the
revived Roman Empire when it fills the place of world government at the time of the end is that it should have among its constituent elements one of a new kind altogether. Turning back to Nebuchadnezzar’s vision in Daniel 2, we find that while all the parts of the image which symbolized the pre-existing world-powers consisted exclusively of metallic substances, the legs and feet, symbolizing the Empire of Rome, should have an entirely different element, clay, mingled with the metal. And further, this clay did not appear in the image except in the feet, and especially the toes, that is, in the final phase only of the empire, its revived and modern form. This, as we saw last month, is composed of ten kingdoms (represented by the ten toes of the image) joined together in a “league of nations.”

What is it that answers to the clay? What new element is to appear in the Roman Empire when once again it assumes a dominant place amid the world’s systems of government?

Note that the clay was to exist side by side with the iron. There would be no cohesion between the two. The result would be a weakening of the iron, clay being a brittle substance.

There can be little doubt that the iron represents the imperialistic, militarist element in world-rule (compare the great iron teeth of the fourth beast in Dan. 7. 7). This, for a while, had exclusive power. There was no clay mixed with the iron in the legs of the image. The clay appears in the feet, and especially the toes. It is interpreted as being “the seed of men” (Dan. 2. 43); in other words, Democracy.

“...we see no reason to doubt a very common interpretation of the clay, that it represents the mingling of popular democratic forms with absolute government, the combination of absolutism with the popular will, which, as they are incongruous elements, can never be thoroughly welded together, and must, in the very attempt at union, become a source of weakness.”—Daniel the Prophet, by E. Dennett.

“Iron mixed with miry clay, or brittle pottery, speaking of an attempted union between imperialism and democracy.”—Lectures on Daniel, by H. A. Ironside.

See also Eight Lectures on Prophecy, by W. T. and T. S., pages 220, 221.

We may conclude, therefore, that the eighth king, which would be “of the seven,” represents the empire in its coming, democratized form. It is “of the seven” in that it is Roman, and occupying the same territory as the empire of yore; it is the “eighth” in that it is new and distinct in character from all that has yet been.

What an astonishing resurrection it will be! The historic empire of Western Europe, newly constituted by a league of ten nations, with democracy as its prominent feature. Most certainly things in the world are shaping to that end. Is it not remarkable, to say the least, that the Word of God should so wonderfully indicate that the very state of things that bids fair soon to be established, should exist at the time of the end?

A third feature marking the Roman Empire is found in Revelation, though not given in the vision of the great image. It is that the revival of the empire will be brought about by a distinct work of the devil. In its final form, it will be Satanic in its origin.

Viewed in one aspect the great democratic empire that is coming will have a very human origin. This is set forth in Revelation 13. 1, in the vision of the ten-horned beast rising up out of the sea. The sea, in apocalyptic symbolism, stands for peoples and nations in a state of unrest. But in chapter 17, 8, the beast is seen as ascending out of the bottomless pit, manifestly indicating that its reconstitution will have behind it something more than mere human ambition, and that it will be part of the plans of Satan whereby he seeks to thwart the counsel of God.

In 2 Thessalonians 2. 9, the coming of the “man of sin” is also shown to be “after the working of Satan.” This
"man of sin" is the great, false religious personage of the last days, otherwise called the Antichrist, the second of the two beasts of Revelation 13. He has two horns "like a lamb"—he impersonates Christ, but "he spake as a dragon"—he is Satan's mouthpiece. By his wonder-working power he secures almost universal allegiance for the first beast.

This "man of sin," as we learn from other Scriptures, is the acknowledged king of the infidel and apostate Jews who have been reinstated in Palestine, and the bitter persecutor of the small remnant of Jews that fear God. He is in close association with the "first beast," the head of the revived Roman Empire, and with Satan himself. These form the terrible trinity which will fill the world with unrestrained evil (see Rev. 16. 13). All three meet with the same awful doom (Rev. 19. 20 and 20. 10).

This, then, is the ultimate result of the much-vaunted triumph of democracy. It will reach its zenith in the Satan-inspired, reorganized empire of Southern and Western Europe, only to have its transient power and influence brought to a sudden and terrible end at the appearing of Him whose name is Faithful and True, when, followed by the armies of heaven, He comes to take the kingdoms for His own (Rev. 19.).

Meanwhile, the Christian will do well to heed the word that says: "My son, fear thou God and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Prov. 24. 21).

H. P. BARKER.

A Song of the Kingdom.

Psalm 78.

O GOD, bestow Thy judgments Upon Thy chosen King When, to Thy stricken people, He righteousness shall bring; When peace shall widely echo From every lofty height, And ages of oppression Be ended by His might.

Long as the moon endureth, Long as doth shine the sun, Men's hearts shall rise in worship To Thee, the Holy One; And as the rain descendeth Upon the thirsty land, The King shall come from heaven With blessings in His hand.

By dwellers in the desert His Name shall be adored, The rulers of the islands Shall own Him as their Lord; Yea, kings shall render homage And peoples do His will, His mercy and His goodness Shall every bosom fill.

The needy, when he crieth, Shall never cry in vain; And he that hath no helper Shall mighty help obtain. Their souls, from wrong redeemed, Shall gladsome praises bring, And they, of old downtrodden, Be precious to the King.

For Him shall grateful millions Their intercession make, And day by day His praises Their swelling songs shall wake; His fame shall wide be chanted By men of every race, And all the earth re-echo The glories of His grace.

His Name shall never perish, For ever it shall stand, While tides of richest blessing Roll out to every strand; The God who doeth wonders Shall do this wondrous thing, And Israel's great Redeemer Be Israel's glorious King!

Then let His Name be blessed! With glory let it shine! And let the earth be covered With glory all divine! This King of kings is Jesus, The One whose love we know, To Him be endless glory. Amen! Lord, be it so!

H. P. BARKER.
Phases of Repentance.

WHEN a Christian sins the Advocacy of Christ at once comes into operation. It is well to observe that the familiar passage in John’s first Epistle does not read “if any man repent,” but “if any man sin, we have an Advocate [or one called to our side] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

The Christian is a child in the family circle of heaven; when he sins, his sin is against the Father, and the love of relationship is in exercise about it.

The holiness of the home circle of heaven demands that sin cannot be treated lightly. Grace abounds and so sin cannot be allowed to hold sway. There is thus a special judgment in operation amongst the children of God, not in a penal sense but in the way of chastisement, and they have to suffer greatly because of self-will and sin.

Our Advocate is also the Propitiation, the basis of the grace which expresses itself in Advocacy. He is constantly occupied with the maintenance of communion and its restoration when lost. The effect of advocacy is that self-confidence is broken. His unceasing care is exercised that we may learn ourselves even although this may involve painful experiences. Tenderness, divine love and comfort, are shown, but there is no laxity in His discipline. We must learn our lesson often in sorrow.

There are two phases of this sorrow, and they are frequently not distinguished except by the careful observer. Probably all experience some measure of the first phase, but many never reach the second. The first springs from shame at failing to maintain a good reputation in the eyes of our fellows. It does not recognize the grievous nature of sin in the eyes of God.

When David spared Saul’s life for the second time, the latter confessed that he had played the fool and erred exceedingly. He realized that he had missed the mark, and that he might have acted more prudently; but there was no real sorrow for his sin. This is also too often the measure of the Christian’s repentance. The root of the trouble remains untouched.

How different was David’s confession when his sin pressed home on his conscience! He entered the second and real phase of repentance. His confession, “I have sinned against the Lord,” evinced a godly repentance, and a deep, yearning desire that broken communion should be restored. He scrupled not to take the low place, heedless of reputation, metaphorically submitting to the purging process with the hyssop that he might be thoroughly cleansed whiter than snow.

The Greek word ὁμολογεῖν (homo­logeo) means literally “to speak like,” so the Christian in real confession of sin views and speaks like God about it, and that is the essence of repentance. Tears may only spring from shame, but viewing with God’s eye touches the depths of the moral being.

Those who fail to reach the second phase of sorrow miss the wealth of God’s blessing in forgiveness. The laver was the only article of furniture in the tabernacle which was unspecified in dimensions. This typically sets forth that there are no limits to God’s restoring grace. This truth is beautifully exemplified in David’s case. What soul-stirring impulse must have prompted the thirty-second Psalm! Beginning “Blessed or [happy] is the man whose transgression is forgiven,” passing on to the second stage of realization that he was literally compassed about with songs of deliverance, and thirdly guided by that very eye with which he had viewed his sin.

T. OLIVERR.
NOWHERE have we more forcibly brought into view the utter worthlessness, blindness, and criminal stupidity of the flesh, as well as its complete removal from the sphere of relationship with God, than in this first chapter of first Corinthians. The New Testament abounds with dilatations, as well as with terse statements, regarding its rejection, judgment, and removal from before God, but in this chapter the uncontroversible proofs of its unprofitableness are concentrated into the compass of a few sentences, and with a convincing clearness sufficient to silence every caviller who is not so obstinate as to sin against the reason given to him of God.

In certain other Scriptures is brought into evidence what may be called the bad side of the flesh—its hypocrisy, its covetousness, its malice, its violence, its corruption; but here is what may be called its good side—its wisdom; what, if the thing were genuine, might be made a subject of boast; and the Cross of Christ is that which is used to show it up in its true character.

The statement is made, that "the world by wisdom knew not God." But how is this statement to be substantiated? Where is the proof of it? The worldling might say, It is easy to make statements, but we want more than mere arbitrary statements: we want proofs.

And the proofs are easily given. The cross of Christ is the one mighty proof, crushing into the dust every opposing force that would rise up in the assertion of the contrary. The cross is the utter condemnation of all man's boasted wisdom, for it is the estimate that man formed of his Creator come in grace into His own world. By its rejection of Him the world's affectation of knowledge is proven to be the mere conceit of a heart steeped in ignorance and alienation from God: for He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not (John 1:10).

Jesus was God manifest in flesh, and the life of God shone out in His words, works, and ways; but the leaders of this world knew Him not, neither could they believe that that which shone out in all its moral glory in Him was really the light of the invisible God. The gibbet upon which they impaled Him is the witness of their ignorance of who He was, as also of their hatred of all that came to light in Him. As He says: "They have seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24). Who would trust the wisdom of man after such a display of it as this?

And it is the same in regard of the preaching of the Gospel: "The Jews require a sign," and that with the sign visibly before them; for what greater sign could be given of the intervention of God on behalf of man than the Son come in manhood's lowly guise into a world dominated by the devil, invested with power sufficient to deliver the race from the whole consequences of the Fall? He Himself was the sign, if they had had eyes to see it, and wisdom enough to avail themselves of it.

"And the Greeks seek after wisdom," and that with the wisdom of God proclaimed in their ears in the Gospel of His grace. What mind but that of Him who is infinite in wisdom could have invented such a way for the recovery of His fallen creature? No one could, for no one knew of the resources that lay in the mind of the Creator. But when it was revealed it should have appealed to men as the only possible solution of the question of good and evil, and the only means by which, consistently with the nature and character
of God, man could be brought out of his lost condition and set before his Maker in peace and blessing.

But no: man, be he Jew or Gentile, knew nothing regarding his lost condition, and he was a great deal too proud to acknowledge himself as needing the grace of God. To be accounted helpless sinners, deserving nothing but banishment from the presence of their Creator, was more than the haughty leaders of this world could accept. Hence "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

In the pride of their heart, and overlooking their utterly sinful condition, the Jews expected the Messiah to establish them as head of the nations, and with His throne in their midst to subjugate the world; and indeed with a proposal of this nature they were tested, when our Lord took His place of public testimony among them. He gave abundant witness of His power and readiness to dispel all the evils that afflicted them, to raise all the departed saints, and to establish the nation in peace, security, and blessing. But all this was presented to them in a way that tested the state of their souls with reference to the God whom they professed to reverence and serve, and here they were found wanting. There was nothing in Him that ministered to the pride of their natural hearts, but everything that was a severe rebuke to it. He was not a man after their heart: the Antichrist will be that, and of this the Lord warns them: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 6. 42).

The Greeks had no promises, and were not looking for the Messiah, and having no true knowledge of their wretched condition as the servants of sin and slaves of the devil, they were not looking for the advent of a deliverer. But to turn their attention to such a necessity, and to tell them that One had made His appearance, and then to be informed that He had died a malefactor's death upon a gibbet, was to their cultivated minds absolute folly. Such a gospel had no attraction for them.

The Jews required a sign, and the Greeks sought after wisdom; but, says the Apostle: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And how infinite that power and wisdom have shown themselves to be!

The cross is the witness of man's refusal of God come in grace into the midst of a world of sinners, and it is also the witness of God's refusal of the sinful flesh, and of man as characterized by it. At the cross God condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8. 3), and there the whole ground was cleared from the presence of the man after that order. Such a man has no longer any existence in relationship with God. His sinful history is still continued in this world which rejected God when He came in grace, but in the cross of Christ his end has been reached in the judgment of God. For God—as in relationship with Him—as on probation—as one from whom any good is expected—the man after the flesh does not really exist. As I have said, he is here in this world, prosecuting his sinful career, and accountable to God for his actions; but he is not in, nor is God seeking to bring him into, any permanent relationship of blessing with Himself. His day is
The cross has been the end of him judicially. What God is seeking to do is to save him out of that state and position, so that he might be no longer in the flesh but in the spirit (Rom. 8); no longer in Adam but in Christ (Rom. 5).

And the One in whom that judgment was set forth in the sight of the universe is risen from the dead, and is in the glory of God, the last Adam, life-giving Head of a new heavenly race who derive from Him, as the old race from the old sinful head, the first Adam. The past history of such has been closed by means of the cross, and a new history has been begun by the quickening power of God, who has thus linked them up in life with Himself.

Therefore the Apostle says: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." In Christ is new creation; old things are there passed away, and all things have become new, and all these new things are of God (2 Cor. 5. 17-18). Of God are we in Christ. There is nothing of the old order there. We have a new life and a new nature, and all that we want is a new body to have parted with the old altogether.

The individuality remains, but the life and nature are entirely different. The life is the life that is in Christ Jesus; the nature is divine, for we are born of God; the relationships are new, for Christ's Father is our Father, and His God our God; the affections are new, for he that loveth is born of God, he knoweth God; the prospects are new, for the Father's house is our eternal abiding-place, there to be for ever with our Lord, conformed to His image. What a glorious prospect!

And He is made unto us wisdom. All the wisdom of God centres in Him. It is in Him we learn it. Men of this world may be wise in their generation, and indeed they are, even much wiser than the children of light are in their generation, for the temporal interests of the worldling occupy all his thoughts, and it is not true of the child of light that his eternal interests are always paramount.

But if we compare the puny mind of man, and the limited circle in which it revolves, with the infinite mind of the Creator, and the illimitable expanse in which that mind employs itself, how the paltry thoughts of the creature fade into nothingness! If we study the wisdom of God as seen in Creation it is simply overwhelming, and the mind becomes giddy in the contemplation of its wonders, but in the subject of redemption we have the inventiveness (if I may use the expression) of eternal wisdom, when that wisdom was tested to the uttermost limits of its power. The feverish activities of the human mind when contrasted with the wonders of redemption are seen to be beggarly in the extreme. Let us therefore patiently, persistently, and prayerfully apply our hearts and minds to the study of the wisdom of God, as it is set before us in Christ.

But He is also made unto us righteousness. He is our subsisting righteousness before the face of God. We have none of our own, for we are sinners by nature and practice; that is, as in our natural condition, children of Adam, our fallen head. But because we have no righteousness of our own, and because without it we would be lost for ever, God has intervened on our behalf in Christ, and that in consistency with His own nature and character, and found righteousness for us in Him risen from the dead.

Now we have righteousness, and we have it where we want it; that is, in the presence of God: for He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We have this righteousness, it is ours: it is in the very place we need it. We cannot do without it, for we
are sinners every one of us; and even after we have known the Lord, in many things we all offend. Even with the best intentions we fail repeatedly. But does our righteousness fail? No, it is always there, it cannot be tarnished by my failure. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. We are always that. Our privilege is to enjoy the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not at all reckon sin. Our sins were borne by Christ on the tree, and His blood has cleansed us from them. They are gone as completely as though they never had been committed. Every one of them is gone in the judgment of the cross, and He who bore them is our righteousness before the face of God.

But He is also our holiness. The measure of the believer's separation to God is Christ in heaven. I know no standard of holiness short of that. On my side I may not have reached it, and surely I have not, but it is set before me in Him. That my sins are gone I know. That I am clean every whit cannot be questioned, if I am born of water and of the Spirit; but in myself, as one set apart to God by baptism, which is the initiatory ordinance into the Christian profession upon earth, do I walk as He walked? Alas, I fail, and there was no failure in Him. I am not practically what He was: I am, as to my standing in Him, for that 'is perfect. I did not gain it by my conduct, neither can I lose it by my conduct. What I am in Christ I am by the work of God. To that I have contributed nothing.

But if I know that I am to be conformed to His image in a day that is coming, I shall desire to be purifying myself according to that standard. I shall not be dabbling in the things of this world, as though I were a citizen of earth, but the Word of the Father, and the hope of that to which He has called me, will awake new motives within me, to which I was, in my natural state, a total stranger.

In the risen Christ I see the goal which God has placed before me, and that to which I shall have come when His purpose regarding me is completed: "For 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. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 29, 30). Therefore I desire with all my heart to be as like Him now as possible.

The power of redemption also is in Him. We have redemption now, as far as forgiveness of sins goes (Eph. 1. 7), and we are in the life of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit taste the blessedness of the new and eternal relationships into which we have been introduced by the Word of the truth of the Gospel, but for complete redemption we await our Saviour from heaven, "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 to Himself" (Phil. 3. 20, 21).

In Christ and by His cross the whole ground is cleared for a completely new order of things, and in Him that new order of things is established. Outside Him it is all chaos, corruption, and condemnation. Righteousness, life, salvation, and complete redemption, are found only in Him; and all are the portion of the weakest believer, and that through the grace of a Saviour God.
WE will now touch upon the subject of the Holy Spirit as the Unction or Anointing. There are two passages which refer to Him in this way; 2 Corinthians 1. 21 shows that it is God who has anointed Christians in connection with their new position in Christ, and 1 John 2. 18-27 indicates that the youngest Christians have all the advantages which the anointing confers.

To take the last passage (1 John 2.) first, the reader will do well to note that in verses 12 and 28, "little children" is better rendered "children," since the word so translated is one meaning children (of God) in general, of all stages. It is a different word from that in verses 13 and 18, which does really mean children in a stage of infancy, and for the sake of distinctness is still preserved as "little children" in the New Translation by Mr. Darby.

In verse 12 we have clearly the privilege of all the children of God. This communication of the Holy Ghost through the Apostle John comes to them because the whole question of their sins is settled for the Name's sake of the One who is the propitiation for them (ver. 2). It is not the blessing of one more than another in the family; be we old or be we young in the faith, we are all here addressed as those whose sins are forgiven absolutely. Even as there is no room for uncertainty in the divine clearance of our sins, so is there no room for doubt in any of our minds when we see that clearance.

In verse 13, there follow differences in the growth and maturity of those in the family: here we find there may be fathers, young men, and little children, or "babes." But while of course it would be true of the young men, and of the fathers, it is emphatically stated of the babes, that they know the Father. Nothing is more foreign to the whole truth of Christianity than the idea that a person should be ignorant of his relationship with the Father. It is the inalienable privilege and right of each Christian, though a babe.

In verses 14-27 we have the same three divisions of the family referred to. The fathers are dismissed in half a verse. The young men occupy from the middle of verse 14 to the end of verse 17. Then the little children or "babes" occupy from verse 18 down to verse 27. And it is to babes that it is said "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (ver. 20), and in connection with whom we read that the "anointing" (same word as unction) abides in them, and teaches.

Then the exhortation follows in verse 28 to all the "children" to abide in Him.

To sum up, all the children of God (a) are forgiven their sins; including the babes. And (b) the babes know the Father, and are (c) possessed of the anointing.

We are not therefore plunging into very difficult lessons, for though this part of our chapter reads rather strangely to our uninstructed ears it is assumed that even babes in the divine family can grasp it. The passage is of peculiar interest (as are also the epistles to the Thessalonians) as showing the kind of thing in which young converts were instructed in the Apostle's days. But let us consider this anointing and its meaning.

That it refers to the service of the Holy Ghost is proved from Acts 10. 38, where we read that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." He became Man in very deed, humble, dependent, obedient; and if we cannot fathom the deep
mystery of His Person, we may at least learn that when He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, He did it not by any Divine, personal, inherent power as Son of God though He is Son, but as Man by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was indeed the Christ, i.e. the anointed One; such being the meaning of His title—Christ. He was the One qualified in every way to fulfill every promise to the nation of Israel, and to be their Messiah. But His rejection by the Jews proved that the time had not yet come for the fulfillment of those earthly promises, and the Lord told His disciples they were not to tell any man that He was the Christ (Matt. 16. 20). When He was raised from the dead, the still dependent though not victorious Man (yet ever Son of God) it is said of Him (Acts 1. 2) that He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles that He had chosen. He was by the right hand of God exalted (Acts 2. 33), and made both Lord and Christ in resurrection glory, to be the Administrator and Fulfiller of all God’s purposes from thence: and in that new position and still the dependent though glorified Man, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, that He might in His power carry all out for the glory of God; and then sent Him to earth to act here for Him. The Spirit came to the company of the redeemed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and attached Himself to each of them individually, filling them by His power, and qualifying every one of them to be here intelligently and zealously in the testimony for Christ. To that company so wonderfully started in Divine power has God been adding by the work of His grace from that day to this, saving men through faith in the risen Christ, and giving to those saved ones the Holy Spirit to indwell them and to empower them to be here for Christ. The outward failure of the Christian community to walk in the truth as we see it to-day, does not alter God’s grace to the saved individual; the believer is as truly a child of God, and is as truly indwelt and anointed by the Holy Ghost, as in the days when all was outwardly so bright. But this produces at once the great privilege, and with it the grave responsibility, of being here in spite of the general failure, maintaining the whole truth of Christ.

Seeing now that even the youngest Christians have this unction or anointing from the Holy One, we may read two or three old Testament passages which afford help as to what is meant by the “anointing.”

1. Leviticus 8. 1-12, gives us the anointing of Aaron as Priest.
2. 1 Samuel 16. 1-13, gives us the anointing of David as King.
3. 1 Kings 19. 13-16, gives us the anointing of Elisha as Prophet.

1. No one can read Exodus 28. 1, in conjunction with Leviticus 8. 1-12, without seeing that God by the anointing of Aaron sanctified him or set him apart for the office and service of priest. The whole congregation of Israel was summoned, their attention was particularly called to the Divine authority by which the choice was made, and in a most conspicuous way Aaron was designated for the exercise of the priestly functions. And in all the other occurrences of this anointing it seems clear that it is God’s way of bringing a man into a particular office or position and publicly marking him out or designating him for it.

2. This is equally the case in 1 Samuel 16. 1-13, where David superseded Saul, by choice of the Lord, as King. The failure of the people’s choice and his rejection by Jehovah cleared the way for the introduction of God’s man. So Adam set in authority at first has broken down and failed, and God has introduced the second Man, Christ, who must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. But in David’s anointing and designation as King,
there follows in verse 13, the remarkable addition that 'the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.' How could he who had been hitherto a simple shepherd comfort himself and be in behaviour as was suitable to a king? The anointing not only marked him out for the position, but conferred upon him the necessary power and fitness to be and to walk in every way worthy of the position for which he was designated.

3. In confirmation of what has been said as to the marking out for position by the anointing, we have 1 Kings 19. 13–16. Elijah was to anoint Hazael for the kingdom of Syria, Jehu for Israel, and Elisha as prophet as a successor to himself. But the words 'in thy room' at the end of verse 16 are very suggestive. Elijah had seemingly laboured in vain and had spent his strength for nought and in vain, as was said of the Messiah in Isaiah 49. But God had appreciated his faithful service, and would shortly bestow upon him the unique and splendid honour of taking him up into heaven. Yet in grace He purposed that Elijah's faithful testimony should be continued in Elisha. We have then Elijah taken to heaven, and Elisha left on earth in the same position to represent him, 'in his room,' as it says. For this the anointing was to qualify and equip him; that he might be the representative of the man who was taken into heaven.

Now Christ is the One who fulfils all these types, whether of Priest, King, or Prophet. Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. We may not pretend to bottom the deep glory of His Person, but while He is in His eternal and essential glory the Son, He has become in being and nature Man; as such has died and risen again, and is officially designated as the Christ, i.e. the Anointed One, Priest, King, and Prophet. Moreover, in the perfection of His Manhood—though ever Son—He will fulfil all the duties and responsibilities of His glorious offices by the power of the Holy Ghost. Without controversy, great is the mystery.

But we are concerned for the moment as to the meaning of the Anointing for the Christian.

In 2 Corinthians 1. 21, the new position in which every believer is established, and for which he is designated is, 'in Christ.' I say every believer advisedly, for as in John's epistle the three stages of fathers, young men, and little children, are contemplated, so here the 'us with you' takes in the apostles and the Corinthian saints, some of whom he had very pointedly and in a different sense—quite reproachfully in fact—called babes in his first epistle. They ought to have been more advanced, considering the time they had been converted and the opportunities they had had. But the 'us with you' takes them all in, every believer; and our position before God is not in Adam, or in sin, or in ourselves, but in Christ. Once we have believed the gospel truly and have received the Holy Spirit, it is God's delight to indicate to us our new position, and to establish us in it: to settle our souls into the happy realization by the Spirit's power of what that new position involves. But He has anointed us also. By the gift of the Spirit He has definitely set us apart and designated us for the position; by the same anointing He has given us power to be in every respect consistent with the whole of that position and all that it involves, and in result, and in so far as we use the power given to us, we should become descriptive here on earth of the Man that has gone into heaven.

Each of these elements opens out into a world of exercise; but oh that it could be conveyed to the oldest as well as to the youngest Christian that you are really and truly furnished with the indwelling Spirit as the power by which failure may be avoided, difficulties be overcome, and consistency maintained.
with the whole revelation of God in Christ, whether in the individual, or in the church, whether in the personal life and service, in the home, in our natural relationships, in our responsibilities as Christians, children of God, brethren of Christ, members in the body of Christ, partakers of the heavenly calling, pilgrims on our way home—every character indeed in which as Christians we can be considered. It is passing wonderful, and failure only comes in because we fail to understand what is meant by being in Christ, or because we do not use the power given to and resident in us.

Only one thing more need be added at the moment. It is that in the second chapter of John’s epistle, the little children, seeing that they possess the unction or anointing, are instructed that they need not yield the least fraction of ground to the enemy. Even if the enemy should labour to seduce them, there is a very simple axiom by which to detect him, that no lie is of the truth. Jesus is the Christ; Jesus is the Son of God. He is both the one and the other. The youngest Christian, being taught by the Holy Ghost, knows that anyone denying in his teaching that Jesus is the Anointed, risen Man, or that He is the eternal Son of God, equally Divine with the Father, is on anti-Christian lines. There is, I fear, among many a readiness to deny Personality to the Son in Manhood, to teach that the Manhood of Christ is to be regarded as a condition assumed, and to deny that He became Man in nature. This is anti-Christian in character, for it undermines both the atonement and the priesthood of Christ, and it makes of all His perfect dependence and obedience simply a condition assumed—or to put it baldly, a character acted, as one might act a character on a stage. The Manhood of Christ is real, even as His Deity as Son of God is unchanging and eternal.

The Spirit of God is the power by which all false teaching can be exposed, and all seduction into error avoided; and by which the youngest Christian can stand in the truth, undaunted by Satan’s terrors and uncorrupted amid the most subtle counterfeit that he can invent, even were it possible for him to come up against the anti-Christ himself. We can never therefore excuse ourselves in any failure; failure can only be that we do not use the power conferred upon us in the gift of the Holy Ghost.

W. H. Westcott.

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**Home.**

CLAD in love and glory stands He,  
On that glowing shore,  
There to speak the blessed welcome,  
All our journeyings o’er.

Now at last our eyes behold Him,  
At His feet we fall.  
“Two and three” have we adored Him,  
Now are gathered all.

All His saints from all the ages,  
Every clime and tongue,  
All together now we worship  
In a faultless song.

In the song no discord troubles,  
And no weakness mars,  
Sound we now His Name beloved  
Far beyond the stars.

That blest song first sung in glory  
By His lips divine;  
Now in chorus deep and endless,  
All the ransomed join.

Glorious and solemn hour,  
On the verge to stand  
Of that endless day of worship;  
Of that blessed Land.

One last shout of solemn warning  
To the world below;  
One loud shout that all may hear us  
Hail Him ere we go.

Once more let that Name be sounded  
With a trumpet tone—  
Here amid the thickening darkness  
Then before the throne.
WHAT end? Not that of "the world," but of the age then, and still, present.

The coming of the Messiah in power and glory was, in the minds of the disciples, coincident with the end of the age.

That age should terminate, and the Messiah would inaugurate, by His coming, another and very different one. He would introduce what we call the millennial age.

As He and they sat on the side of the Mount of Olives, after the Lord had departed from the Temple, thereby leaving it utterly desolate, they asked Him: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?"

He answered both questions—the latter first—stating precisely when that end should come.

He fixed no date; He marked out no year; but He described signs and portents which should, to the willing mind, indicate, without fail, the gradual approach of that end.

This is most interesting to us, albeit we, the church, require no such portents to apprise us of our end here below. We look for the Saviour—the Bridegroom; we listen for "the trump of God," which shall, in a moment, raise the dead and change the living, so that, together, we shall meet the Lord in the air and be with Him in glory, heavenly and eternal (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

It is of interest to us because it is so subject of present and profound importance.

"Then shall the end come!"

Let us look at the detail. You will notice that, in the passage above (Matt. 24. 9-31), the word "then" occurs eight times, and that each marks off a distinct and special event. This, I think, is helpful; only let us clearly understand that this passage is occupied solely with the future history of the nation of Israel, at a crucial point; and that it has nothing whatever to do with the history of the church.

No doubt the disciples, to whom the Lord communicated these prophecies, became, when the church took the place of the nation, no longer Jews but Christians; but here they are addressed as representing the nation at the time when the sign of the Messiah shall appear. We can all see how that the nation has been displaced, for the time, by that which is called in Scripture "the church." But the passage in question must be viewed as exclusively applicable to Israel at its coming national crisis.

Hence we read of "the beginning of sorrows," presaged, as they shall be, by nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, with attendant famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places; and, although these are not peculiar to that special moment, yet they are precursory to that special moment, yet they are precursory to it, and are, so far, a distinct premonition of worse to follow.

"Then" (mark the first occasion of our word and its significance here) "shall they deliver you up," says the Lord, "to be afflicted and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all the nations for My name sake."

The one nation shall incur the hatred of the other nations, and that for the
sake of His name, whom, as His (the Messiah's) missionaries at that time, they boldly proclaim. It is His "saving health" (as Ps. 67 beautifully calls it) which they make known "among all nations." Their testimony causes them to be rejected by many, as the close of the following chapter (Matt. 25.) shows.

Not only so, but "then" (punctuating another event) "shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another." Bad as is opposition from without, it is far worse from within. There is mutual hatred, betrayal and offence. False prophets should arise, and iniquity abound, while love waxes cold. The loss of mutual confidence, esteem and affection is the greatest of all losses. In such a case, where man cannot be trusted, there must be very pronounced faith in God whose support can alone sustain. Hence we read: "he that shall endure to the end shall be saved." But the end of what? The end of this crisis! The survivor should be delivered; the overcomer alone should be crowned.

The testimony must be borne worldwide, amid every species of trial, and the witnesses must fight the good fight in the power of faith; but "when this gospel of the kingdom" (not merely the gospel but this gospel—that of the kingdom) "shall be preached in all the world for a witness (nothing more) to all the nations, then (notice this third recurrence of our word) shall the end come." The preaching of this gospel of the kingdom, throughout the habitable world, is the immediate harbinger of the end.

The conversion of the world to-day by the preaching of the grace of God, or by that of the kingdom of God by and by is an unwarranted dream. The coming of the Lord, in person, will close the day of grace. The sign of the Son of Man in heaven will be the end, for one thing, of Israel's travail and woe. "Then shall come the end." But it may be safely affirmed that the world, as such, is not going to be converted, although, thank God, individual souls shall be, whether by the gospel of the grace of God which is being preached now, or by that of the kingdom of God which will be preached then. Wise and happy the man who, in his one little day, obeys the gospel.

But narrowing the circle of outward signs, "When ye shall see," the Lord now adds, "the abomination of desolation standing in a holy place" (no doubt somewhere in the land) "where it should not" (Mark 13. 14) "then" (note our word used a fourth time) "let them that are in Judea flee into the mountains!" And why? Because in that locality—chiefly in Jerusalem the greatest of all convulsions, the direst of all distresses—is to burst on the dwellers therein. The presence of this Idol would be the signal for the concentrated wrath and judgment of God. Those who had ears to hear were to flee to places of safety, nor allow themselves to be impeded in their flight, by any means at all.

"For then" (a fifth repetition) "shall there be great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world; no, nor ever shall be." Misery unprecedented on earth shall be focussed there at that moment; and so awful that its curtailment is mercifully granted for the sake of the elect involved in it. "The days shall be shortened." Pitiable plight, no sign of a Deliverer.

"Then" (sixth occasion) "if any man shall say unto you: 'Lo, here is Christ; or lo, there' believe it not." False Christs and false prophets shall arise showing signs and wonders, so that, were it possible, they should deceive the very elect—a thing, thank God, beyond their wicked power. Should they state that He is in the desert, go not forth—in the secret chambers (a strange place for the great Messiah) believe it not. Faith must endure to the end for the Deliverer.
But the moment comes! As a flash of lightning athwart the darkened sky. "So also shall the coming of the Son of Man be." The corrupt carcase of unbelief shall receive its merited judgment. Sun, moon and stars—every earthly luminary shall suffer a fearful eclipse, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. (May not our sixth "then" be read along with the sixth seal of Rev. 6?)

Very well, "and then (seventhly) shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." For where else could the sign of the once crucified, but risen and ascended, Christ be expected? As He ascended in the clouds of heaven, so will He in like manner return. That return will be public, powerful, glorious! But woe to His foes!

And then (the eighth and last occasion of the word in our passage) shall all the tribes of the earth mourn (solemn fact) and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The mourning will not then be limited to Judea. It is universal. But amid these mourning tribes are scattered His elect; and these, by angelic means, and trumpet-sound, He gathers together from one end of heaven to the other, and recalls them to their own promised land.

As their Deliverer He comes out of Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob, and accomplishes for them a future on earth long predicted but as long retarded; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Thus the foretold "end" shall surely come, even though reached through wars, and opposition, and treachery, and the powers of Antichrist, and great tribulation, and the raving of false prophets, right on till the lightning flash illuminates the sky and His sign is beheld which strikes terror among the tribes of earth, but is the signal for Israel’s glad lifting up of head, and her redemption near at hand.

J. Wilson Smith.

The League of Nations and the Smaller Nationalities.

"AFTER this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns (Daniel 7, 7.)

This verse gives a description of the fourth great Gentile world-power, the Roman Empire; and the ten horns which it has presents it in its revived character as composed of ten kingdoms, covering more or less the ancient geographical boundaries of the former empire, under the supreme control of the Beast (Rev. 13, 1, 17-8-14), who is the little horn of verse 8. This greatest power in the world’s history will pay scant consideration to the rights of the smaller nationalities: “home rule,” “self-determination,” and similar attractive terms and phrases will have no place in the mouths of her orators or the state-craft of her politicians. “Necessity knows no law,” and “might is right” will be both proclaimed and practised and it will devour and break in pieces and stamp the residue with the feet of it.” Woe, then, to the smaller nations, to which we believe the residue refers, who have put their trust in the words of princes and in solemn international treaties; the treatment that Belgium and Serbia have received since 1914 is but a foreshadowing of what their fate will be. We ought to see these things, for they are clearly writ upon the page of Scripture, and if we do see them we shall be preserved from putting our confidence and centering our hopes in any nation or league of nations, but in Christ, the Son of Man, of whom it is said: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7, 13, 14.)
Present Effects of the "Blessed Hope."

There is no truth in Scripture that produces greater practical results when properly received than the truth of the Lord's Second Coming. An illustration will help us to understand this. Look at that home; the young mother and all the children are affected by a bright hope. The husband and father is coming back from the Palestine front. His absence has seemed long, but now he is coming home. What a practical effect this has upon them. The loved one is coming home!

The children cease their fault-finding, quarrelling, and tale-bearing; and their differences, so big to them before, now grow small and disappear, and all are bound together in love to a common object, and peace and harmony reigns in that little home, and all become energetic in their own way to have things right for father. Everything puts on a brighter and cleaner aspect in that home in view of that blessed hope.

Each one has his or her own individual matter to think of in view of the home-coming. Nellie knows that father will be glad that she has got the first prize at school. Mary works hard at her lessons so that he will not be disappointed in her; little Jack looks after his rabbits with greater care, and mother, who has spent many a weary hour and shed many a tear as she laboured to keep the home fires burning, eagerly prepares for the longed-for hour. Not a thing or person in that little home remains unaffected by the hope that has brought a new light into it. So the Word of God shows us that the blessed hope of our Lord's return should affect all our ways both powerfully and practically.

1. Love to all Saints.

Paul, writing to the Colossians, says: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:4,5). It was "for" or "on account of" the hope that love to all the saints characterized them. The hope that they would all be together with the Lord Jesus Christ and like Him, sharing with Him the coming glory, that hope was laid up for them in heaven, not on earth as is Israel's hope, therefore they loved all the saints.

The closing verses of the Bible speak much of the Lord's coming again, and the very last words of Scripture are: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints" (N.T.). This is very significant, coming at the close of the Book which shows in startling colour the failure of the assemblies. Love to all saints is one important effect of the blessed hope. Take another illustration. A letter comes from His Majesty the King telling you that he wants your company at Windsor and that eleven other of your fellow townsmen are to join you on a certain day in a month's time. You are all to spend a few days together with the King. A list of the names of the others who are called out from your town to this high honour is given in a letter to each of them, and His Majesty desires that all twelve should get to know each other well beforehand; therefore you visit each other, and converse together in view of what is before you, so that, when you all sit in the saloon of the express for Windsor, you are just like one happy united family. The King of kings, the Lord of lords, has called out His own from this world to spend, not a few days, but eternity with Him; to share the coming glory in the company of Christ as His own bride, His assembly, for ever. The church, or assembly is the out-called, the Ek-klesia. We are out-called from
the world, and are not of the world even as Christ is not of the world (John 17).

2. Spirit, Soul, and Body, preserved Blameless.

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5. 23). Both the Epistles to the Thessalonians are full of Christ’s return. The manner of it was specially revealed to Paul and is recorded in chapter 4. 15-18. And we are exhorted to behave ourselves in a suitable way in view of it. There are those who labour in the work of the Lord, and we are to esteem them highly. They serve in connection with God’s house. We are told not to lightly regard the ministry of the word; we are not to render evil to any man, but to be marked by goodness, patience and prayer. The very appearance of evil must be avoided. We are to edify one another, love and practical holiness are to gladden and brighten the house of God, and in this way we shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The house of God is built up of true believers,—“living stones,” those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have come to Him. In such the Spirit of God dwells. They are called in 1 Peter 2. “A spiritual house, a holy priesthood.” Don’t tell me that the house of God is made up of cold, dead stones! “God dwelleth not in temples made by hands” (Acts 17. 24). True believers are the house of God.

With the fact of the Lord’s coming bright and shining before us, we shall be greatly affected as to the condition of the house. Some like to leave those tell-tale cobwebs, spun from old wranglings, hanging about the house, and believe that they must be left there untouched until the Lord comes, instead of getting them cleared out. Such say, or think, “We are right, and they are wrong,” instead of being humbled before God as to the dishonour done to the Lord by these things and the lack of grace and diligence needed to clear away these things which must be displeasing to Him. It can be done by getting into the sense of the love of Christ shown for all His own at Calvary, and also that the Lord may come at any moment. Someone may say, “It cannot be done at present: it must be put off till the judgment seat.” I beg your pardon, dear brother; if the Lord came to-night every question of this kind would actually be settled in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We should all be gathered together to Him at once. Where would be the mysterious difference then?

As to sins, we are told they will be “remembered no more.” I know that the things done in the body are to be gone into by and by; but what I mean is this. These wretched cobwebs should be cleared away now. I heard of a believer praying in a meeting, “Lord, clear out the cobwebs.” Another brother followed with a more practical prayer. “Lord, HELP US to clear out the spiders,” said he. It is the thing that produces the other—the flesh, as well as carnal things that is to go. It has been judged at the cross, and now, in Christ, where all things are new, where all things are of God, we may walk together happily in freedom; and when the Lord comes, practical holiness and fellowship in divine things, as is pleasing to Him, will be found with us.


“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together; as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10. 25).

As Christ’s return draws near, we are also to be marked by assembling
together. There is often much said about the individual path to-day; but, my beloved brethren, the more you are right individually the more you will seek to gather together with the saints of God, with those who have redemption in Christ. If you are getting slack about assembling with those that love our Lord Jesus Christ now, let me say, you are not only disloyal to Christ to whom you belong, but you are in for trouble if you go on. Pull up, and say, "I am going that road no longer," and get into touch with those that love the Lord, and call on Him out of a pure heart; encouraging one another as they see the day of His coming draw near. There is a blessed word about our gracious God Himself. It says this: "He is the God of all encouragement." He does not discourage anyone who seeks to do His will. This is cheering for those who desire to be God-like, who seek to encourage those who love our Lord Jesus Christ. If ever there was a day when encouragers were needed it is to-day. So many are discouraged; and we need to be in the spirit and power of that word. Our God is the God of all encouragement. As we see the day approaching, assembling together and encouraging one another are also present practical effects of the blessed hope.

4. Personal Purity.

"And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3).

This last scripture reminds us that now we are the sons of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be. "sons" should read "children." Paul speaks of us as the "sons of God," —sons through adoption; but the striking thing in John is, he sees us as begotten of God, and says, "Now we are the children of God." That relationship will be no more ours when we are in heaven than it is "now." What wonderful love the Father hath bestowed upon us already; and when Christ shall appear "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." That is future, of course; but we could not see Him "as He is" if we were not like Him. He is so glorious, so bright, so beautiful, so pure, so holy, that if we were put into heaven with the eyes we have now, we could not gaze upon His glory, upon the Son of God in all the intense splendour of His majesty. It is said, the eagle can look at the sun shining in its strength. Even that is questionable; but when we are like Christ, we shall be able to look upon Him, to "see Him as He is." The eyes of our bodies of glory will be able to rest upon Him with delight. They will feast upon His loveliness without being dazzled. We shall be able to contemplate His holy perfections. Our mortal bodies will have put on immortality, and the bodies of those saints now in the grave will have put on incorruptibility. Mortal now, immortal then; corruptible now, incorruptible then. In splendour, in glory, in power, in honour, in spiritual and heavenly bodies, we shall be able to look upon our beloved Lord and rejoice with exceeding joy as we "see Him as He is."

What is the present effect of this? He that hath this hope in Him (not in himself, but in Christ)—He that hath this hope in Christ Jesus, who Himself is our hope, "purifies himself even as He is pure." Present personal purity is the effect! We hear a great deal about personal purity. Let this hope be given its proper place in the life—that at any moment we might be transferred from this earth and go up to meet Christ in the air and be like Him, then this effect will surely follow. We are to be with Him in His glory, and in His likeness for ever, pure as He is pure. It is this hope in Him which results in our purifying ourselves now, until at last, in glory, we shall be perfect, altogether pure even as He is pure.

See that young man! he is studying the law; he hopes to be a judge one day. He reads the books and follows the
pronouncements of the leading judge on His Majesty’s Bench. His hope affects him in all his ways; and his friends remark, “He is getting more like a judge every day. How thoughtful he is! How grave and wise his countenance is becoming!” That is the effect of the hope he has before him. What is the effect of having Christ who is our hope before us? We shall become morally more and more like Him every day! It is not simply to have the blessed event of His return before us, but to have the One who is coming as the object of our hearts—to have Himself before us! Christ Jesus is our hope (1 Tim. 1. 1) and our object now.

“Looking on the glory of the Lord” we are transformed now “according to the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3. 18, N.T.). That blessed work of transforming us after the moral likeness of Christ will go on very rapidly when we have His glory before us, and at last we shall drop what is not like Him altogether, and Christ in His beauty shall fill our hearts for ever. We shall see Him as He is.

May the important effects of the blessed hope which we have spoken of mark us all: Love to all the saints; suitable and becoming behaviour as belonging to God’s house; assembling together and encouraging one another as we see the day approaching—having our hope in Christ, purifying ourselves even as He is pure—for His Name’s sake.

“Soon the redeeming Lord shall come, And we whose sins He bore, Shall gaze upon His glory bright, And praise Him evermore. Then endless song our lips shall move, And joy our spirits fill; The objects of His love divine, Oh who that love can tell?”

Address by H. J. Vine.

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Universal Peace.

This is what men are longing for to-day. Statesmen of the Allied nations, with the utmost sincerity we believe, declare that their aim is to overthrow German militarism because it is a perpetual menace to the peace of the world. Their hope is that the greatest war that has ever been waged may be followed by a peace that shall not only be universal, but durable.

Is this hope a well-founded one? Is it likely to be realized?

The present state of things is indeed grievous to the spirits of those who by the infinite grace of God are His children, and who are waiting for His Son from heaven, and we often groan within ourselves, and sorrow because of the sorrows of humanity in which we all have part, but the deliverance that the Word of God teaches us to expect is not a mere change of conditions here, whether political or social, but a translation to heaven, even as Enoch was translated.

“Signs of the times,” as they are called, may, and doubtless do, indicate that we are far on the way towards the end of this age, but they who belong to Christ are to be caught clean away before the end is reached. “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . 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” (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). After this, the age will march on with rapid strides to its appointed terminus.

We are rightly concerned, however, with all that is taught in the Scriptures, whether it has a direct bearing upon ourselves or not. And beyond all doubt the Scriptures indicate that in the last days a general cry of “peace and safety” will be raised. Do not the first whisper-
Scripture Truth.

ings of this cry already fall upon our ears? Are not men prophesying a long period of universal peace, and aiming at the destruction of military autocracy so that there may at last be assured safety for small nationalities and for democracy.

Scripture indicates, we repeat, that such a cry will be raised, but it shows that the success of any scheme that aims at the establishment of the much-desired peace and safety will be short-lived, for it expressly declares that "WHEN THEY SHALL SAY PEACE AND SAFETY, THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMETH UPON THEM" (1 Thess. 5. 3).

For the coming of the Lord to translate His church to heaven will mark the commencement of what is called "the day of the Lord" for the world, a day when God begins to actively intervene, to deal with men in judgment, and to prepare the way for earth's rightful King to take possession of His inheritance.

This "day of the Lord" will suddenly come with all the unexpectedness of a thief in the night. Not that it comes thus to those who belong to Christ, through faith in His Name. They are not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief. But others, however wide-awake they may be as to the things of this life, are fast asleep as to what is in store for them. The coming of the day of the Lord will take them by surprise. Read the first nine verses of 1 Thessalonians 5. for instruction as to this.

Turning now to the book of Revelation we see how the day of the Lord begins to manifest itself in the world. Chapters 4. and 5. give us a picture of what goes on in heaven after the church's translation thither. The redeemed are there, giving all the honour of their redemption to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb. Chapter 6. brings us back to earth and shows us the first beginnings of the day of the Lord.

The very first thing set forth in the vision is the coming of a white horse, bearing a rider with a bow and a crown, who pursues a career of conquest. Not necessarily conquest by battle and bloodshed. The thought presented is rather that of an exalted personage who by successful diplomacy and prudent policy acquires a position of widely extended power and influence.*

Following him in the vision is another horse, this time a red one, and "power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another" (ver. 4). How soon the dream of universal peace will be broken! After the period filled with the career of the rider of the white horse, peace is taken from the earth, and the nations begin again to engage in mutual destruction, slaying one another in their mad hate.

After this, things rapidly develop. The "beast," as we have seen in previous papers, acquires sovereignty in the revived Roman Empire by a union, or league, of ten nations. God's judgment is eventually poured out upon this confederation of kingdoms, "upon the seat of the beast; his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain" (Rev. 16. 10). All these terrible judgments produce no effect upon men's consciences, for we read that they "blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (ver. 11).

* We would suggest that the rider on the white horse is not necessarily an exalted personage, but is symbolical of some great and promising movement. It is plain that those that follow are symbolical of the sword (red), famine (black), and death (pale), and we do not see why the first should be an exception. May it not be some "prudent policy" such as a "league of nations" which will raise hopes and promise great progress and prosperity?—(Ed.).
And thus the final act of the terrible drama is reached, and Satanic influence gathers "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (ver. 14). This is the Armageddon of prophecy. Is there any need to declare the result? There can be only one result when men, even when led by the kings of the whole world, wage war with God Almighty.

So perishes the dream of perpetual peace on earth! So ends the hope of assured safety in a world where God has been defied and His Son rejected and crucified!

But God has His plans for peace and safety on earth, plans which will as surely stand as those devised by men and engineered by Satan will come to nought. For He who comes with a sharp sword to smite the nations (Rev. 19.15) comes also to give fulfilment to many a glowing and gracious promise of peace and blessing.

After all that is an offence has been cleared out of the way, and those that have rejected Him have been sent to their doom, Israel's long-looked-for Messiah, "great David's greater Son" will establish His throne in Jerusalem. Then will come to pass the desire of the nations for peace. "The work of righteousness shall be peace." Along with this peace, the result of a righteous judgment upon sin and sinners, shall go safety. "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places" (Isa. 32. 17, 18).

Many a wonderful prophecy refers to that glorious time of universal peace which will follow the destruction of the present world-system and the coming of the King.

For instance: "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they 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).

Again: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted . . . He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder" (Ps. 46. 6–9).

How plainly this passage shows that the coming era of world-wide peace will be brought in, not during the present age, by treaties or arrangements made by man, but after this age has been terminated, and the judgments of God executed upon the wicked, by the power and personal presence of Christ!

Will the peace that He establishes in the world be a durable one? "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72. 7).

Will all nations be brought under the peaceful sceptre of Israel's Messiah? "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. 14. 9).

How much better to have a link with Him in whom all God's purposes for heaven and earth are centred than to seek to reach unattainable ends in connection with the world-system of today! How infinitely better to have our hopes fixed on the bright destiny that we shall share with Him than upon something that depends for its realization upon an arm of flesh!

May the Lord graciously direct His people's hearts into the patient waiting for Christ (2 Thess. 3. 5). This is the direction in which He would have our thoughts run, rather than that we should give a place in our hearts to the desires and aims cherished by the men of this age, doomed, as they all necessarily are, to disappointment, since Christ has been rejected here.

H. P. Barker.
Jerusalem.

At an official banquet given recently by the Governor of Jerusalem at the Government House, in honour of the Zionist Commission now at work there, and to which the principal notables of the city were invited, Dr. Weizmann, the chairman of the Commission, made a remarkable, and from a worldly point of view a statesman-like, speech.

In the course of it Dr. Weizmann said:

"I speak with a grave sense of responsibility. I wish to speak of peace, harmony, and co-operation between the communities here represented. On the spot where we are now standing my ancestors stood two centuries ago. FROM HERE THEY SENT FORTH THEIR GREAT MESSAGE, like bread cast upon the waters, and now the waters are bringing this bread back to us, their descendants. We are united to-night under the wing of the mightiest of the World's Powers, which is fighting for great ideals rooted in love for the old prophets of Palestine. Here the Jewish seers and poets proclaimed universal ideals of justice and peace; here we are the guests of the greatest of Bible-loving nations.

"This great nation has told us in the Declaration that our Jewish work accomplished in Palestine centuries ago has not been forgotten, and that our age-long devotion to Palestine has found recognition. In very truth this is not all accident. It is destiny. Our forefathers heroically defended our right to this sacred country, and only after having been overwhelmed by a fate more cruel and sanguinary than even the present fate of Belgium and Armenia did they lose physical hold on Palestine. But our ancestors did not relinquish their claim to it. Instead of a political Palestine, they set up a moral and intellectual Palestine, which triumphantly resisted the onslaughts of every conceivable foe.

"We do not, therefore, come to Palestine, we return to it; return to link up the glorious traditions of the past with the future, IN ORDER TO CREATE ONCE MORE A GREAT MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL CENTRE, WHENCE, PERHAPS, A NEW WORD WILL COME FORTH TO A SORELY-TRIED WORLD. This is for me the innermost meaning of a national home. But such a centre must have real props, must have its roots in and derive strength from the soil of Palestine. . . .

"We ask therefore for an opportunity for free national development in Palestine, and in justice that demand cannot be refused. We want to cultivate our long-neglected land with modern methods and under a just, economic system, avoiding the social evils from which even the advanced countries of Europe are only now beginning to free themselves.

"We want also, and here I am referring to what I regard as the coping stone of our present work, to make Palestine once more a fountain of knowledge and idealism through the creation of a Hebrew University at Jerusalem, a great intellectual centre open to all mankind, in which the ancient truths of the prophets will obtain expression in modern form. . . . The eyes of our scattered people in every corner of the globe are now fixed on Palestine, and on what the Jews are doing there. The Jewish communities of the West are not without influence in the Councils of the nations.

"The city of Jerusalem is for Jews a holy shrine. For that reason, if for that alone, Jews are able to respect the sentiments of others for whom Jerusalem is sacred. We wish to interfere in no way with the holy places to which the hearts of Moslems and Christians turn with reverence. We Zionists wish to live in Palestine at peace with all, on a basis of mutual regard and mutual respect."

What was the great message that went forth from Jerusalem twenty centuries ago? How precious it is to us who have heard and believed it. It came from the lips of the risen Lord Jesus. He said unto His disciples, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: AND THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM" (Luke 24. 46, 47). This message was for "the Jew first," and if they had believed it they would not have been overwhelmed by so cruel and sanguinary a fate as that of which Dr. Weizmann spoke. But as they rejected with lofty scorn their meek and lowly Messiah, and with wicked hands crucified and slew Him when He was amongst them in person, so also did they refuse His message of repentance and a full forgiveness brought from heaven by the Holy Ghost. Hence "the times of restitution of all things of which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3. 21) have been postponed, and "the wrath is come upon them"
to the uttermost” (1 Thess. 2. 16), and if
the nation of the Jews have found an
asylum in Great Britain, and if this land
is interested above other nations in the
welfare of this scattered people, it is only
because this message rejected by the Jew
has been more accepted here than in any
other land.

Dr. Weizmann looked back to the
former times when inspired seers and
poets of Israel spoke of universal justice
and peace, and he looked forward to the
time when, perhaps, a new word will
come forth to a sorely-tried world. And
such a time is coming, for the most
eloquent and sublime of all those ancient
prophets proclaimed: “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 ploughshares, and their spears into
pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up
sword against nation, neither shall they
learn war any more” (Isa. 2. 3, 4). But
when will that be? Only when these
same people believe the report of this
same prophet, which hitherto they have
not believed, and confess that He whom
they crucified was wounded for their in­
transgressions, and bruised for their in­
quities (chap. 53. 5). “Will they do this?
Not until they learn through still more
bitter experiences than they have known
hitherto that, without Christ, the Stone
which was set at nought by the builders
of their national life of old, and who is
still set at nought by them and left out of
their plans, their building must come to
nothing. Except the Lord build the
house they labour in vain that build it
(Ps. 127.). And the Lord will only build
upon and from the Headstone of the
corner, even Christ, whom He raised up
from the dead (Ps. 118. 22; Mark 12. 10;
Acts 4. 11). Then Jerusalem shall be all
and more than Dr. Weizmann says it shall
be, for all that God has said of it shall be
fulfilled. “The remnant of Jacob shall
be in the midst of many people, as a dew
from the Lord, as the showers upon the
grass.” And all the nations o’er he earth
shall look to Israel as the true spiritual,
moral and intellectual centre, and they
will say, “Come, let us go up to the house
of the God of Jacob; and He will teach
us of His ways, and we will walk in
His paths” (Micah 4. 3).

If Dr. Weizmann had learnt the lesson
that the ancient seers and poets of his
race teach, and if he were taking his
guidance from them, he would not make
the University the centre from which light
and help and words of blessing are to
radiate and flow to a sorely-tried world,
he would understand that it is the
TEMPLE and not the university that is
to fill that great place. The Lord’s House
must be established if peace is to be within
the walls of Jerusalem (Ps. 122), and
spread out to the nations (Isa. 2. 2). It
is from that House and not from any seat
of learning that the life-giving waters will
flow (Ezek. 47.). That means that God
must be first and not man, that from the
heart of God and not from the brain of
man all good comes, and that there is no
wisdom that can help men in those
schemes that do not give to God that
place that is His by right—the supreme
place. The wisdom of the philosophers
and the schools of learning is that of
which the Word has said, “The world by
wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1. 21);
it is not the wisdom of God, for had it
been “the princes of this world . . .
would not have crucified the Lord of glory”
(1 Cor. 2. 8). To revive such wisdom as
that in Jerusalem will fill its cup of
sorrow to the brim.

The chosen site for the University is
the Mount of Olives. Have those who
have had the purchase of this site in hand
considered the writings of one of their
ancient seers, Zechariah by name? If so,
they have neither believed nor understood
what he has written, for in the fourteenth
chapter of his remarkable book we are
told that the Lord’s “feet shall stand on
the Mount of Olives, which is before
Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of
Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof
toward the east and toward the west,
and there shall be a great valley, and half
the mountain shall remove toward the
north, and half of it toward the south.”

At that glorious appearing of the Lord,
and the mighty earthquake that shall
accompany it, the proud university will
crash to its ruin, and with it shall perish
for ever in the nation of Israel that con­
fidence in the wisdom of men that has
been their undoing, and they will then
learn what that word means: “The fear
of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

(EDITOR).
God's Panoply.
A Bible Study on Ephesians 6. 10-18.

The remarks which follow the initials in the following Bible Study are taken verbatim (in a few instances slightly abridged) from J. N. Darby's "Collected Writings" and "Synopsis"; W. Kelly's "Lectures on the Ephesians"; F. W. Grant's "Numerical Bible"; and F. G. Patterson's "The Lord's Host."

The Call to Battle.

10. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

J. N. D. Here is strength! What joy to be able to say, If I am weak, Christ is my strength!

W. K. It is the opening of the solemn subject of proper Christian conflict viewed, naturally in Ephesians, as carried on at the height of our heavenly privileges in Christ.

J. N. D. Observe first, that the Spirit turns our thoughts upon God Himself before speaking of that which has to be overcome. "Be strong in the Lord." It is not, first of all, a refuge from the face of the enemy we are in it for ourselves before we use it against the wiles of the enemy. It is in the intimacy of the counsels and the grace of God that man fortifies himself for the warfare from which he cannot escape if he would enjoy his Christian privileges.

W. K. The trumpet, which here summons to the battle, gives the most certain sounds of good courage, without presumption, in the saints, and of the amplest provision for their victory, in the Lord, who has called them to warfare at His charges.

The Armour.

11. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

W. K. The Holy Spirit calls on us to take up the panoply of God. Neither strength nor wisdom of man avail in this conflict.

J. N. D. We have no strength of our own. We have nothing to do with any carnal or fleshly weapons. The armour must be that of God—divine in its nature. Human armour will not ward off the attacks of Satan; confidence in that armour will engage us in the battle only to make us fall in combat with a spirit who is more mighty and more crafty than we are.

W. K. As we have to do with the hosts of Satan on the one hand, we need, on the other, "the whole armour of God."

J. N. D. The whole armour of God; for if we have only truth and not righteousness, or only righteousness and not truth, the devil may reach us. The Christian is the object of his attack, and if he is not clothed with the whole armour of God, the darts of the enemy reach him. None can resist him but the one who is thus clothed.

W. K. The mighty contest with the powers of darkness admits of no negligence on our part. We cannot afford to be unguarded anywhere.

Q. Why are the wiles of the devil particularly mentioned?

W. K. We have to stand, not so much against the strength of the devil (Christ did this) as against his wiles. He is to us a vanquished foe in the cross, and we are entitled always to treat him as such. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." It is his artifices that are chiefly and always to be dreaded.

J. N. D. Satan is always there, using wiles and artifices; he is often as a lion, but more habitually as a serpent, and he tries to reach us and introduce
the point of his weapon; he seeks to deal his blows wherever he finds a part of the body unprotected, not clothed with this armour of God.

W. K. Well might we tremble if we stood in any resources of our own. But it is not so. The battle is the Lord’s, and our exposure but draws out His mighty hand and unfailing wisdom. Still, we have to fight. It will not do to plead our weakness or His strength in order to shirk our responsibility. We must not merely look at, or point to, the panoply of God as our possession, so to speak, but must put it on at His bidding.

Q. What is the character of the conflict in view of which we need the armour of God?

W. K. It is no question of our wants before God. For He has no conflict with us; but having delivered our souls, He calls us to wrestle for the mastery with the unseen armies of His enemy. As naked in our lost estate once, we needed to be clothed; and His grace did clothe us with the best robe, with Christ. But here it is a question of fighting the enemy, and we need armour of divine tempering to stand aright and securely.

F. G. P. It is not so much an aggressive warfare as a defensive. It relates, too, to the condition of the heart and conscience which, when good, leaves the foe without resource, and our souls are thus maintained consciously in the joy of our heavenly position, as witnesses and soldiers of a glorified Christ. Do we suppose, if our souls are bent on maintaining such a position, that Satan will allow us to pass? We shall never be so conscious of the depth of his wiles as then.

J. N. D. I have to go through the world with the cares of family or business, or meeting the contradiction of sinners. But this is not a moment in which I am fighting God’s battles. I am then fighting my own, so to speak. Our contending with Satan would be against heresy, superstition and other things. Thus there are doubts, and things of that kind, which Satan brings into the mind—infidelity, for instance. Satan in them acts directly; they are not mere temptations of an ordinary kind.

Q. Is there anything that we may learn, with reference to this kind of conflict, from Joshua’s war with the Canaanites?

W. K. It is clear that if the Canaanites were but enemies of flesh and blood, they are types of the still deadlier foes we have to fight—foes whose effort it is to hinder the Christian from taking possession, in present enjoyment, of his heavenly inheritance.

J. N. D. The people of Israel under Joshua in the land of Canaan were indeed in the promised land, but they were in conflict there with enemies who were in it before them. It is not with flesh and blood that we have to fight, as was the case with Israel. Our blessings are spiritual in the heavenly places. We are sitting in Christ in the heavens. We are a testimony to principalities and powers in the heavens; we have to wrestle with spiritual wickedness in the heavens.

Israel had crossed the Jordan. They were settled in the land of Canaan as though it were all their own without striking a blow. So it is with regard to the Christian. Although we are in the wilderness, we are also in the heavenly places in Christ. We have crossed the Jordan, we have died and are risen again with Him.

W. K. Is the evangelical school right in making Jordan to be the act of death at the end of our career, when the saint departs to be with Christ? Clearly not; for in this case what would answer to the wars in Canaan? The truth is that in the Red Sea we have Christ dead and risen for us; in Jordan we have our death and resurrection with Him; the one ushering us into the world as the dreary waste of our pilgrimage, the
other putting us in view of our heavenly blessing, which we have then to appropriate by victory over Satan.

The Enemy.

12. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

J. N. D. The rulers of the darkness of this world are Satan and his angels. The darkness of the world is ignorance of God. These evil powers are in the heavens, whence they are not yet driven out; and in their wickedness they act not in a gross but in a spiritual manner. They do not possess merely an outward force; they exercise a spiritual influence, as having the place of gods. There is then, first, their intrinsic character, their mode of being, and the state in which they are found; second, their power in the world as governing it; and third, their religious and delusive ascendancy, as lodging in the heavens.

W. K. Are we merely guarding against the flesh breaking out here or there, against worldly temptations overtaking us in this or that? If so, need we wonder that verse 12 sounds mysterious, and that we question what is meant by the wrestling with the enemies in heavenly places?

J. N. D. We have not only to enjoy God, and the counsels of God and their effect in peace; but, since these very counsels introduce us into heavenly places and make us the light of God on earth, we have also to encounter the spiritual wickednesses which are in the heavenly places, and which seek to make us falsify our high position, to mislead us, and to darken the light of Christ in us on the earth.

13. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Q. When is the “evil day” here spoken of?

J. N. D. The whole of this present dispensation is the evil day, during which Satan is allowed to exercise his power.

W. K. Evil indeed is the entire period since Christ was crucified and the enemy acquired the title of “the prince of this world.” But here we have something more precise. For there are occasions when the power of evil is allowed to press more closely. It is emphatically then “the evil day.”

F. W. G. There are special evil days. There are times when the power of the enemy is gathered against us in a very marked way. After success and joy of victory there may be a carelessness brought in by the victory itself, which may allow us to fall, as it were, without a battle.

J. N. D. There are times when we are attacked by the enemy, and when God permits that we should be more or less tried; when we are made to feel the power of Satan—the power of Christ also, without doubt, but it is in order to fight. This is the reason it is said “Take the whole armour of God.”

F. G. P. Alas, what mournful instances crowd upon our memory, of those who once ran well, who fought valiantly in the Lord’s battles, and fell before the foe! Some part of His armour wanting; some joint let loose; some moment of an ungirded loin, and the ever watchful foe sent home his wile, and the bravest have fallen. None are secure in this solemn, yet blessed, battlefield when lacking the condition of soul unfolded in this “whole armour of God.”

Q. Besides withstanding we have to stand. What does this mean?

J. N. D. To make good your ground. Satan tries to destroy our confidence, to withdraw us from enjoying Christ, and to take from us the consciousness that we possess all things in Him. What we have to do, then, in this position is to stand firm.
When we have done all, we have to stand. Nothing but the constant sense of our dependence upon Another, the watchfulness which comes from this consciousness of inherent weakness, will enable us to find constant success.

Much mischief has arisen from regarding this passage as if it treated of standing, whereas, in truth, it is essentially different. It is practical arming and conflict, founded on the most blessed standing anywhere revealed in the New Testament, and suitably closing the epistle which reveals it.

The Girdle.

14. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

"Truth," notice, comes here first—the action of the Word; and what does it do for us? It girds the loins. It prevents our garments, our habits, as we may interpret it, hindering us. The power of heavenly truth upon our souls will make us, in our whole character here, simply as those who are passing through and not settling down. Our garments in that way will never be loose about us. The strife is constant. We must not expect rest. We have a rest, indeed, in Christ at all times, but that is another thing. The time of rest has not come. We are to be as soldiers of Christ, who, as the Apostle says, are not to entangle themselves with the things of this world. When the enemy is meeting us with the darkness of this world, how important for us, first of all, to have this girdle about the loins!

You must have the mind and affections tucked up with the Word of God. We must have our loins girded about with truth, or else we shall be like a ship with its sails spread, but no ballast. It would founder; the ballast which produces the equilibrium is necessary. We ought not only to know the truth, but to have our affections filled and governed by it.

There is no truth in the world but the Word of God. When this living word is applied to the heart and conscience, and the whole inner man curbed and broken, his loins are thus girded with the truth. The loins are that portion of the body that needs to be braced up and supported in conflict and toil. When the loins are braced up with the truth, the affections are curbed, and the will broken, so that there is a firmness of tone imparted to the whole man.

This piece of armour is the application of truth in the most intimate movements, the first movements of the heart. We gird up the loins. This is done, not when Satan is present; it is a work with God, which is done by applying the truth to our souls in His presence, judging everything in us by this means, and putting a bridle on the heart, that it may only move under His eye.

It is the intimate dealing of truth with the soul, so that there is no laxity of heart or indulged will, but, on the contrary, the affections and judgment braced up to Christ and the things of Christ.

It is not merely the repression of evil thoughts. It is the action of the truth, acting by the revelation of all that He Himself teaches, bringing the conscience into His presence, keeping it thus in His thoughts.

The time will come when we may let the heart go free; when conscience will not be needed, and there shall be girded loins no more for ever. In heaven we shall be able to let the heart go free. Here never! If you tire for a moment in watchfulness, and relax the loins, the heart wanders into something that is not Christ!

There, in heaven, we shall be able to let loose our hearts because e
nothing will be there but holiness and the glory of God; but here, in the presence of the enemy, with such deceitful hearts, we must have truth to govern them.

_F. G. P._ It will not do to have the truth merely known; it must be the truth applied, and then, with girded loin and broken will, the heart goes on with God, and Satan's wiles avail not.

_W. K._ To bear and delight in this, however, assumes that the heart is established in grace; it can then welcome the truth in all its energetic claim and control.

The Breastplate.

_Q._ Does the breastplate of righteousness refer to our righteousness before God, or to that which is practical?

_J. N. D._ Practical righteousness. It is not before God, but with Satan here.

_W. K._ Quite distinct from the righteousness of God, which we are made in Christ. As the Spirit, in the girding round our loins with truth, shows the first piece of armour to be the thorough application of the word to us in self-judgment, and, withal, in moral energy, so the next demanded is that we put on practical righteousness as our breastplate.

• _F. G. P._ The second part of the armour is more directly as regards the conscience; giving condition of soul to face the foe, no armour being provided for the back.

_W. K._ Nothing exposes a saint in conflict more readily than a bad conscience in his ways. I do not mean a conscience unpurged, but where evil, after the knowledge of redemption, has been allowed, and communion is broken.

_J. N. D._ The natural man knows how a bad conscience robs him of strength before men. With this armour we have nothing on the conscience. If I have not practical righteousness, Satan has got something against me; I am afraid.

_F. W. G._ The breastplate covers a vital part. If indeed there is not righteousness with us, the accuser has a fair means of attack. "Righteousness," let us remember, is practical consistency with our position and relationships, and thus if we are indeed heavenly men, this righteousness will be a very different thing from what the world would call such. The only righteous thing for us is to be practically what we are professedly in everything; even the showing of mercy is only righteousness for those who have had mercy shown them, nor can righteousness exist apart from the love which we owe men at all times. Thus the "breastplate of righteousness" is indeed important, and we see how the truth must have gone before it, to put us in the place which defines for us what practical righteousness must be with us.

_J. N. D._ It is when we are walking with God, for the love of God, for the love of righteousness itself, that we have this breastplate on, and thus we are fearless when called to go forward and face the enemy. What integrity in such a walk, what truthfulness of heart when no eye sees us! We are peremptory with ourselves, with our own hearts, and with regard to our conduct; we can therefore be peaceful in our ways. If I have a bad conscience, I am vexed with myself, I grow angry with others.

_F. G. P._ It is surprising to see how happy things seem, what a different hue they present, when the soul is walking peacefully with God. The reverse, too, when there is an accusing conscience. Where it is so, we are ready to find fault with others, and see what we would not see if we were happy in the love of Christ, flowing from a peaceful walk and a conscience void of offence towards God and man.
The Sandals.

15. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

W. K. This, again, is evidently a matter of practical power and enjoyment, the effect of maintaining a good conscience, as the latter can only be where all is held and guarded by the truth. Then the soul goes on in peace.

Q. In Conybeare's translation, verse 15 is rendered "shod as ready messengers of the glad tidings of peace." Is this the significance of the passage?

F. W. G. Our "preparation" is that which is wrought by "the gospel of peace." It is not a question of carrying the gospel to others. It is our feet that are shod with this "preparation"; it is a peace which God has preached to us in it, the peace with Himself, which gives peace, therefore, as to all things: "For if God be for us, who can be against us?" It is this peace that arms the feet for all the difficulties of the way.

F. G. P. This lovely peacefulness of soul carries one into all the details of each and every day, with soft and gentle tread; sheds by its presence a calm and placid influence on others; it gives firmness to the pathway in which it treads the battlefield of God. The feet thus sandalled with firm footing, as it may be said, of the glad tidings of peace, carries peace into the enemy's land; and in face of the restless anxiety and uneasy fears which govern the hearts of so many, and as much as lieth in it, lives peaceably with all.

Remark. The thought as to the "firm footing" expressed by F. G. P. is confirmed by Moffatt's rendering: "Your feet shod with the stability of the gospel of peace."

J. N. D. When the heart is at peace with God, and has nothing to reproach itself with, when the will is held in check, peace reigns in the soul. We walk on the earth, but the heart is above it in intercourse with better things; we walk in a peaceful spirit with others, and nothing troubles our relations with God. He is the God of peace. Peace, the peace of Jesus, fills the heart. The feet are shod with it; we walk in the spirit of peace.

The Shield.

16. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Q. What is the force of "above all" in this verse?

F. W. G. "Over all," as we should read.

Remark. Conybeare, in a note to his translation, says "To cover all," and adds that if it meant in addition to all it would surely have come last in the list.

J. N. D. A piece of defensive armour is needed over all the rest. This is the shield, faith; that is to say, full and entire trust in God, the consciousness of grace and of His favour maintained in the heart.

F. G. P. What is here spoken of is not the faith of the sinner which first lays hold on Christ. Here we find the faith of the saint; the perfection of confidence in God, known experimentally as One who is what He says He is.

F. W. G. This is that practical confidence in God which should never fail us at all times, even in the midst of the sense of failure and the need of self-judgment. Let the armour be fitted to us as it may, there is always room for some apprehension, if we simply think about ourselves, that somewhere we may have left opportunity for the enemy; but the shield of faith covers all the armour. Confidence in God is our security and rest; only we must remember that the putting on of the armour comes first. There must be honest endeavour to have all right in this way. We must not try to shield a
body evidently exposed; but when we have all apparently right, we have need still of that practical confidence which, let us notice, has for its object specially to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

J. N. D. Entire confidence in God is needed. From the position we see all the storms below us, we are at peace; but if we have not this confidence, there are things which trouble us. We see Christ in this calm and perfect confidence in the midst of His suffering (John 18. 11), peace keeping His soul; not that He could feel joy in drinking the cup, but He felt it in receiving the cup from the hand of Him who gave it to Him; nothing could shake His confidence; all the darts of Satan were quenched on the shield of faith.

F. G. P. You find this "shield of faith" practically illustrated in Moses. God had said that the people were a stiffnecked people, and if He were to come into their midst He must consume them in a moment. The very reason which the Lord gave in Exodus 33. 5 for not coming into their midst, Moses pleads in Exodus 34. 9, as the reason why He should go with them. "Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us, for it is a stiffnecked people." He had found out, meanwhile, what God is in Himself, and in this consciousness he pleads for His presence, on the ground of what He is. Oh, what confidence, what a plea to present to Him, in the consciousness of the depths of such evil hearts!

J. N. D. Here faith is the present assurance of the heart with regard to that which God is for us; trust in His love and in His faithfulness, as well as in His power.

Q. What are the "fiery darts" of the wicked one?

J. N. D. Not the desires of the flesh, but spiritual attacks.

F. W. G. These "fiery darts" are indeed terrible weapons. The fire speaks of wrath, of judgment, and it is with this that the enemy would assail us. He is the accuser. His aim, as already said, is to bring distance in some sense between our souls and God. How great a necessity, therefore, to maintain this happy confidence in Him, which, while it does not excuse failure in the least, yet finds all its confidence in Him who has undertaken for us.

F. G. P. Satan may come in with his dark suggestions, but their power is gone because God is known. Thank God, we do know Him better than we know ourselves! Satan's fiery darts are quenched with the joyous and exulting note, God is for me!

The Helmet.

17. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

W. K. All the envenomed efforts of the wicked one are futile where God is thus known in the power of the Holy Ghost ungrieved within us; all his darts not only fail to produce despair and distrust, but they are extinguished by the shield of faith.

W. K. The shield of faith is more general confidence; the helmet of salvation is rather the bold and joyous consciousness of the full deliverance God has wrought for us in Christ. This crowns the various parts of the armour already noticed.

J. N. D. The former parts of the armoury give us freedom to enjoy the last two. I can hold my head up; and having got all the defensive armour complete, I take the sword.

Q. Is this helmet the same as that spoken of as the hope of salvation in I Thessalonians 4. 8?

F. W. G. There it is the world with which we are in conflict. Here it is the consciousness of a salvation already attained, which sustains us against the enemy. This is not a hope. It is a realized certainty.
Q. Why is salvation spoken of as a helmet?

F. W. G. The helmet covers the head. We are preserved by it from blows which would rob us of what we rightly call “presence of mind.” It is this presence of mind in the midst of perils which is the best kind of courage, and the salvation of God is that which may very well secure it for us.

J. N. D. The salvation of a soul once brought right to God is a settled thing; it is a helmet, a defence which guards him from the attacks of the enemy. In my battles with the enemy I have on my head the assurance of salvation. He cannot touch me, I have eternal life; Satan cannot break in upon that. This gives boldness in the conflict; having the consciousness that God has saved us, we go on, the head lifted up, trusting in Him, fearing nothing.

F. G. P. What a lovely illustration we have of this helmet of salvation in Paul, in Acts 26. There stood that blessed man, bound with chains. There he stood, the attention of the Roman governor riveted, until Festus cried out, “Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad.” Mark the calm and collected reply, “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!” There stood this blessed witness of the power of that salvation with which God had covered his head for the day of battle.

Oh, what a softened feeling grace imparts to the heart which brings us in contact with a living Person, who has placed the helmet of salvation on our brow! It is not the salvation itself which then engrosses, but the One who has so acted for us, setting our heart as free as air, that it may run in the same channel with His heart towards an evil world.

J. N. D. Such is the case when we have the affections on Christ; we are so set as to be enabled to go on with boldness, by power being given to us to use the armour of God.

The Sword.

J. N. D. We have seen, in what precedes, that the Apostle begins by setting before us that which gives inward strength, namely, the armour defensive against the attacks of the enemy. Now he speaks of the offensive weapons, and begins with the sword of the Spirit.

The helmet is placed before the sword, because if there is not this confidence, this assurance, we cannot even handle this sword of the Spirit.

F. W. G. We have one, only one, offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, as that which enables us to penetrate all the wiles of the enemy to expose and baffle him. How impossible it will be to oppose that of which we are not positively sure whether it be his voice or the voice of God Himself! If there is any confusion as to this (and the great work of the enemy is to promote this confusion), of necessity we have no right to dismiss from our mind what may be merely his temptation. How much we want to be armed, therefore, by “the sword of the Spirit!” How we must have God’s word furnishing us at all points if we are to be ready for every form of assault!

J. N. D. But, observe here, this sword is the sword of the Spirit. It is not the intelligence or the capacity of
man, although it is man who uses the word. His sword is highly tempered, but he can neither draw it nor strike with it if the Holy Ghost is not acting in him. The weapons are spiritual; they are used by the power of the Spirit."

F. W. G. It is "the saying" rather than the "Word"; that is to say, if we think of the Word of God, it is the whole Book which He has put into our hands. What we want for the conflict is the special word, the text which suits the occasion; that is what "the sword of the Spirit" really is. It is the Word of God as applied by the Spirit of God, used, therefore, with the wisdom of God, as with our Lord in the wilderness, where always the special text is brought forward which decides what is before Him. But for this, let us remind ourselves again, we must be in the energy of the Spirit. The use of the sword requires practice and to be on the alert and watchful.

J. N. D. Paul supposes a Christian who is standing fast in the power of the Spirit, and who completely stops the mouth of Satan when he tries in a thousand ways to make him fall. Such a Christian, having all the defensive weapons, is able to handle the sword of the Spirit. The Word of God is the most powerful of the weapons of the Christian's strength.

F. G. P. How prostrate and feeble the soldiers of Christ seem to be in these infidel days. They fear often to stand alone by that Word which God has set above all His name. They are not formed by its precepts themselves, and therefore they are not fit to use this mighty sword; it would cut themselves, for it has two edges. But when the soul is fitted to wield this sword, no enemy can withstand it. The enemy may not be worsted, but the soul is steadied; its conduct and obedience are accounted for by the Word. Every infidel suggestion is met; every perversion of the truth laid bare; every superstition with which the devil deceives his votaries is exposed. All is met by the mighty instrument which alone can guide the soul in a world of boasted progress.

The Effect of Sorrow.

It is astonishing what progress a soul sometimes makes in a time of sorrow. It has been much more with God; for, indeed, that alone makes us make progress. There is much more confidence, quietness, absence of will, much more dependence on God and more intimacy with Him and independence of circumstances. And then all the blessedness that is in Him comes to act upon the soul and to reflect in it.

Christ never makes a breach except to come in and connect the heart more with Himself; and it is worth all the sorrow that ever was to learn the least atom more of His love and Himself, for there is nothing like that and Him, and it lasts. Pride and stoical resistance to sorrow will not do. That does not draw the soul to God, but effectually keeps it from Him. Sorrow, when it is complete and helpless, gives intimacy with Him who is willing and able to help.

If we carried all our troubles to God, to go fully through all with Him, our hearts would be all free and happy to turn round and care for others. The time will come when all our sorrows will be over, but our Friend will remain. He is our tried and true Friend. He has entered into the deepest woes of our hearts, and will make us the sharers of His joy for ever. (J. N. D.)

Christ is love; the greater sinner I am, the more need I have of Him.
The Song of Songs. No. 3.

Canticle II.

Chapter 2. 8 to Chapter 3. 5.

The Awakening of Love.

The Bride.

2. The voice of my beloved!

Behold, he cometh.

The first canticle presents a gay scene with the King sitting at his table: in the second canticle the enjoyment of love in the presence of the King is past, and it opens with the bride reposing in her home in the plains, with its latticed windows. In the absence of the Bridegroom, she has turned back to her own home, in her own land; like Peter, in a later day, who said, in the absence of Christ, "I go a-fishing." He turned back to circumstances that once he had left to follow Christ. Others follow him, only to find on "that night they caught nothing." The bride is aroused by hearing the voice of her beloved, which tells that he is coming. Then in the distance he is seen approaching over the mountains: a little later he stands behind the wall of the house, then he shows himself through the lattice.

How often, in the history of the Lord's people, a time of great joy and blessing is followed by a season of spiritual torpor. The banqueting house of the King gives place to the latticed home of the bride. Communion with the King at his table is followed by the solitary longings of the bride in her own home.

How soon the early freshness of the church passed away. When "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"; when the saints were marked by "great power" and "great grace"; when they continued daily with "one accord," "breaking bread from house to house," and "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" may we not say they were at the banqueting-house, with the King at his table. But when this early freshness passed away, and all sought their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ, must we not admit that spiritual night had fallen upon the saints, that they had lost all sense of their high calling, and settled down in their own homes in the plains of the world?

And what is true of the church as a whole is often true, alas, of the individual. After the early freshness of first love how often the young convert settles down at a low spiritual level, in which, though the outward routine of service may be kept up, yet the constraining love of Christ—the true motive for all service—is lacking.

Such are the conditions portrayed in this second canticle. But further, we see the way love takes to meet this condition, how the King reawakens bridal affections in the heart of the bride. And herein there is rich instruction for our souls, to which we do well to take heed.

The affections of the bride are first awakened by the voice of the Bridegroom. Drowsy though she may be, at once she recognizes the voice of her beloved. So with the Lord's sheep: they may wander from Him, but it ever remains true "they know His voice" (John 10. 4). Peter, and those who follow him, may turn back to their poor fisherman's life; but when recalled by the visit of the Lord, at once they discern "it is the Lord."

The voice proclaims that he is coming.
Could anything awaken the affections like the news that he is coming? What would so quicken the affections of a wife as the knowledge that at last her husband from overseas is coming? What will quicken the affections of Israel's godly remnant, in the day to come, like the glorious announcement, "The King is coming"? "Rejoice, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments; thy King is coming." So, too, the affections of Christ's waiting church are awakened by the truth that He is coming. All the majestic unfoldings in the Revelation, by elders and angels, of solemn events, of coming glories and eternal blessing, are heard with calm if rapt attention; but when every other voice is hushed, and we hear Jesus Himself saying, "Surely I come quickly," then, at last, the affections of the church are aroused, and the cry goes back, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills,
9. *My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart.*

With the energy of a gazelle or a young hart, leaping from rock to rock on the mountains and the hills, so the earnest desire of the King, to claim his bride, is presented as overcoming every obstacle. The bride may sleep, but not so the King. Israel may sleep, but "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Four times over does the Lord say to His church, "Behold, I come quickly"; and does not this word "quickly" bespeak the earnest desire of the Lord for that great day when "the marriage of the Lamb is come"?

Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh in through the windows,
Glancing through the lattice.

Not only does the King awaken the affections of the bride by the sound of his voice, but, in patience, he stands waiting at the wall of the house; and then, showing himself through the lattice, attracts her by the beauty of his person. Was it not thus that Christ dealt with those two disappointed saints on the way to Emmaus? He first made their hearts burn within them as He talked with them by the way. Then He stands at the threshold of their house as a wayfaring man, and at last He reveals Himself to them—just a glance, as it were, through the lattice—and He is gone. And in like manner He deals with His beloved people to-day. He awakens our drooping affections by making His still small voice of love to be heard in the secret of our souls, and in wonderful patience, He often stands at our doors, even as He stood at the door of the poor Laodicean, waiting to show Himself and attract our hearts by His excellencies.

HAMILTON SMITH.

"Them also that sleep in [or through] Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14).

"Seeker for Truth."—This sentence refers to the Lord's coming from heaven to establish His kingdom on earth. Chapter 1. 9, 10 shows that the Thessalonian converts waited for this great event. But while they waited many of them fell asleep, martyred no doubt for Christ's sake, for they suffered much persecution. Evidently those who survived feared that those who had died would not participate in the joy and glory of that kingdom. Hence their special sorrow. This special sorrow called for a special revelation, in which they were shown that when Jesus comes to reign those who have fallen asleep will come with Him, and the way also by which this will be brought about. They are to be raised from the dead, and the living saints are to be changed to pass first of all into the Father's house with and like the Lord and then to come forth with Him, according to this verse. See also 2 Thess. 1. 10.)
The Woman whom Thou gavest . . . me.
Genesis 3. 12.

The Men which Thou gavest Me.
John 17. 6.

HOW great is the contrast between the first man and the second, between Adam and Christ. To Adam God gave a helpmate to be his companion and joy in the place of dominion in which God set him. And as it was his responsibility to keep the earth for God, so also was it his responsibility, and should have been counted his chief duty and joy, to keep the woman, also, from every evil, for she was nearer to him and more to him than all beneath him, seeing she was taken out of him and given to him by God.

But he failed to keep her. He had evidently given her God's word as to the trees of the garden, but he did not support her in the hour of trial, nor preserve her from the subtle tempter; and when she fell he made no attempt to rescue her, but followed her with his eyes open into the place of disobedience to God and defiance of His word. Hence "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." And when he was confronted by God with his treachery and sin, his now sinful and selfish heart cast the blame of all the ruin upon the woman and upon God whose gift to him she was.

Then Christ came, and to Him were given men, who were to form the nucleus of His church, which is to be His helpmeet when He is given the place of universal dominion. He found them fallen and ignorant, but He gave them His Father's word, and thus He enlightened their darkness and brought them into a new life, and taught them so gently and patiently that when the test came to them as to whether they would join the multitude or follow Him, they chose to follow Him. "They have kept Thy word," said the Lord of them.

But how was it that they had done this? The secret is revealed when He said, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost" (John 17. 12). It was His love and power and grace that kept them from being seduced from Him by a subtle foe. But all this of which He spoke involved Him in death, for He found His own where sin had left them, lying under the judgment of death, and He had to bear that judgment to release them from it. The full penalty fell upon Him, and those disciples of His, and all who have believed on Him since, are kept by Him. He gives them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of His hand. And soon shall come that day of His glory when all who have been given to Him out of the world shall be presented by Him, faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). What a contrast this to Adam who, as a willing partner in his wife's transgression, stood miserable and afraid before God, casting the blame upon her whom he ought to have kept.

All those, kept by Him, shall form His church which He loved so well that He gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5. 25-27). Then shall we all be beyond the reach of evil and temptation, and His labour of love and constant solicitude for us in this respect over, He will rest in His love, and we shall be with Him, the eternal evidence of a love that died to deliver us and a care that kept us unceasingly.

J. T. MAWSON.
Of all the functions of the Spirit in connection with Christians this seems to be the one which opens out in the largest way. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 the whole Christian company is said to have been baptized by one Spirit into one body. It is an unfortunate circumstance that very many earnest believers, in their dissatisfaction with the usual dead-alive state of things in Christendom, and in their desire to come more under the power of God's Spirit, have fixed upon this expression and have sought a quasi-baptism of the Spirit which leads them away from its real significance. It is not our business to contend with them, for at least we are seeking in these studies how to be more fully, yea completely, under His control. But we may see what the Scripture teaches; and God forbid that we should—while affirming our aim to be filled with the Spirit—shun what the Spirit is here pre-eminently to produce.

It is clear from the passage referred to, that all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, whether Paul the Apostle or his Corinthian converts (and with them all converts in Christ in every place), are formed into one body by the baptism of the Spirit. They are blessed as individual believers on receiving the gospel of their salvation, and are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, anointed, and sealed, and in them He operates as the Earnest. These things have been considered in previous papers. But we are here led further. The same Spirit is the One who forms us into one body; so that every divergent interest which we might have had as individuals, even if they were as widely apart as those of Jew and Gentile, should be submerged in a community of interests under one sovereign direction. The figure is used of a body as a whole and of its members in particular. It does not seem to be the object of the Apostle in Corinthians to show in any special way the glory of Christ as the Head (which is the theme of Colossians), nor the way that He nourishes and administers to its growth and promotes its unity (as in Ephesians), but rather to indicate the Divine power that works in and animates the members of the body in their relations one with another. The whole of the twelfth chapter is given up to this theme. The Holy Spirit moving a man will never for one moment lend His support to any utterance derogatory to the glory or authority of Jesus; nor will He fail for an instant to support His Lordship. There is such a thing as inflation by an evil spirit, a demon; but the Spirit of God when filling a man in the Christian assembly will start him with the truth of the unassailable holiness of Christ, and His unquestionable Lordship, the risen, triumphant, glorified Man. There will be almost infinite diversity in the way Christ is presented by different men; distinctions of gifts (ver. 4); distinctions of services (ver. 5); distinctions of operations (ver. 6); but with every function there is the one Spirit, and not another; the one Lord, and not another; the one God, and not another. Unity, and the thought and principle of unity, lies behind all the diversity.

But, moreover, there is sober definite purpose in all the diversity. Nothing is more foreign to the spirit of Christianity than for a man to get up under a pretended afflatus, and jabber away in an unknown tongue as a mere fact. That is of man or of the devil. Tongues were originally given for the purpose of reaching foreigners in a meeting, or of voicing their praise or prayer in an intelligent fashion. Being in this way useful, as well as phenomenal, they became a sign even to any unbeliever who might be present, but they were
not intended to be signs to believers (1 Cor. 14. 22). Everything done in the assembly when convened, and as led by the true and holy Spirit of God, was for edification, encouragement, and consolation; and nothing for display (1 Cor. 14. 1–5). The true phenomenon in Christianity is to see a multitude of persons, differing oftentimes in nationality and speech, and always in social status and temperament, so delivered from self-interest by having drunk into one Spirit, that while each is at liberty to take part if led by that Spirit and as led by Him, there is perfect order and subjection one to another, and undoubted profit and edification in what is done.

But the reason of this is stated in our chapter (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13). Just as the varied members of a human body being under one will and one control work together in harmony however diverse, so it is with the Christ. All saints, indwelt by the Spirit, are corporately associated together under the designation of "the Christ." It is not a voluntary association of believers agreeing upon a certain mode of procedure, but an organic unity formed in the power of the Spirit, and subsisting actually and continuously whether convened into one place or scattered. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." What is formed by the baptism of the Spirit (and concerns and embraces all the members of the body as an accomplished fact), is on our side entered into by our drinking into one Spirit. While the unity is formed, and we are in it through grace and the mighty power of the Spirit, we can only realize it and act according to it by imbibing the thought of God and being consistent with it, so that Spirit displaces flesh. It is to be feared that very few Christians who speak so earnestly of being "baptized by the Spirit" enter into it in the corporate sense referred to in the passage, because they are not in the position where the Spirit's operations in the assembly can be known. Congregations are usually under the rule of man, and know nothing of this liberty of the Spirit in assembly. Yet the Lord vouchsafes to many a great sense of His love, and their true devotedness up to a certain point might well put others, perhaps better instructed, to shame. Would that they could combine all true service and zeal according to the Word with the exercise of this privilege also.

Now if we have understood that all Christians who are indwelt by the Spirit are also baptized by the Spirit into one body, we can perhaps study with more interest its import. The body of any creature is always formed according to its proper uses and habits. So a bird has wings, a fish has fins, etc. It is created for its specific purpose, and all things according to the plan of God. A human body is the vessel in which man was designed to be the image and likeness of God, as representing Him in the world. In Adam this failed; but what failed in Adam is made good in Christ. Christ personally is all that God can desire or require in man, and all that God is is expressed bodily in Him. But Christ was rejected on earth, and disappeared from man's eyes by His death. So that there is no personal Christ on earth. He was raised from the dead, it is true, but is hid in the heavens; and the Holy Ghost is here on earth to represent Him. And not only have we the gospel told out for the salvation of souls, but we have the mystery of the gospel, that there is to be here a mystical body comprising all saints from Pentecost to the Rapture, to be descriptive of Christ. Hence the "body" is called "the Christ." He is absent and unseen; but the body is here, formed by the baptism of the Spirit, in which the whole character of Christ is to be wrought and effectuated. All that He is in life, and affection, and mind, and character, is to be seen in the saints collectively.
What, then, of Christ is to be set forth? First let us say that Israel nationally was intended to be God's witness; the visible and tangible evidence in a national way of what God was. Israel failed; and this opened the way for God to bring out the hidden wisdom which was ordained before the world unto our glory.

There are four mentions of the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the four gospels. In Matthew, where the Lord's Kingship and authority are especially the theme, we have chapter 3. 11. It was clearly God's purpose, according to that gospel, to have Christ in authority, and to have a people, baptized by the Spirit, who would be absolutely responsive to Him and subject to Him, and able to administer of His authority for His Name. Israel having failed, the church comes by God's grace into the position they forfeited, not in a national but in a corporate way. To this end, then, are we baptized into one body, that we may be descriptive of Christ; in absolute subjection to His authority, and capable of acting for Him in a corporate way till He come.

In Mark, we have the service of Christ in His prophetic character, like Elijah and Elisha in the days of old. In Mark 1. 8, it is clear that He would fain have prepared Israel to be a people capable of understanding Him in that capacity, and of representing Him in loving service to God and men. But Israel failing, He has now formed us by the baptism of the Spirit to the same end; namely, that having accepted of His service for ourselves we in our turn should be now able to represent Him by faithful and diligent service to God and men.

In the Gospel of Luke, the Manhood of Jesus is especially the subject, and the way in which the true character of God was displayed and revealed in a Man. Reading Luke 3. 16 in this light, it appears that Israel as a nation was to become the vessel for all the moral attributes of God to be expressed; but as they rejected the counsel of God about themselves at that time, we have come in for this likewise by the baptism of the Spirit. That is, it is the purpose of God to mould us in our character so that as the body is descriptive of the head, so the saints should indeed, as members of the body of Christ, show not the traits of a carnal nature, but the very graces of Christ, so fragrant to God.

Finally, in John 1. 33, there is the same thought underlying the passage. Christ is seen in the fourth gospel as a Heavenly Man on earth, expressing what eternal life is, and relationship of the Son as a Man with the Father, and all the communion and blessedness of that life and that relationship. When this was presented to Israel, they only refused it all. Thus by God's sovereign favour we are brought in, by the baptism of the Spirit, to be associated with Christ now risen from the dead; that in us may be seen the life, the affections and joys of the relationship, and the blessedness of this intimate communion.

Summing this all up, and remembering that only by the failure of Israel nationally do we come in (yet by the eternal counsel and purpose of God), it is ours to set forth in a corporate way what Christ is. We can see what is in Christ, and that His body has been formed for the expression of Him in a practical way in a world exactly opposite to Him. We are to answer to Him in the sense of administering everything in the Christian community according to God (Matthew); to represent Him in His untiring and perfect service Godward and manward (Mark); to correspond with Him in all His gracious character as the Man of God's good pleasure (Luke), and to walk as sons of God, heavenly men, filled with His Spirit, and in the enjoyment of that eternal life which lies outside of our ordinary life though affecting us in it.

These traits and qualities are not to be looked for in the world; nor will they be found in the outward mass of professing "Christendom." But it is in-
tended that they should be found among Christians; since we are baptized by one Spirit into this one body for the very purpose of continuing "the Christ" on earth during His absence. For this all saints are required; it is only in the "new man" comprising all saints that it could be fulfilled. And to further it, it is necessary that all that is of flesh be excluded, all that is of man be negated, that all may be practically of the Spirit.

It only remains to trace the history in the Acts, as to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1:5 we have the Lord's own prophecy of its fulfilment as to the disciples who were then of His company; as in chapter 2, we have its accomplishment in their case. On the day of Pentecost it was perhaps exclusively Jews and Jewish proselytes who were brought in. But in Acts 10., supplemented by Acts 11.15, 16, we have a Gentile band introduced. Thus as to its composition we have one body formed of Jew and Gentile, by the baptism of the Spirit. Into this body God has been bringing souls through faith in Christ and by the reception of the Spirit; so that of every saint viewed in his relation to his fellow-saints in this dispensation can it be said: "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body." As far as reception of the Spirit now is concerned, this takes place individually where the gospel of "your salvation" is received; but when received, the same Spirit who seals us individually also unites us with every other sealed one, and so we have a corporate history as well as a particular one.

The baptism of the Spirit then is not some extraordinary infilling of the Holy Ghost in answer to a Christian's earnest prayers, or diligent seeking or self-surrender, or "laying all upon the altar," but the simple fact proper to every saint that he belongs to "the body" whatever he may be as an individual believer, or servant of Christ. So that every saint has corporate responsibilities as well as personal ones. If I were asked to say what Christians may pray for, it is that they may be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5.); that the Spirit who does already indwell them (Eph. 1.) may indeed have absolute control—will, affections, indeed the whole man, being brought entirely under His sway. In that case we should not only have learnt how the flesh has been judged in the death of Christ, but we should have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. 4.). And it may be that some who speak of an extraordinary "baptism of the Spirit" really mean the filling of the Spirit already indwelling, though they use the wrong term to describe it. But if they were really to be filled with the Spirit it would mean the smashing of all self-complacency, and of man's disorder in the church of God, and a heart-absorption with Christ to which most are strangers.

In explanation of Joel 2.28, to which Peter refers in Acts 2., it confirms what I have said; that it is God's purpose to have His earthly people Israel filled with His poured-out Spirit in a national way. But as they through their rulers rejected the counsel of God in the gospels and the Acts, God has temporarily set them aside; and in the meantime is carrying out still grander purposes in Christ's body, the church, in a corporate way.

W. H. Wescott.

On the Cross.

On the cross hung the one spotless, blessed man, yet forsaken of God. What a fact before the world! No wonder the sun was darkened—the central and splendid witness to God's glory in nature, when the faithful and true witness cried to His God and was not heard. Jesus forsaken of God! What does this mean? What part have I in the cross? One single part—my sins. It baffles thought, that most solemn hour which stands aloof from all others both before and after.
The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8. 9).

All the myriad stars that cluster
Heaven’s expanse when day is gone,
All the power, the might, the lustre
Of creation was His own.
Desert foxes had their burrows,
Every little bird its nest,
But the lonely Man of Sorrows
Had no home, no place of rest.

When the shades of night were palling
Each man went to his abode,
Where the dews were coldly falling
Went the stranger Son of God.
Ah, the heart must thrill and soften
And unbidden tears must flow,
As we read—'tis told so often—
He had nowhere here to go.

Yet as lowly and dependent
Pressed He on His pathway still,
On His Father’s will attendant,
Only here to do that will.
From the “glory” to the “manger,”
On through suffering, shame, and loss,
Went that homeless, heavenly Stranger
To the ending—CALVARY’S CROSS.

Never such a tale of sorrow,
Never such a tale of love;
In the endless bright to-morrow
It will be the theme above.
In the temple’s holiest places,
Shining in their golden sheen,
‘Shittim-staves’ memorial traces
Of where once the ark had been.*

Ah, amid the golden glowing
Of the city without tears,
There will be the endless showing
Of those unforgotten years.
He who then will lead the chorus,
Crown the triumph, swell the strain,
Will for ever be before us
As the Lamb that once was slain.

* 2 Chronicle 5. 7-9.

A. Stevenso
Prayer at this Time.

There is cause for thankfulness in the fact that by the wish of the King and by a Government motion there is to be public and official acknowledgment of God on August 4th. This, in the announcement of it, does not go so far or strike so deep as when, during the Indian Mutiny, October 7th, 1857, was appointed a solemn day for humiliation, prayer and fasting, and the need is a hundred-fold greater in this great crisis than in that. Yet every Christian will desire that behind what may be merely formal there may be a true turning to God in confession and prayer, that the lessons He would teach men by His chastisement may be learnt, and that He may have a larger and not a smaller place in our lives than formerly, for apart from these things great victories would only leave us poorer than we were before in all that has true value, and generate that presumptuous pride which would only bring then atonion into a greater condemnation. There is need for us all to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God lest we are humbled by those that hate us.

While gladly acknowledging the authorities in this matter, as in all others that lie within their jurisdiction, as being ministers of God in the nation, the Christians will not need to be told how to pray or when, for the Bible in their hands and the Holy Spirit in their hearts will direct and teach them in their supplications, chief amongst which will be, “Come, Lord Jesus.” “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as in heaven... For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

The Song of Songs. Canticle I.

The Assurance of Love.

(The Continued from page 129, June issue.)

The Bride.

1. 12. While the King is at his table,
My spikenard sendeth forth its fragrance.

13. A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me;
That passeth the night between my breasts.

14. My beloved is unto me a cluster of henna-flowers
In the vineyards of Engedi.

The glowing thoughts of the Bridegroom for the bride call forth her immediate response. While the King sitteth at his table, the worship of her heart ascends as a sweet odour. The King at his table gives us a lovely picture of Christ in the midst of His own. Not Christ with the girded loins, in lowly service, washing sin-soiled feet; not Christ as the captain of the Lord’s host leading His own in the fight with the powers of evil; not Christ with the tears of divine compassion comforting a sorrowing heart, but Christ at rest, finding joy and delight in the midst of His own. Not Bethany with its sorrow, but Bethany with its feasting—that happy moment when loving hearts “made Him a supper.” It was not often in this poor world that any one made a supper for Him. Once in the house of Levi a feast was made that Christ might bless poor sinners, and once in the home at Bethany that Christ might commune with saints. There at last they spread a feast for Him who spread a feast for all the world. There the King sat at His table, and there the spikenard of the bride sent forth its
It was blessed to sit at His feet as a learner and hear His word, but Mary's spikenard sent forth no fragrance there. It was blessed to fall at His feet in the day of sorrow and receive the comfort of His tears, but it drew no fragrant spikenard from Mary's broken heart. But when the King sat at His table in the midst of His own, no longer sustaining them in the pathway, comforting them in their sorrows, dealing with their weakness or correcting their mistakes, but now resting in His love in holy communion and intimacy with His own, then indeed the suited moment had come to bring forth the alabaster box and pour out the precious spikenard upon the King, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

It is the presence of the King at His table that calls forth the worship of His own. Only a heart set free from its sorrows, and its exercises, and busy service, can worship in the presence of the King. To learn at His feet is good, but learning is not worship. To be comforted by His tears of sympathy is sweet, but comfort is not worship. In learning I am conscious of my ignorance, in comfort I am thinking of my sorrow. But when we spread a feast for Christ—when the King sits at His table—it is no time for instruction or comfort. There we leave our sorrows, our ignorance, our daily cares behind, and, at His supper, He only engrosses the mind and holds the affections; and when the heart is filled with Christ we worship—"Our spikenard sendeth forth its fragrance."

But worship is the overflow of a heart filled with Christ. And when Christ fills the heart we can say, in the language of the bride, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me." The myrrh speaks of Christ, but not Christ as an object before our gaze, but Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. Myrrh does not attract by its beauty, like the flower. It is a resin precious by reason of its sweet odour. The myrrh, too, is wrapped up in a bundle; it is unseen but its fragrance is enjoyed. Such was the beloved to the bride, and such is Christ to the believer when dwelling in His heart by faith. And, says the bride, the bundle of myrrh shall lie all night between my breasts. All through the darkness of this world's night, until the dawn of endless day, the believer has Christ enshrined in the secret of his affections.

But further, the bride likens the Bridgroom to the beauty of a cluster of henna-flowers in the vineyards of Engedi. She would delight in her beloved in the secret of her affections, but she would also enjoy him as the object of her enraptured gaze. So too we need Christ not only dwelling in the heart by faith, but as the attractive object of our souls, that gazing upon Him with unveiled face we may behold the glory of the Lord and be changed into the same image from glory to glory.

We need Christ to draw forth the fragrance of the spikenard at the feast; we need Christ as the bundle of myrrh throughout the long dark night; and we need Christ as the cluster of flowers in the vineyards of Engedi—enshrined, as it were, in His own glory.

The Bridgroom.

15. Behold, thou art fair, my love, Behold, thou art fair: thine eyes (are as) doves.

The spikenard of the bride has sent forth its fragrance, expressive of her delight in the Bridgroom, and now he expresses his delight in the bride. She had said, "I am black," but the Bridgroom says, "Behold, thou art fair." Christ, ever viewing His people in the light of His purpose, and on the ground of His work, can say of each one, "Thou art fair." Thus the Apostle John can write, "As He is so are we, in this world." Moreover, the King adds, "Thou hast doves’ eyes." The dove mourns and languishes when separated from its mate. Hezekiah could say in
his sickness, “I did mourn as a dove.” The dove has no eye but for its loved object; and it is of those who have before them one object—and that object Christ—of whom He can say, “Thou hast doves' eyes.”

The Bride.

16. Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant; Also our bed is green.

17. The beams of our houses are cedars, Our rafters are firs.

The Bridegroom had said, “Behold, thou art fair, my love”; and with great delight the bride at once responds, “Behold, thou art fair, my beloved.” Her comeliness is the counterpart of His. Is Christ fair? So are His people. The beauty of the Lord God is upon us (Ps. 90. 17). But not only does the bride say, “Thou art fair,” but she can add, “Yea, pleasant.” Of others it may be said, many are “fair” that are not “pleasant,” and some are pleasant that are not fair. Christ is not only fair to look upon, but He is wholly pleasant to engage the thoughts. How “pleasant” was Christ to the Psalmist when he said, “My heart is welling forth with a good matter”; and how “fair” when he added, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” Well may we sing, “Each thought of Thee doth constant yield Unchanging fresh delight.”

But more. Not only is the King “fair” and “pleasant,” but in his presence there is rest, security, and shelter. “Our bed is green.” The bed refers to the couch on which the King and the bride recline at the King’s table, and gives the thought of rest. When Christ takes His place in the midst of His own there is found a green spot in this poor world. In His presence there is rest. But it is “our” bed, the rest is mutual. “I with Him, and He with me.” In His presence, too, we shall find security and shelter. “The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters fir.” The “beams” support the building and make it secure, the rafters support the roof and make it a place of shelter. In the presence of the King we have security and shelter. What kind of setting has the Bethany scene, when the King sits at His table? Immediately before we read of the great ones of the earth consulting to put the King to death, immediately after Judas covenants to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver. Outside the storm is rising, inside there is shelter and security from the coming storm. One, indeed, will find fault with Mary, but at once the sheltering care of the Lord is seen: “Let her alone, she hath done what she could.” No power of the enemy can touch the one of whom the King says “Let her alone.”

“In heavenly love abiding, No change my heart shall fear; And safe is such confiding, For nothing changes here. The storm may roar without me. My heart may low be laid, But God is round about me, And can I be dismayed?”

2. 1. I am the rose of Sharon, A lily of the valleys.

The King has said “Thou art fair,” and in response to his “Thou art” she can rightly say “I am.” “I am the rose of Sharon.” Faith expresses what grace has made her in His sight—fragrant as a rose and beautiful as a lily of the valleys. Not a lily in some crowded city for the admiration of the world, but a lily for the Bridegroom’s delight in some secluded valley. There is no presumption in accepting the place that Christ, by grace, has given us before Himself. Rather is it presumption, when Christ says “Thou art fair,” to say “I am unworthy.” The prodigal could speak thus in the far country, but when the Father’s arms were around him and the Father’s kisses covered him all was changed. And, in the presence of the King at His table, we may well take up the words of the bride, not indeed to exalt ourselves, but to magnify the grace of the One who has put His beauty upon us.
A correspondent asks us to place in order the events that are to happen upon earth after the translation of the church to heaven. We here endeavour to do this.

The prophetic Scriptures divide the earth into three parts, namely: (1) the land of Israel; (2) the Roman world, throughout which the Christian faith has been promulgated; and (3) the nations that have remained heathen. Though all three come into view more or less in the Revelation, the first is dealt with mainly in the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels, while the judgments on the Roman world are given in the Revelation, though references are also made to it in the Book of Daniel. The Old Testament gives us the history of the Jew, and so naturally there is given the sufferings and final glory of that nation. In the New Testament the history of the gospel and the church are given, and here the blessed destiny of those who have received, and the doom of those who have rejected or perverted what God has given at so great a cost is foretold.

The great event which forms the true hope of the church now on earth is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to translate her to heaven. This must take place before the events which we here enumerate take place. When He comes personally to earth to reign for a thousand years His church will come forth with Him, and it must be with Him to come forth with Him.

First, then, the church is translated to heaven at the descent of the Lord to the air for her (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17), when all His saints will be changed into His likeness (1 Cor. 15. 51-5; Phil. 3. 21). At this time the Lord will present the church to Himself, a glorious church (Eph. 5. 27); and each saint forming that church will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive His estimate of their whole lives.

This brings us to Revelation 4., where God appears as the eternal and self-existing One who has created all things for His own pleasure, and who is about to assert His rights which have been denied by men upon the earth, and to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth to Himself that He might find His pleasure in them. In Revelation 5. the Lord appears as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, who, having been slain as the sacrificial Lamb, alone is worthy and able to bring this about for God. He takes the seven-sealed scroll of judgment from the hand of God to open the seals of it and to execute the judgments therein written.

Anarchy

with the attendant suffering, misery, follows the opening of the seals, in, we judge, the professedly Christian lands, for they speak of the Lamb (ver. 16), a title by which the Lord is only known where the gospel has been preached. This condition of things is not due to the direct judgment of God, but seems to be the outcome of the unrestrained development of the pretentious and promising schemes by men for their own betterment apart from God. Their wisdom turns out to be folly, and the way that seemeth right unto them ends in death (Prov. 16. 25). This condition of things opens the way for the rise of the Beast—the devil-inspired empire and its ruthless head.

The Fall of Great Powers

is indicated under the Trumpets (Rev. 8.) in the same sphere as that affected by the seals, but the awful calamities seem to spread to heathen lands in chapter 9., as indicated by the fact that idolatry comes into the catalogue of crimes in verse 29. We see in these visions a world that has refused God and His Christ at the mercy of men's passions and the malice of demons.

Palestine peopled with Jews.

At this time the Jews will be fully established in Palestine under the protection of a maritime nation (Isa. 18.).

Satan cast out of Heaven.

The seat of Spiritual Authority that lies behind all great movements in the world
is the heavens. Satan occupies this position now (Eph. 2. 2; 6. 12), though God is above all and only permits evil to go so far. But he is to be cast out of this place by Michael the archangel to make way for the church, which is the Lamb's bride, the holy Jerusalem, for it must eventually have that place for the blessing of the world (Rev. 21. 9-27).

The Rise of the Beast.

Being cast out of heaven Satan exercises all his power and ingenuity in the reconstruction of the Roman Empire. It comes up out of the anarchy of Revelation 6., and to its head, the Beast, Satan, the Dragon, gives his power, and his seat (Rev. 13.), and his authority (ver. 2). In this person Prussianism, with its godless, blasphemous, diabolical ruthlessness will be intensified, he will devour and break in pieces, and all those who dare to resist his political schemes—the residue—he will stamp beneath his feet (Dan. 7. 7).

The intention of Satan in this, his masterpiece, is to hold the kingdoms of the world against the Lord and His Christ, and the ten kingdoms that form the Roman Empire will join in this, and give their power to the Beast in order to make war with the Lamb who is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17. 12-14).

Antichrist will also arise as the great coadjutor of the Beast. He will be an apostate Jew, regarding not the God of his fathers (Dan. 11. 37), and will be the leader of the Jews in Jerusalem. The Dragon (Satan), the Beast, and the False Prophet (Antichrist) will form a trinity of evil (Rev. 16. 13).

The last week of Daniel's seventy commences.

The Prince of the same people, the Romans, who destroyed the temple and city of Jerusalem, i.e. the Beast, will make a covenant with the leaders of the Jews for one week, a week of years, or seven years; this is the last week of the seventy of Daniel's prophecy that still waits to be fulfilled (Dan. 9. 20-27). This covenant is referred to in Isaiah 28. 14-20 as being on the part of the leaders of the Jews a God-defying covenant. They will at this time believe that they are at last firmly established in their land, and that an era of peace has been inaugurated. They will say, “Peace, and there is no peace.” They will build a wall of protection about themselves, and daub it with untempered mortar, but a storm wind will rend it, and great hailstones shall consume it in the wrath of God (Ezek. 13. 10-15).

The Great Tribulation.

In the midst of the week the Beast will manifest another Prussian characteristic, and treat his covenant with the Jews as “a scrap of paper,” to be scorned and torn according to his imperious will. The great tribulation will then begin, which will spend its greatest fury upon the Jews (Jer. 30. 7; Dan. 12. 1; Matt. 24. 8), but which will also try all that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3. 10). During this period all will be compelled to receive the mark of the beast and worship him, or suffer boycott and death (Rev. 13. 16, 17). A remnant will be preserved of the power of God (Rev. 12. 14, 16).

The Remnant and their Service.

At this time there will appear the two witnesses for God at Jerusalem, in the power of Elias (Rev. 11.), and the remnant which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12. 17). To these Matthew 24, Mark 13. and Luke 21. 8-19, 25-33 will apply. The commission given to the apostles in Matthew 10. will be taken up again, and the sufferings and persecutions and martyrdoms there promised will be endured, and by this remnant a people will be prepared amongst the Jews to receive the Lord at His coming, and they “shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come” (ver. 23). Others will go further afield and preach “this gospel of the kingdom” “in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24. 14).

Babylon the Great, the corrupt Church of Rome, overthrown.

After the translation of the true church to heaven, the false profession in Christendom will all be merged into the Romish
church, and this will become more powerful and greater than ever in the past, and as the scarlet woman, corrupt, blood-drunken and splendid, she will ride upon the Beast, the political and military power, but she is to be destroyed as described in Revelation 17. and 18.

The Great Apostasy.
Then there will be no semblance of public religion in Christendom or in Jewry (for the Jewish sacrifice will be stopped by the law of the Beast), except the worship of the Beast himself, the exaltation of man above all that is called God. Then the great apostasy will have come to its head (2 Thess. 2. 3–12), and the abomination of desolation will be set up in the Temple at Jerusalem, probably an image to the Beast (Dan. 9. 27; Matt. 24. 15). At this sign those who are faithful to God amongst the Jews in Judea will flee to the mountains (Matt. 24. 16).

Invasions of Palestine.
Towards the end of the second half of Daniel’s last week the King of the South (Egypt) will invade Palestine, in order to attack Antichrist (the wilful king) at Jerusalem. Simultaneously the King of the North will sweep down upon the land and attack the armies from the south and overthrow them and compel the whole force from the South to submit to his will and support his campaign against Jerusalem (Dan. 11. 40–45). The King of the North is the Assyrian of Old Testament prophecy, the overflowing scourge.

The Gathering of the Kings for Armageddon.
Revelation 16. 13–16 describes how the kings of the whole earth and of the world will be gathered into Palestine at this time, and Joel 3. 9–11 foretells that war will be the supreme business of all nations. Various political reasons will doubtless move these kings to march upon the Holy Land, but the object of Satan, who will move behind the scenes so as to involve all in this crisis, is to fight against the Lamb and hold Jerusalem against Him. But God will turn all to His own glory. So that in reality God will gather them there (Zech. 14. 2), and will stain the pride of all militarism and glory of men, and smash it for ever outside the city which He has chosen to place His name there. The kings of the East, probably four, with an almost countless host, will gather with others (Rev. 9. 13–19; 16. 12).

The Coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords.
The sudden appearance of the Lord in this character has special reference to the Beast and false prophet and their armies, for the Beast will have assumed this place and title. These two devil-inspired leaders of men are cast into the lake of fire and their armies are destroyed by the word of the Lord (Rev. 19. 11–21).

In Flaming Fire taking Vengeance.
Simultaneously all who had not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they must have heard to be judged on this ground, whether with the armies of the Beast or not, will be destroyed at the glorious appearing of the Lord (2 Thess. 1. 7–9).

His feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet.
He shall appear for the salvation of the godly remnant of Israel who look for Him (Heb. 9. 28), and who have fled to the mountains according to His word (Matt. 24. 16). In the same manner as, and from the same spot from whence He went up, He shall return (Acts 1. 11; Zech. 14. 4). And then the Lord will sit to judge the heathen round about (Zech. 14.; Joel 3. 12–16).

Israel delivered and the Kingdom established.
Those of the Jewish nation who have been faithful to Him during the great tribulation now brought to an end by the coming of the Lord will have a special place in His Kingdom, but He will gather the ten tribes also from north, south, east and west (Matt. 24. 31), and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11. 26). The nation
born again, and with the law written in their hearts, shall live unto God (Ezek. 37).

The invasion of the land by Gog and Magog.

This invasion of a mighty host from Russia and adjacent lands foretold in Ezekiel 38, 39., after the striking description of the restoration of Israel in chapter 37., appears to take place after Israel has accepted their Messiah, and when they are at rest and dwell safely (chap. 38, 11). The destruction of these armies is described in chapter 39.

The judgment of the living nations.

The last section of mankind left alive on the earth to be judged of the Lord are those that have been farthest off from Him, morally and spiritually, and who have had the least knowledge of His will, the heathen nations. This judgment is described by the Lord in Matthew 25, 31-46. It is not as the Messiah of Israel that He judges these nations, but as Son of man, who is set over all things, and it takes place when He sits upon the throne of His glory in that character. The test for all who stand before Him then and there will be how they have treated His brethren (ver. 40), who had preached to the ends of the earth this gospel of the kingdom, who had been the heralds of His kingdom.

Peace and Blessing will follow which shall be earth-wide, having its centre on earth in Jerusalem, but all the light and wisdom and blessing will come through the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the wife of the Lamb, His helpmeet in the place of administration that is given to Him. And Christ shall be the golden ladder by which the blessing of heaven shall come to earth, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend upon Him (John 1, 51).

Principalities and Powers and Dominions, other than those connected with the earth will have to be subdued by Him and reconciled to God (Col. 1, 20), for He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death... and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15, 25-28).

The close of the thousand years reveals the fact that millions who had been born during their peaceful course had not been born again, and that they will be in heart and character just what man has ever been since the fall, ready to rebel against God, which they do with great enthusiasm when Satan who had been chained up in the bottomless pit during the millennium is released for a little season (Rev. 20, 7-9). The devil is then sent to his eternal doom, the lake of fire (ver. 10).

The Great White Throne.

This will be the last judgment, the judgment of the dead who have died in their sins, all who stand there have but one judgment; they are shut off from the God whose mercy they had refused and cast into the lake of fire, where the devil is whom they had served (Rev. 20, 11-15).

The Eternal State.

The earth and the heaven having fled away from the face of the Judge upon the throne, a new heaven and a new earth comes into being, and the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these things are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely (Rev. 21, 3-6),

J. T. MAWSON,
"Who is this Son of Man?" No. 1.

Glorious and astonishing things are spoken of the Son of Man; and the Spirit strikingly shows in the Scriptures His wonderful works, ways and worth; foretelling too in the Old Testament His exceeding majesty; and recording also in the New His surprising humiliation.

Set at nought, mocked, scorned, scourged and spit upon, He was crucified by men; but raised again by God He was exalted to the place of universal authority as Head over all things, in accordance with the prophetic utterances concerning Him; and Stephen, to whom His glory was disclosed, said, "Lo, I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." But when Stephen bore this witness to His glory, his doom was sealed. His hearers rushed upon him, and having cast him out of the council chamber, they stoned him to death.

Those who thus hated to hear of the supremacy of the Son of Man were Jews, like those who had previously asked the question, "Who is this Son of Man?" Had Stephen said, "I see the Son of David in the place of power," this malevolence might not have been so manifested. The Jewish leaders seem to have instinctively felt—though they may not have been able to explain it—that what was involved in the title "Son of Man" far transcended Judaism, and was evidently greater than that which they connected with the Son of David. This is true; and it is therefore insufficient, in reply to their question—who is this Son of Man—to simply say, "The Lord Jesus Christ." That is true, thank God; but the Spirit leads our hearts into the understanding of the truth, as well as gives us the knowledge of it; and He strengthens us, so that our apprehension of the glory of Christ may be enlarged, and that we might not be dwarfed, or limited as to this, by other influences.

1. His Grace and His Glory.

Even the Jews should have had some knowledge concerning the Son of Man; and the ignorance they showed was most culpable; for their own Scriptures, as we have said, largely speak of Him. Such portions as Psalms 8.; 80; and Daniel 7. 13, 14 should have impressed them; but it is quite evident (like many religionists of to-day), they read the Bible with themselves in view, and therefore could not brook any truth that surpassed their circle. Israel then, or the assembly now, being made the centre and circumference of the thoughts, ensures serious disaster. The title, Son of Man, involves wider glories than those connected with both of these circles, as we shall see. It is Christ's racial name, and therefore embraces all nations and peoples, as well as the heavenly glories which God has counselled for Christ as Man, and made known in the Epistles. The regal rights of David's line are His; also the splendour of the kingdoms and dominions of this world; the Headship of the assembly also, and He is its glorious Bridegroom; but exaltation over all things in heaven as well as earth is His too—"all things" are put beneath His feet. As we behold the magnificent greatness of this, the universal munificence and grandeur of it, and the kingly and lordly excellence of Christ's gracious majesty how sharp the contrast appears, when we behold Him, lowly and unrecognized, wending His way through sufferings to the glory. The FIRST thing said of Him as the Son of Man in the New Testament is that He had "not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8. 20). The last mention of Him in this character in the Old Testament is in Daniel 7. 14: "There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not
pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Amidst shame and sorrow, and amidst greatness and gladness, the incomparable perfections of the Son of Man are to be seen.

Man had fallen from the high estate in which God had placed him. He was sold under sin, subject to death, captive to Satan, and another Man, the Son of Man, alone could deliver him. Man set in government, under Noah, again fell; and the only hope of recovery is in another Man, the Son of Man. Israel, to whom national supremacy was given, also fell; restoration for them must come through another—the Son of David. But David called his Son his LORD; and this was the enigma which the Pharisees could not find an answer to; for David’s Son was no less a person than the Son of God, Jesus, Immanuel. In Him, the uncreated, all hope is centred. Herein lies the explanation of the difficulties: not in the first man, the created man, not in Abraham, not in David, but in the Son of Man, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the SON OF GOD—GOD THE SON. By man the failure came: by the Son of Man—by Him, who in grace came into that place—the recovery and the counselled glory is secured; and God Himself is glorified in the Son of Man! What a glorious reversal by Man of all the shameful failure of man! The apostles do not appear to have once spoken of the Lord as Son of Man in the Gospels; but the fact that He Himself used the title about eighty times shows how He graciously prized it.

Christ came to bring the reversal about. He came to Israel, under law—come of a woman.’ He was the promised Seed of the woman—of the Virgin—Son of Man, but not the son of a man. He came to recover and restore, to redeem and reconcile, to bring about blessing for man and glory to God; He is the Son of Man whom God has made strong for Himself (Ps. 80. 17); but Israel rejected Him when He came to them; He therefore began to speak of something new, something unique, something more glorious and exceptional—He would build His assembly—the Son of Man’s assembly (see Matt. 16. 13-18)—before restoring Israel. Later we find Him judging the assemblies—standing in their midst like unto the Son of Man (Rev. 1.)—before He takes up the nations and the peoples, before He brings about universal order. We will, however, follow out these and other important facts with more detail.

2. His Relation to the Assembly.

When introducing this great matter of His assembly, the Lord Jesus began by raising a question which emphasized what was before His mind. He asked His disciples, ‘Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?’ After hearing their answers, He said He would build His assembly, and the gates of Hades should not prevail against it, because He would build it upon the rock foundation of Himself, the Christ, the Son of the living God, as revealed by the Father. That Peter was not the rock, and that such a thought never entered his mind, is seen by what he himself wrote after, when he explained that the spiritual house was formed of those who came to Christ, the Living Stone, rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious (1 Peter 2. 4). It is Christ, not Peter; and this assembly is the outcome of revelation—not of the education of flesh and blood—the Father being the source of that revelation; therefore the idea of heredity or of apostolic succession is outrageous.

What has been overlooked in the multitude of controversies on this matter is the fact that it is the Son of Man’s assembly; also that He Himself builds it as the Son of Man, and calls it “My assembly.” It is this which accounts for what we read in Ephesians 1. 22, 23; where, citing Psalm 8. as to the Son of Man, the Spirit tells us that all things are put under His feet; showing the assembly also to be associated with Him in His place as “Head over
fitting all things”; adding, The assembly is “His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.” Here the Son of Man and His assembly are found intimately together. Indeed, this is in view in both Matthew 16. and Ephesians 1. At the close of the former we read of the Son of Man coming in the glory of His Father with His angels, and of the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. He builds His assembly first, and this is necessary for the coming glory as Ephesians 1. shows. Since His rejection, since His death, resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand, He has been doing this; and when the building is complete, He will associate the assembly with Him actually, in the exalted place which is already His as the Head of it. He is glorified now; but the assembly awaits His coming to be glorified with Him; although faith enters into our present part with Him, in the power of the Spirit, before that day.

It is of the utmost importance, however, to recognize this serious fact, that alongside the building of the Son of Man there has grown up a vast system of so-called Christian religion which is not His building. Therefore in the last book of the Bible, the book of judgments, we find, at the very opening of it, One standing in a judicial character in the midst of the assemblies, scrutinizing them with eyes as a flame of fire. All judgment, we are told, is given to Christ,” because He is the Son of Man” (John 5. 22, 27). Christendom therefore comes under His judicial dealing first. It professes His name; but that which is His must be real, a structure that can stand the severest test, which is the result of the revelation of the Father, and the building of the Son of Man; its material being and constitution the result of the divinely imparted knowledge of the Christ, the Son of the living God. When therefore John sees the Lord examining the seven assemblies, which set forth the churches of Christendom—for the book of Revelation is prophetic and symbolic—He sees Him standing in their midst as “One like unto the Son of Man.” It is in this character He both judges and builds. He knows His own work. No mere ecclesiasticism can produce this. That which is the outcome of the Father revealing and the Son of Man building, no Satanic onslaught can prevail against.

The counsels, schemes, espionage, and offenses of the gates of Hades all fail. (The reference to the “gates,” made in Matthew 16., points to the council places. Such were in the gates in the Old Testament times.) Hades’ gates may effect such a state in Christendom that Satan sets his throne there, and finds a convenient dwelling in it (Rev. 2. 13, N.T.); they may be the cause of a Thyatira—Romish condition (2. 18-29), and of a Savilis—Protestant state of things (3. 1-6); they may even be the indirect means of the “little strength” in the Philadelphia—“Love of the brethren” assembly—which, however, remains faithful to the finish (7-13); and they may produce the lukewarm, self-satisfied condition of the Laodicean—Christian Brotherhood (14-22); but against the assembly which is the outcome of divine revelation and building they are impotent: they are just as helpless as is death itself against the life of the risen Son of God—who has triumphed over both death and the grave—for it is in that life the Son of Man’s assembly has its being and constitution.

There are other aspects of the assembly. It is that which belongs to Christ as the fruit of the purpose of God which centred in Himself; and, again, as the outcome of His own love, for “Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself for it”; also it is that which is formed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, for “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” We may not, however, enlarge upon these precious facts here.

H. J. VINE.

(To be continued.)
The Desirableness of a Man.

IN the Authorised Version the first half of Proverbs 19. 22 reads: "The desire of a man is his kindness." This is, in literal truth, Hebrew to the ordinary reader. The Revised Version is no better. But its marginal rendering is intelligible. It runs: "That which maketh a man to be desired is his kindness." Dr. Young in his Literal Translation of the Bible renders the passage thus: "The desirableness of a man is his kindness." J. N. Darby's New Translation is still better. It has: "The charm of a man is his kindness." The Hebrew word done into English as "desire" in the common versions is "ta'awah. It has two senses. Viewed subjectively it means "desire or satisfaction." But taken objectively the signification is "desirableness or charm." In Proverbs 19. 22 the second meaning is in complete consonance with the setting. Does not the verse remind us of the kindness and love to men of our Saviour God (Titus 3. 4)? Is He not superlatively desirable because of His abundant kindness? "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). Jesus though very God is very Man. Beyond question the desirableness of the Man Christ Jesus is His kindness.  

"Princes also did sit and speak against me; but Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes" (Ps. 119. 23).

THE Psalmist desired that his way might be directed by God's statutes (ver. 5); and that it might be cleansed from every sin and inconsistency by His Word (ver. 9); and that he might not at any time wander from the commandments of God (ver. 10). But while he walked and laboured, the princes, who ought to have understood, and would have understood if they had been walking and labouring in God's ways also, sat and criticized. Notice how he puts it: "Princes also did sit"—not in the learner's seat, but at the judge's bench, and from thence they spoke against him. It is easy to sit and speak against others: it requires no spiritual power, no God-given purpose, no earnest prayer, no diligent study of the Word—though all these are needed if we are to walk in the way of God's commandments. It is excusable, perhaps, in petulant children, whose growth has been retarded by ill-feeding and training, or by the maladies of the evil flesh, such as were those saints who lived in Corinth in A.D. 59, but for princes, whose work is to bring their offerings to God (Num. 7. 7), or to be digging wells for the refreshment of the people (Num. 21. 18), it is dishonourable—dishonourable to themselves, dishonouring to God, and harmful to all who hear them. But the psalmist was a wise man, made wise by the Word that he loved, and so he did not retaliate, nor even defend himself. He might have done this with no results except to waste his time, harass his own spirit, and drag others into controversy and side-taking, for some would probably have supported him and made a leader and hero of him. But he did not defend himself or bring counter charges against his ease-loving critics. No, he says, "but Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes." Wise man! He was the Lord's servant, and this fact he brings clearly out before his own soul, like Paul in a later day (1 Cor. 4.), or like brave Hugh Latimer, who, when called to speak before the great Henry, thus apostrophized himself: "Hugh Latimer, thou standest up to-day as the servant of the King of kings, therefore fear not the face of man." It is a great stay to the soul when one can look into the face of God and say, "I am Thy servant." But more he says, "Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes." What peace that meditation would give! How it would lift him above the irritation that this criticism would otherwise have caused within him! How it would help him to more truly adjust his ways not to the opinions of his self-appointed judges but according to God.  

EDITOR.
EVERYTHING about the Lord Jesus is precious to the heart that loves Him, but there are some statements in the Word of God with regard to Him which seem to strike you sometimes with great force and power; the opening verse of this chapter is one of them. We are easy-going. That I think everyone of us will admit. But what of our Lord’s labours on earth. “And it came to pass afterward, that He went ” not into, but “throughout every city and village preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.” That was not a day, dear friends, of express trains or even stage coaches; upon foot the blessed Lord fulfilled His ministry.

What record will there be for you and me at the end of any three and a half years you like to take of your history and my history? It is good to let our souls face a bit of truth like this. What was Jesus here for? He was here for God. What are you and I here for? That is the question. And how long are we to be here? Well, suppose only three and a half years. Now what would God’s Spirit write as to three and a half years of my history and yours? He could write of Jesus that there was not a city, a village in all that favoured but dark land of Israel that His blessed feet did not take Him into.

Oh, it gives you a blessed conception of the diligence of that lowly blessed Man of Sorrows. And what was He doing? “Preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.” That is just the position God has put us in. Some are called to preach, and may God give zeal and power to all such and stir them up mightily to pursue their service with diligence, but the man who thinks only of preaching is a very poor one. Are we shewing the glad tidings? The great want to-day is men and women who from the first of January to the thirty-first of December perhaps never preach at all, but who show the glad tidings. It is a remarkable expression. There is no doubt in His own person, in His very looks, in His ways and His words, in His manners the Lord Jesus communicated to those round about what God was. The glad tidings of God’s grace poured in blessed words from His lips, but His every act and way proclaimed the same grace. It might well stir up all our hearts. I never read it without feeling utterly rebuked.

And observe further. “And the twelve were with Him.” But they were apostles! Yes, but Mark 3. tells us, “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with Him” (ver. 14). That was the point. The most blessed part of their call was this, “that they should be with Him.” And the preaching will be poor and powerless stuff apart from that. And that is exactly what His grace has called us for now. You say, “I am not an apostle.” No, the greater number listening to my words here are women. And that brings me to the next statement. Have not women their place to fill? Certainly. Some of the women of Galilee have a very good testimony in Scripture. This is what is said of them: “And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance” (vers. 2, 3).

There were those who were not of the twelve whom the Lord had specially ordained to go with Him, whom His grace had met, and without being told, without being commanded, they were with Him. And the Spirit of God is very careful, not only to tell us that
they were with Him, but likewise the names of some of them. Now I think there is a very great encouragement for the sisters in this. The Lord is not here to-day. Yet you may keep His company, for He comes and reveals Himself to those who love Him and keep His word (John 14). Mary Magdelene, out of whom He had cast seven devils gets a prominent place amongst those who kept the company of Jesus. (ver. 9). The more we have felt the power of sin and Satan, the more we appreciate what the deliverance of Christ is, and the more true and real will be the devotedness of heart to Him. And the less the sense of sin and conviction before God and the less the sense of the state in which we were by nature, the less the heart clings to Christ. If a person passes through shallow exercise it is a great pity. Here you have a woman who was delivered from the sevenfold power of Satan, and her heart was entranced with Jesus, her Deliverer. She was probably a titled lady, but she was under the power of Satan, like every other woman, till Christ delivers her. And then, thoroughly delivered, she followed the Lord. Here is the first announcement we get about her, that she could leave home and follow from city to city this blessed Man. And she was of those who ministered unto Him of their substance. Very likely she had more than others. But here they were, they had each got a little bit of something that they could minister to the blessed Lord. They have a very noble place those women. And the question is whether God can write about you Christian women of to-day what He writes about those women? Are you as thoroughly devoted to Christ as they were?

Later in the Gospels the women were at the cross. There was only one man there that I know of. John was there, and Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses were there. They were at the sepulchre at His burying, and on the morning of resurrection the women were the first to be there. Ah sisters, Christ cares far more for affection than preaching. Preaching is a very small thing. An unconverted man can preach. A man out of communion with Christ can preach. A man with a lot of head knowledge can preach. But it is only the heart that loves Jesus that will cleave to Him and follow Him for His own sake, will cleave to Him and follow Him when He is despised and rejected of men.

These were what I may call His bodyguard. It is a wonderful thing to be in the bodyguard. And mark, the sisters were well to the front of the Lord's bodyguard that day. Are you well to the front, sister? You say, "Who do you mean? I do not want to be in the front." Well, you will very soon be very much in the rear, if you understand me. Because the person who does not want to be in the front in attachment and devotion to Christ will be very soon pushed back to the rear by the devil. God keep you from that, because there is nothing more miserable under the sun than a poor backslider. And not only will you be miserable but the Lord will miss your company.

The one thing He loves is this, to have us with Him. "He chose the twelve that they might be with Him." But the women said, "We will go with Him too." And the Spirit of God puts it to their record that they ministered to Him. "Well," you say, "apply it." Apply it to yourself. Is your heart set on it? Do you seek that nearness to Christ that must result in ministering to Him? We may do it in principle. We may have our hearts set with purpose to cleave to the Lord, and to be here for Him, here for His will, here to do His pleasure. We have the privilege of living on the earth for the Son of God, Who gave up all for us, and we have the privilege of pleasing Him. It will cost us something—but who can tell the compensation?

An Address by the late W. T. P. WOLSTON.
Seven Great Blessings.

"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10.9-11, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28).

There are seven distinct blessings spoken of in these few verses, which contrast very wonderfully with Judaism. The Lord calls His sheep out, and then He says, "I am the door." You say a door must be a door out of somewhere into somewhere. He is the door out of Judaism in one sense, but there is something more than getting out of a place in connection with this expression. It is what He is in Himself. He is the way into every blessing that God has got for man. God's great desire for man was life. We have that brought out in the tree of life. When you have divine life, the life that brings you into association with God, you have the highest blessedness the creature can have. To know the Creator you must have the life that is able to take cognisance of Him, and that is divine life.

(1) Salvation.

"I am the door: by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." That is the first thing—salvation. Was there any salvation in Judaism? That was a system of probation. Every single person that was tested failed, and every failure under the law must be fatal. "The soul that sinneth it shall DIE." The meaning of probation is that you are under trial, whereas the meaning of salvation is that you have got a Saviour. This salvation carries with it the settlement of God's wrath against sin, and our deliverance from it. When Christ came as the door God appeared not as Judge but as Saviour. And it also carries with it the thought of deliverance from all those untoward influences that surround us all through our life down here. There are temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil, and all the fearful power of the enemy arrayed against us. We want salvation from these things, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who can give it. Finally we need salvation in connection with our bodies, and the Lord Jesus Christ will not be content until He gives us that salvation. Our salvation is not complete until the word "redemption" is spelled out in full, and redemption is not spelt out in full until Christ comes to take us to be for ever with Himself. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13.11). Our salvation draws nigh, because the Redeemer is drawing nigh. The Lord is coming.

(2) Liberty.

"He shall go in and out, and find pasture." In Judaism there was no going in and out. It was in, and never out. It was bondage, and the more sincere a person was the more they would find that bondage. Take the Apostle Paul. Was there ever a person more zealous of keeping the law. As "touching the righteousness of the law, blameless" (Phil. 3. 6). But the law said, "Thou shalt not covet," and he adds, "Sin revived, and I died"
The one who sought most zealously to find out the way of life, found it to be the way of death. There was no going in and out in Judaism, but there is a going in and out in Christianity. It is simply an expression which means there is true liberty in Christianity. There is glorious liberty in the Spirit. When the flesh begins to assert itself, we do not find much liberty, but when that which is of God is operative in us, then it is all liberty. There will be nothing but liberty in heaven, and there is nothing but liberty down here for those who are satisfied with Christ.

(3) Sustenance.

Now the next thing is, "And shall find pasture." There was no food under the law for sinners, only the curse and death. I do not mean to say that God did not feed His people in Old Testament times, but in the law proper there was no nourishment except for those who kept it, and none did that save the One, holy Son of God. The Lord says of His sheep, "He shall go in, and out, and find pasture." How sweet it is when the saints are desirous of feeding upon Christ. How sweet it is when they take the opportunity to privately study the word, not as an intellectual exercise, but as food for their souls. I am sure we have all been conscious of this many times, when God has really spoken to us in power by His Spirit. What rich feasts we have had for our souls! The food we have is Christ.

(4) Life.

The next thing is in verse 10: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He is not merely content to give us life, but He wants to give us fullness of life. John never considers any life but divine life. For instance, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (John 3, 36). It is only Christ that can give life. Does it not touch your heart when you read, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep'? In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him' (1 John 4, 9). Life is the sovereign gift of God; but it must come through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(5) Intimacy.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father' (N.T.). The Lord Jesus Christ, in order to give us an idea of the intimacy which will exist between Himself, the Good Shepherd, and the sheep, has to tell us of the intimacy which exists between the Father and the Son. This is far better than visiting terms: these are at home terms. What is the intimacy between the Father and the Son? Can I explain it? I do not need to explain it. Each one of you by the Spirit know that it is the closest, deepest, and most wonderful communion, without a cloud, without anything to mar or hinder. That is the pattern of the intimacy between the Good Shepherd and His sheep. What a contrast to Judaism, where there was distance. How much do we know of this intimacy? Think of what a wonderful place we are brought into.

(6) Unity.

Now the next blessing is unity. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." That is where we come in. We Gentiles
never belonged to the fold. What does the Lord say? “There shall be one flock, and one Shepherd” (N.T.). The Lord Jesus Christ prays in the seventeenth of John that they all might be one. Surely this is the triumph of Christianity—although man has obscured it greatly—that the Jew is lifted up so high into the privileges of Christianity, and the poor Gentile, afar off, lifted into the same privileges, both finding themselves one in Christ.

Nothing but grace could have made the bigoted Jew sit down with the despised Gentile, and nothing would have encouraged the Gentile to sit down with the Jew but the grace which made them one in Christ. “There shall be one flock and one Shepherd.” The Lord ring that word into our hearts. We may well sorrow that all Christians are not expressing that oneness.

(7) Eternal Life.

“My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” Earlier in the same chapter He says that they may have life more abundantly; now He speaks of eternal life. Eternal life means more than is seen on the surface. The Lord in other parts explains what it is. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17. 3). Eternal life involves the relationship of children, for it means that we know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the sent One. Supposing there is a man with six children. Thousands of other children might know that man, but they do not know him as father, only six children, his own, know him as father. So eternal life carries the knowledge of God as Father, and for that we must be children. The word “know” means conscious knowledge. Of course “life” and “eternal life” are not two different things in their essence, but we have sought to present things simply in the way the chapter does.

Thus we have salvation, liberty, food, life, intimacy, unity and eternal life all coming out in this chapter in a wonderful way, and this was all said at Jerusalem. It is not for nothing that the information is given to us where it is. It was at Jerusalem, the central place of Judaism. If there was anything grand and glorious in Judaism, it would be found in the temple at Jerusalem. It was at the feast of dedication, which carries us back to the palmy days when Solomon inaugurated that temple in all its splendour, and when the glory filled the house so that the priests could not stand by reason of that glory. But it adds here, “And it was winter.” This was true of Judaism, although the Lord Jesus Christ was there at that moment, there was nothing but deadness and barrenness. The whole temple system was entirely out of sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the glorious person that He was! No wonder that He takes this step of calling His sheep by name, and leading them out, out of deadness and barrenness, to Himself, the centre of life and light, of glory and blessing.

Now, dear friends, I would ask you, Are you gathered to a system, or are you gathered to a Person? Is Christ and His name sufficient for you? Is His person sufficient for you? Believe me, you understand nothing in Scripture except as you understand Him. It is a wonderful thing to be brought into touch with that Person, the glorious Person of Him who is God and Man. The Lord Jesus Christ is everything for God, and He will be everything for me. World without end, praise His name.

A. J. Pollock.
Modern Blasphemies.

ONE of the most subtle of modern blasphemies is that which declares that our soldiers in France are dying for us just as truly as ever Christ did, and that their death is of the same character as His. It is subtle because, in pretending to exalt a soldier’s death it deceives him, as well as many of those who love and honour him; it is blasphemous because it degrades the death of Christ and robs Him of His glory and His death of its value. These surely are the aims of the devil who is behind it, and who is even more determined on destroying the souls of the soldiers and overthrowing the throne of God than the Hun is on destroying their bodies and breaking the power of the British Empire. This blasphemy is being preached from the pulpits, pressed in the Sunday Schools, published in religious weeklies, woven into fictitious stories, and told to the soldiers by many a Christless chaplain. It is more popular than that other blasphemy, that death on the battlefield will save a man, for if it is true the Bible teaching as to sin and its judgment, the devil and his thraldom, of God and His holiness is nothing more than exploded and out-of-date theology, and Christ is no more than a man like ourselves, whose death was heroic and beneficial to the race as showing the glory of self-sacrifice, but nothing more.

We have the keenest of all reasons for thinking tenderly of the soldiers who are dying in France, and no slight shall ever be cast upon them by any word of ours. We would give them all the honour that is their due, but we do protest with all our powers against the slight that is being cast upon our Lord Jesus Christ by this doctrine, mostly by those who profess to have the honour of His name in their keeping.

The soldiers are dying to right great wrongs, to preserve these lands from invasion and our homes from desolation, and to roll back hordes of frightfulness, to whom nothing is sacred, and who know no pity. But all these with which they do battle are physical and temporal evils—foes that threaten us with physical and temporal harm—they have nothing at all to say to our soul’s eternal welfare or our relationship with God. The death of Christ has to do with these eternal issues and so stands upon a different plane, there is no comparison between the two.

There entered into the death of Christ the questions of sin and its judgment, our never-dying souls and their eternal salvation, the thraldom souls over men and his overthrow, the eternal justice of God and the vindication of His character, as well as the declaration of His love. And it is because men have lost the sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the priceless value of souls, of the holiness and justice of God and the absolute necessity of the cross of Christ if sinners were to be rightly saved, and if God was to be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, that they dare to belittle the death of Christ in this manner.

We believe that the sentimentalism that has invaded modern Christianity and which makes everything of our Lord’s sufferings at the hands of men, which the human mind can in some measure and from one point of view appreciate, and little or nothing of what He suffered as the Sin-bearer at the hand of God, which can only be known by faith, as it is revealed to us in the Word, has opened the door wide for such blasphemies as these to enter. We would not underestimate what He suffered at the hands of men, who were lashed into a fury of hatred against Him by the devil. Our hearts are moved as we see Him meet them without any weapons of defence girded upon His sacred Person, for He was led as a lamb to the slaughter—"His hands and feet were nailed to the Cross." They treated Him brutally and shame-
fully, and He did not resist them. He “despised the shame,” and answered their envenomed malice by prayers for their forgiveness. But if that were all, His name might have lived in history, but it would never have been set above every name in heaven and on earth, nor could He have been the object of the adoration of a countless multitude of ransomed souls, who shall acclaim Him as the Lamb who was slain and whose blood has redeemed them to God.

Men did all they could, and, when tired in their brutality, but not of it, they sat down to watch Him there. Then we read: “From the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole land unto the ninth hour, and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

Why did the sun withdraw his shining at that noonday hour? What was the meaning of that strange and never-to-be-forgotten cry? It was not the pain of His body that caused it, or the cowardice of His friends, or the cruelty of His foes. He looked not inward or outward, but upward, and that most poignant cry that ever broke from suffering lips was addressed to God: for there in that solemn hour He was forsaken of God. We dare not seek an answer to the questions except from the Holy Scriptures, and there we read: “God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5. 21). “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities” (Is. 53.)

If these scriptures mean anything at all, they mean that God could not yield to an impulse of mercy, and, ignoring our sins, save us at the sacrifice of His holiness and justice. A salvation of that kind would have been no salvation at all, it would not have silenced the devil who slanders God and accuses us, and it would have put God in the position of a Being whom we could neither trust nor reverence. They reveal to us what we could not have known apart from them, that at the cross our sins in all their hatefulness in God’s sight were laid upon the Lamb of God, and that there by enduring to the utmost the judgment that they called for He vindicated God’s throne that blessing might come to us according to eternal righteousness.

In that solemn hour the ancient word was brought to pass: “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the Shepherd” (Zech. 13. 7). And the sun became as sackcloth, and all created light was wrapt in gloom that no creature eye might look upon the sorrows of the smitten One, for no creature mind could understand what those sorrows were.

“Earth shuddered as He died, God’s well-beloved Son, The darkness sought His woes to hide, Till all was done.”

It was out of that darkness that the cry arose, and no tongue of angels or men can tell the full import of it, for no creature heart can grasp the vastness of the pain that gave it birth. God, who dwells in unapproachable light, in the everlasting majesty of His being was there, and sin in its irreconcilable rebellion against His supremacy was there, and by His suffering and death Jesus made propitiation to God for sin, glorifying His name, and vindicating His righteousness by an infinite propitiation.

It was the ability of Jesus to estimate to the full what sin and God’s judgment against it were, which He could not have done had He not been the Fellow, or Equal, of the Lord of hosts, and His ability to stand in the place of those who had sinned and bear their judgment, which He could not have done had He not been the sinless Man, that gives His death its value. His deity and His manhood both were there, and His death must ever stand alone, none other ever
was nor could be like it. Death had no claim upon Him, and yet He died who only had the right to live. It was a sacrifice for sins.

How great then is the blasphemy that would put even the most heroic death of any other man alongside His and proclaim them to be the same in character! And what shall we say of the more than criminal levity and blindness of an army chaplain, who in a Good Friday sermon to soldiers over seas, could dismiss the cry of the Lord upon the cross with this explanation: "Often in our moments of extremity, and when about to die we remember verses of hymns of our youth, and no doubt Jesus when young had learnt Psalm 22. and in His extremity he remembered and repeated it!"

Those who love the truth and preach it should take the utmost care that they do not weaken it by the use of illustrations. If it is necessary to use them, and they often help, we must see that the truth and not the illustration is prominent, and especially so when we speak of this most sacred of all subjects, for the devil is full of subtlety and will turn our best intentions to his purpose if we are not watchful. Our safety lies in only touching these great themes in the fear of God and in dependence upon Him, and in reverence for and submission to the Scriptures.

"The Faith of Jesus."

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14. 13).

"The faith of Jesus." Words of hope and comfort,
For saints in ages past, or time to come:
Or present days of sorrow, gloom and sadness,
When tears must fall, and hearts with grief be dumb.

"The faith of Jesus." In the shell-swept trenches,
Among the dying on the battlefield:
Upon the waters dark, 'mid hidden dangers,
The faith of Jesus shall its comforts yield.

"The faith of Jesus." From His Name we borrow,
New strength for days of suffering yet to be:
And hope begotten out of very sorrow
Looks for that day when Jesus we shall see.

"The faith of Jesus." Ever since we knew Him,
In days far off, has been our anchor sure:
"Nor death, nor life, nor any other creature,"
Can sever from His love, so strong, so pure.

"The faith of Jesus." Be the servant's watchword,
Far off from home, and friends, and kindred dear:
Sowing, in distant lands, the seed most precious,
His Name their stronghold, and His love their cheer.

"The faith of Jesus." When faith is declining,
And love grows cold, and truth burns dim and low:
Still would we trust, amid the deep'ning shadows,
Still would we follow, His blest will to know.

ANON.
Our Lord's Second Advent.

Possibly never since the beginning of the second century of the Christian area has the coming of our Lord had such attention given to it by the vast majority of true believers than at this present moment. It is not in the power of the creature to sound the depth of that interest, nor the effect produced in the souls of those who seem to engage themselves with it—one would trust that the influence of it upon the practical lives of all is great indeed, and conducive to rigid separation from this world that rejected, and still rejects, Him for whom we wait—but thanks can be gladly given to God for bringing the bright hope once more so definitely before our hearts.

From the moment in which man, on account of sin, was expelled from Paradise, faith was looking forward for the Deliverer who was to bruise the head of the fell destroyer of the human race; and of His coming and intervention on our behalf all the prophets gave clear and unmistakable testimony. The bruising of the serpent’s head by the Saviour, and the bruising of the Saviour’s heel by the serpent, are the burden of the prophetic word, from the fall of Adam until the coming into the world of the long-expected Redeemer.

But that man was under the complete power of the devil, dominated by sin, guilty of innumerable offences, obnoxious to the judgment of a holy and righteous God, and therefore could only be redeemed by a suffering Saviour, seems to have had little or no place in the minds of His saints, though, as I have said, the burden of prophetic testimony. And even when He had come to earth, and when He had set before His disciples in the plainest words His suffering and death, they were utterly unable to take it in, nor until He was risen from the dead, and had opened to them the Scriptures, were they able to reconcile what they had seen Him in His humiliation subjected to with the words of power they had heard from His lips, and the mighty works they had seen Him perform; but when He had opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, they saw that from Genesis to Malachi the prophets were all occupied with His sufferings and the glory that should follow. Therefore they rejoiced that they were permitted of God to have part in His sufferings, in order that they might be made sharers of His glory.

Presented to man’s responsibility He was despised and rejected; and this rejection, right up till the hour of His coming again, and what will take place then, we have set before us in a few words from verses 12 to 27 of Luke 19. Rejected by the men of this world He leaves His servants to occupy till He come, and when He comes He deals with them, and destroys His enemies who would not have Him to reign over them.

In the gospel men are warned that this Jesus whom the world rejected is coming back again, and that by Him God will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17. 31), and that He shall reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15. 25), and that His ransomed people will in that day sit upon His throne, reign along with Him, and share His glory (Rev. 3. 21; 2 Tim. 2. 12; John 17. 22). This is made known to us in the gospel, and for this we look and wait.

And for this the Thessalonians were waiting. Paul had been among them preaching the gospel, and some of the Jews had believed, “and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, not a few” (Acts 17. 14). After he had left them and gone to Athens he wrote them an epistle, in which he says he has no need to say anything concerning the effect pro-
duced upon them by what he had made known to them, for the heathen all about them knew that they had "turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come" (R.V.). This is the effect of the gospel upon all who hear and believe it, when it is preached in the way in which it has been revealed to us.

We have a good deal in the Word about the wrath to come, and perhaps we have not all grasped the import of these terrible words, the hour in which the wrath shall begin to burn, and the consequences resulting from the execution of it for all who are the subjects of it. Throughout the whole history of the fallen race of Adam the wrath of God has broken forth upon individuals who, by the way in which they have provoked God, have rendered themselves obnoxious to it. Of the fearful nature and execution of this wrath we have many examples in Scripture.

But there is a day of wrath that is still future, and which shall come upon all the earth. This will take place in the last days of this present age. We read in Isaiah 13.:

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fiercer anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine, and I shall punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." Then the Lord shall ask, and God shall give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2.).

Of this day the gospel warns all who come under the sound of it. The prophets of the Old Testament kept it prominently before Israel, for that nation must be the first to feel the fearful effects of the fury of the Lord. It is "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30. 7), and also the time in which the dwellers on the earth (apostate Christendom) shall be tried, and found more ready to believe the lie of the devil than the truth of God (2 Thess. 2.; Rev. 3. 10; 13. 8).

This is the judgment of the living, beginning with the opening of the seals (Rev. 6.), and culminating in the revelation of the Lord Jesus, who will come with the angels of His might in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1.; Rev. 19.; Matt. 25.). As far as Israel is concerned, this shall be "as the waters of Noah unto me," saith the Lord, "for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. 54.). But the nations shall once again, because of their rebellion, feel the brunt of His anger; for even a thousand years under the beneficent reign of the Son of God will not have changed the human heart, nor disposed it in the least toward cordial relations with God (Rev. 20. 7-9).

From this wrath the Thessalonians had found a deliverer in Jesus. The One in the power of whose blood they had found justification would deliver them from wrath (Rom. 5. 9). How He would effect this deliverance they knew not as yet. They were waiting for His return, when He would take to Himself His great power, and by judgment establish the kingdom that was His
own by right, but which men refused to acknowledge when He came into the world in grace.

For the advent of this Saviour they were waiting, and they were ready to give Him a welcome from hearts overflowing with thanksgiving for all that by His death He had accomplished on their behalf. They were not looking for death, in contemplation of the blessedness of departing and being with Him as absent from the body. It does not seem as if they had expected any of their number to die before they would see Him, and therefore their distress when death invaded their holy circle, and took away one and another of their loved ones. They were not prepared for this. They knew not what to think. Would such be debarred from the blessings of the kingdom? They would not be here to welcome the Lord. They wanted light, and this they got in abundance.

Our God is the God of encouragement, and He would not have His people cast down through ignorance of the way that He takes in the effectuation of the counsels of His love. He says: \"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope\" (1 Thess. 4). He would have His saints in the full light of His purposes of grace, and adds: \"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.\"

The question has been raised as to whether this verse refers to the bringing of the saints from their graves, in the same way in which Jesus was brought out of death, or whether it refers to their coming with Jesus, when He comes in glory to establish His kingdom on earth. I certainly think that if it referred to the resurrection from the dead it would have very definitely said so. All through the epistle the coming of Jesus is presented as His coming to this earth—His appearing when every eye shall see Him—except verses 16, 17, which are brought in parenthetically to show how those that have fallen asleep come to be with Him, so as to be able to appear with Him to the world when He comes in glory. For His coming the saints were waiting, and now they are informed that when Jesus comes those who have fallen asleep through Him shall come with Him.

When the Lord appears to this world at His coming again He does not come unattended. His saints come with Him: \"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory\" (Col. 3. 4). Jude says, \"Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints.\" And in Revelation 19, \"And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.\" And in verse 8 of the same chapter we are informed that the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints. I think, therefore, if we take all this into consideration, that there can be no question that the saints must by some means come to be with Christ before He appears.

But however reasonable it be to think this, we are not, thank God, left to what we may gather by putting certain very definite scriptures together. The Word is very clear on the subject; and in unmistakable language the beloved apostle gives us to understand how it comes about that we can appear with Jesus when He appears to the world. \"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede) them that are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.\"

This is what has been sometimes called the secret coming, because the
world will be utterly unaware of what is taking place. Indeed this is no concern of the people of the world, for except that the Spirit of God will leave the earth along with the church, which is His habitation, it will not in the least affect them. It is a heavenly thing we are speaking of, when we speak of the true church of God, and therefore the removal of it from one part of the creation of God unto another part cannot in itself concern the men of this world. But if the Spirit leaves the earth along with the church, as I have no doubt He will, and if Satan must be cast out of heaven when the church goes up, as he certainly must (Rev. 12.), the things contingent upon the rapture of the church will be serious for dwellers upon the earth. It will then be woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil will have come down to them having great wrath, knowing that his time of liberty is but short. Then upon the nations of the earth will fall the terrific judgments of the Lord, of which I have already spoken.

But before these judgments begin we shall have left this scene, for “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (I Thess. 5. 9, 10). While the seals are being opened, the trumpets blown, and the vials poured out, we are with our Saviour in the heavens, as His word informs us. Before the flood was poured out upon the world of the ungodly Enoch was translated to heaven, while Noah was left on earth to go through the judgment, but found salvation in the ark; so the church shall be translated to heaven before the judgments shall begin to be poured out upon this world, while the Jew will be left to go through it, though the godly remnant will find salvation in Christ.

The believer in the present dispensation does not come into judgment; neither that of the living, nor of the dead (John 5. 24). It is not merely that the judgment does not overwhelm him, he does not come into it. As the Lord says to the church of the Philadelphians: “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” (Rev. 3. 10). They are not saved merely from the judgment, so that they are not destroyed by it, they are not on earth when the judgment comes, they are kept from the “hour” of its execution.

And this is the way in which we are saved from wrath through our Saviour. We have been justified by His blood, and we shall be saved from wrath through Him, for to wrath we have not been appointed. The Jew has to go through it, but the godly will find deliverance from all their tribulations when He whom the nation rejected shall arise as the sun of righteousness with healing in His wings (Mal. 4. 2). He will take us out of the world before His judgments are let loose upon it. Then when He appears we shall appear with Him in glory.

This is our hope and expectation. We shall see Him as He is (1 John 3. 2). He will come and receive us to Himself, and we shall have some little time with Him in the Father’s house, before He comes with the angels of His might in flaming fire taking vengeance, and when we shall appear with Him in glory, and in His image and likeness.

And the time draws near. We can see the day approaching. The day that will be ushered in with the sun of righteousness. But before the day dawns we must be gathered up from tomb and waste to Himself. Hence if there are signs of the day, we may well expect to be brought at any moment under the powerful influence of the Morning Star, which shall with its magnetic influence counteract every earthly attraction, and lift us into the presence of Him, whose infinite love shall be the subject of our everlasting praise.

J. Boyd.
A Song of the Son of Man.

SONG of my praise, O Son of Man,
Our minstrel strains shall swell
With ringing notes to tell Thy ways,
For Thou dost all things well:
For Thou dost all things well, we sing
With flowing melody,
And voice Thy praise in joyful lays—
Redeemed by grace are we!

LIGHT of my life, O Son of Man,
Upon the steep incline
Of Hope's rough track and Faith's strait way
Thy grace and glory shine:
Thy grace and glory shine, we sing
As up the path we speed;
To where Thou art—to have our part—
The "light of life" doth lead.

JOY of my soul, O Son of Man,
Thou cam'st to seek and save;
Scourged, slain, yet Thou didst rise again,
In triumph o'er the grave;
In triumph o'er the grave, we sing
And laud Thy victory;
Exalted now, each knee must bow
Before Thy majesty.

HOPE of my heart, O Son of Man,
The Kingdom shall be given
To thee, the King and Lord of all;—
Come, rule o'er earth and heaven!
Come, rule o'er earth and heaven, we sing—
God's angels wait on Thee!
With peace and truth and joy shine forth,
Let all Thy glory see!

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.”

(1 Peter 5. 7).

"Be not crushed under the grinding wheels of care, but cast all your care upon Me, and find in My care for you a safe and joyous home retreat."

But let us have a definite idea of the command. It is not that we are to cast upon God the thing about which we have care, but simply the care. The work of our livelihood we are not to throw upon Him; that we must ourselves do with His blessing; but, while we are diligently working, any anxiety about it we should cast upon Him. And so as regards our trials and bereavements. This is an important distinction, and of great practical worth. It educates us for the whole business of life.

And the command applies to all our cares. None too great, none too small. What a cordon of protection and comfort God would build around the whole area of each one's personality!
The command is that we cast our anxieties upon Him. It is something for us to do. If we ourselves do it not, then we remain care-crushed. It is our responsibility. It is a question of obedience or disobedience. If we obey, and actively lift these anxieties from our minds, and lay them upon Him, then are we without care—care-less. A man without care—how magnificent the conception! “Careless” commonly means unthoughtful, untidy, negligent—a slipshod spirit. But here is a heavenly carelessness. A man without care—he is a heavenly man. And this, be it observed, is what we every one may become. It is our responsibility. Cast your care upon Him. It is ours—O wonderful prerogative!—to constitute God Himself our own Care-bearer.

Meanwhile you are actively going forward with all the work you have in hand; energetic, cheery, thankful, joyous, knowing that God loves you, that He is busy about you, that He doeth all things well.

Such, on the whole, is the casting of one’s care upon God. In this checkered life of ours what other recourse have we? Can we take up arms against a sea of troubles? We are but pigmies. The Scriptures.

If Scripture which reveals Christ is untrustworthy, how can I know that the Christ it reveals is trustworthy?

“Every Scripture is God-breathed.” If a person breathes a word into my ear, that word must be the word of the one who breathes it! Thus every Scripture is God’s word, because “every Scripture is God-breathed.”

“Scripture should not be simply a check upon our thoughts, but the source of them.”

What are we here for?

“BERNARD, what are you here for?” was the motto suspended by the old medieval saint over his study table.

Might we not challenge ourselves oftentimes with the same question? What are we here for? To make money?—To enjoy ourselves?—To become famous?—To do our own will?

Nay, the answer is given us in 2 Corinthians 5.15 and Romans 12.1–3. We are here to do the will of God! “Even Christ pleased not Himself.”
The Two Books.

The Book of Grace.

THAT the Revelation is largely a book of symbols will be understood by all our readers. Some of these symbols are difficult to interpret, others are exceedingly plain. Christ is the great centre of Revelation 5., and the chapter is easy to understand.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDA, THE ROOT OF DAVID takes the Book. It is plain that whatever the results of the opening of this seven-sealed scroll may be they have Israel specially in view, for the titles of the Lord here given are distinctly Jewish titles. His labours of Love for His Assembly are completed (Eph. 5. 25-32). He has presented her to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and He turns His attention now to earth and to those judgments that shall prepare the way for His kingdom in it, but He does so as the One who is to bear David's sceptre, and the one who made a sure covenant with David.

We gain little from our study of the Word if we do not gain some fuller knowledge of Himself, consequently we will consider Him. In other days and in other circumstances He opened a book. We read the story in the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel: He stood up, the meek and lowly Jesus, in the synagogue of Nazareth in which He had often sat as a boy, and the book of the Prophet Esaias was given to Him. He turned to the 61st chapter of Isaiah and read those beautiful words concerning Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to open the eyes of the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He ceased to read in the middle of a sentence and put a full stop where in our Old Testament we have only a comma, and He closed the book. Why did He do that? The completion of the sentence is this “And the day of vengeance of our God.” He was then and there to open the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of grace, the year of blessing, and to postpone the day of vengeance until that year had run its course. That year has extended until now. In order to open and tell the tale of grace He had to be the man of sorrows in His life and the sacrifice for sin in His death. He was both, blessed by His name, and the grace of God is now in full revelation. But the Jews did not want the grace of God nor Him who brought it to them. It is true they marvelled at His words. They sounded in their ears like sweetest music, but when He showed them how that grace worked, that it reached out to the poor hopeless Gentile, and passed the smug, self-satisfied, self-righteous religionist by, they were filled with rage and took Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built to cast Him down headlong. They rejected Him and the grace of God, and that is why they wander strangers upon the earth to-day, and they will never know peace and rest until they receive it on the ground of the grace that He whom they rejected brought into the world. When He takes the book of the Revelation the year of grace will have run to its close and the first hour of the day of vengeance will have struck.

Notice the character of our God. If it is a question of grace it is the year; if it is a question of judgment it is the day; if it is a question of grace our God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3. 9); if it is a question of judgment He says “A short work will the Lord make in the earth” (Rom. 9. 28).

The day of vengeance has the final
blessing of Israel in view. This is plain from Isaiah 61.2, for following the words "the day of vengeance of our God" we read "to comfort those that mourn." Who will the mourners be when that day of vengeance comes? They will be the godly remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem and the land of Canaan, as the following verses show:

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations" (Is. 61.3).

The Book of Judgment.

Think of the majesty of the One who takes the book from the hand of God. He is the Lion of the tribe of Juda. Juda is the royal tribe, the lion symbolizes strength and royalty. All royalty belongs to Christ, as the Son of David according to the flesh. He will be invested with all that royalty means in God’s thoughts, and men will see in Him what a true King is. He presented Himself once for their acceptance when He entered Jerusalem "meek and riding on an ass." And the world rejected Him—Jew and Gentile alike—but when He appears as the Lion of the tribe of Juda He will break the nations in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

But He is also the Root of David, the One from whom every promise made to David proceeded and the One in whom is the life and force to fulfil the promises He has made. He is the One who made "an everlasting covenant with David, ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. 23.5). He is the One of whom David said "Thou are great, O Lord God, for there is none like Thee . . . and now, O Lord God, the word thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning His house establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said, and let Thy name be magnified for ever" (2 Sam. 7).

John looked to see the Lion of whom the elder spoke, but instead it was the Lamb that was slain that appeared in the midst of the throne. John knew Him well. It was he who heard the Baptist say, "Behold the Lamb of God," and followed Him; He had leaned on His breast at the last Supper, and had stood beside His cross when He was slain for our sins. He sees Him now exalted from the degradation of the cross and the darkness of the grave to the Throne; sees Him, no longer in the place of sacrifice, where He was bruised for our iniquities, but enthroned amidst the splendours of the glory of God. He sees Him there as the centre of heaven’s admiration and the object of its worship, for when He takes the book all heaven breaks forth into the rapture of the new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book." The One who bore the judgment of God in order to redeem men by His blood, is the only One who can judge the world in righteousness, and all judgment has been put into His hands, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father (John 5).

The Lamb that was slain is the Lion that shall reign. And John tells us more about Him; He has seven horns and seven eyes. Horns in Scripture symbolize power and eyes discrimination and wisdom. Seven is the number that stands for perfection. The Lamb will be perfect in His power and wisdom. He is this in the day of grace for the salvation of men, for "Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1.24). But He will also be the power and wisdom of God in the day of vengeance. He will slay the rebellious with the rod of His mouth with such power that no weapon lifted against Him shall prosper, but He will do it with such absolute righteousness and discrimination that not one stroke will fall where it ought not, and not one voice in the universe will be able to charge Him with folly or injustice.

J. T. MAWSON.
It may be more difficult to see in what way the Lord, as Son of Man, stands in relation to Israel, for it is as Son of David that the Messiah is related specially to this nation; nevertheless, they must yet be freed from bigotry and selfishness, and learn that He is the Son of Man with wider interests than Israel simply; also that their national breakdown necessitated His intervention as such, if ever they were to be put right with God. The plaintive singer of the beautiful eightieth Psalm understood this. “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,” he pleadingly begins. “Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved,” he continues. After describing the failure and ruin of the nation—the song rises in rich notes of hopefulness, because of another whom God can use to recover Israel for Himself; and, ringing out its music with joyful strains of triumph, it says, “Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the SON OF MAN whom Thou madest strong FOR THYSELF. So will not we go back from Thee.”

In full view of the failure of Israel, the sweet singer ascends in faith and confidence to God and the Son of Man, in whom he sees one able to bring Israel into salvation and into the shining of God’s countenance.

It seems as if the people are to be prepared for this, for Ezekiel and Daniel, who prophesied when they were in captivity in Babylon—away from Israel’s national home—are both addressed “Son of Man.” These are the only cases in Scripture, and it is indicative of the One, who, when rejected by Israel, takes this title as being rightly His. No one, except our Lord Jesus Christ, speaks of Himself by that name, and He only is the Son of Man. Jonah went unwillingly to Gentiles, and became a type, in the fish’s belly, of the Son of Man three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth.

Israel will learn by experience that there is no hope in man after the flesh. In this connection another had said, “Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man, a worm? and the Son of Man, a worm (Job 25. 5, 6)? Quite true; but another beheld “the moon and the stars” also, and he questioned about man and the Son of Man, but he was given to see Him according to God’s purpose set over all (Ps. 8.); not like Bildad the Shuhite—a helpless worm after the flesh! Still, that lesson will be taught to the descendants of Jacob; then it will be said, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob . . . I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument”; and they shall thresh the mountains, the great governments of the nations of the world (Isa. 41. 14, 15). This will come about through the Man—the Son of Man of Psalm 80., of which we have spoken; but He Himself must first come to Israel, and fully settle the question of their sins, and of their state before God; and He did this at the Cross of Calvary. So completely did He identify Himself with them, we hear Him cry, “I am a worm” (Ps. 22. 6). What grace on the part of Him who was altogether perfect! And now, raised from among the dead, He is exalted to God’s right hand. When He has builded His assembly, when it is complete, when it is glorified, He will take up Israel, and bring them into blessing with God, through the sacrifice which He made on the Cross. They will then say, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of
our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." They will know that the Son of Man, who was rejected by the elders of the nation, who was scorned, scourged and spitefully entreated, is their Saviour and Messiah.

It is true that Nathanael, an Israelite in whom there was no guile, recognized Him, and owned Him to be the King of Israel; but the Lord told him, he should see hereafter "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The administration for every circle of blessing must centre in Him. To the disciples He said, "When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

In Matthew 25. 31 we are told, when the Son of Man shall have come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit down upon His throne of glory, and all the nations shall be gathered before Him. In verse 40, the Son of Man—the King, speaks also of another company—"These my brethren." They are of Israel. So we have the Son of Man, Israel and all the nations in this chapter brought together; but the nations are judged by the King according to their treatment of His brethren of Israel. In the previous chapter, Matthew 24., Israel is specially in view; remarkable to say, the Son of Man's coming again is spoken of five times in the latter half of the chapter. He is to come in power and glory we are told; and the Son of Man specially cares for His elect at that time. It is striking that Israel here is called the Son of Man's elect in verses 30, 31. He sends His angels, and with the sound of a great trumpet, they "gather together His elect from the four winds from one extremity of the heavens to the other." It is to be remarked, that in Matthew, the gospel which shows Israel her King, the Son of Man is mentioned over thirty times. In Mark Christ is so named fourteen times; Luke, twenty-six; John, twelve.

Finally, in Daniel 7, where world-empire is before the mind of the Spirit; where four great beasts—representing the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, are seen by the prophet; where the Ancient of days—the everlasting God, comes and judges these empires; the Son of Man is seen coming with the clouds of heaven! He is brought near before the Ancient of days, and the dominion and glory is given to Him. All people—Israel too—as well as all the other nations and languages, serve Him! This kingdom does not crumble and pass away like that of Babylon and the others. Its permanence is secured in the perfection of the One who is King of kings and Lord of lords! Men shall indeed be blessed in Him, and His high praise shall sound abroad upon the earth in that glorious day!

"Kings shall fall down before Him, And gold and incense bring; All nations shall adore Him, His praise all people sing."

4. His Relation to Individuals.

This is a matter of the most intense interest to each one of us. If we are not right in this, the other relations of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of Man, cannot have their proper place in our hearts and minds. To be wrong here is to be wrong everywhere: to be right here makes it possible to be right everywhere. The matter is of acute, personal, present and eternal importance. In self-judgment and prayer before God, we need to find out for ourselves, if we are each one individually in right relation with the Son of Man. One verse will bring home to every honest heart the truth of what we say, "Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and drunk His blood, ye have no life in yourselves" (John 6. 53, N.T.). Solemn word, "NO LIFE!" Religion there may be; church membership there may be; so-called "good works"
there may be; but no life unless the death of the Son of Man has been appropriated. Here we must all begin.

It is entirely an individual matter, and each one must face it for himself. We have either accepted in faith the death of the Son of Man as the way of life or we have not. When He gave His flesh at Calvary, it was in view of the whole world; but we must appropriate individually, as He said, "That a man may eat thereof, and not die" (John 6. 50); and again, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life" (54). It is a question of receiving the truth into our hearts by faith. The truth is made known, and the true believer appropriates it. That is the eating and drinking which is spoken of. The Lord said towards the close of this wonderful discourse, which gives the foundation of our vital relations with God—"The spirit quickens, the flesh profits nothing: the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe" (N.T.). There it is! We believe or we do not believe! It is a matter of faith.

Those who believe will be raised at "THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE": those who do not believe will be called to "THE RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT" (John 5. 29). The first have done good, and therefore we are told in verse 24, they "shall not come into judgment," for they have already passed out of death into life. Their judgment was borne by the One whose death they have appropriated. The second, however, cannot escape judgment. The One they have refused, spurned, or neglected, has all judgment committed to Him because He is the Son of Man; since, therefore, they did not accept Him as their Saviour, they must meet Him as their Judge. Nor will there be any escape from the sentence which their sins call for. Revelation 20. 11-15 shows that all who stand to be judged in that dread day receive an eternal sentence. They did not take the way of life through the death of the Son of Man, now they pass down to exist eternally in a state that is called "the second death," because it is alienated entirely from the life of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man will have to say to each individual, either as a judge or as the giver of life. No wonder He said, to those who followed Him for present benefit in this life only,—"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you; for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6. 27); and when they enquired how they might "work the works of God," He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." This makes it all plain. Moreover, that the believer might be delivered and be brought into life consistently with the throne of God’s righteousness and holiness, we read, "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many." It was thus the righteous foundation was laid; and we can therefore see how consistently the true believer is exempted from judgment.

The fact is, He came seeking us, that we might be saved from eternal doom. The activity of grace was on His side, blessed be His name. Even if it were a question of the children, who had not arrived at the years of responsibility, who had not deliberately wandered away in the paths of evil; but who by reason of their birth were necessarily in a lost condition, we read, the Saviour said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones . . . for the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18. 10, 11). What grace shines in the Son of Man! What multitudes of these dear little ones shall praise Him for their salvation for ever and ever! And when years of responsibility have been reached, and the wanderer has gone far from God, when he needs not only
saving but seeking, even then His grace and compassion carry Him after the wayward one, for He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19. 10). Blessed Saviour, hast Thou not sought us we should have been lost for ever! We should never have known Thy great salvation! We should have been strangers to Thy rich grace and love eternally. We bless Thee for seeking us. We bless Thee for saving us.

It might be said, with a measure of truth, these Scriptures refer to the lost of Israel; but in their application they may be rightly carried further. Even the Gentile woman of Mark 7. 25 claimed the crumbs of blessing which came from Israel's table, and the Lord gladly approved her claim. So is it with forgiveness of sins. This is offered freely through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel to-day. It is for "all who believe"; yet, when on earth, He brought it specially to Israel. The Son of Man had power on earth to "forgive sins" (Matt. 9. 6). This was governmental: now eternal forgiveness is preached. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed exceedingly abundant. Who shall limit it? As Son of Man—His racial title—He cannot be confined to Israel; and as we have seen they must yet learn His wider interests. The very title involves man generally; and that which He came to secure—the rich blessings that are in His bountiful hands, are open to all. We need to know Him better, and we shall rejoice in Him more.

"Son of Man, His incarnation, Open'd first the tale of grace; Son of Man, in new creation, Leader of a chosen race! Well may glory Crown Him in the ordered place!"

H. J. VINE.

(To be continued.)

"As pants the Hart."

Psalm 42. 1.

An eastern caravan was overtaken once by failure of the water supply. The accustomed fountains were all dried, the oasis had become a desert. They halted an hour before sunset to find, after a day of scorching heat, that they were perishing for want of water. Vainly they explored the usual wells, for they were all dry.

Dismay was upon all faces and despair in all hearts, when one of the wise men approached the sheik and counselled him to unloose two beautiful harts that he was conveying home as a present to his bride, and let them scour the desert in search of water.

Their tongues were protruding with thirst, and their bosoms heaving with distress. But, as they were led out to the borders of the camp and then set free on the boundless plain, they lifted up their heads on high and sniffed the air with distended nostrils, and then, with unerring instinct, with course as straight as an arrow and speed as swift as the wind, they darted off across the desert.

Swift horsemen followed, and an hour or two later hastened back with the glad tidings that water had been found, and the camp moved with shouts of rejoicing to the happily discovered fountains.

Are we athirst for God? Is this world a desert place in which every well of water in which we hoped has run dry? God remains, and with Him is the fountain of living waters. He can, but He only can, satisfy the deep yearnings of a soul awakened by grace, and He calls to us:

"Drink abundantly beloved,"
Speaks His voice so sweet and still,
Of the life, and love, and glory,
Freely come and drink your fill."
LAZARUS was plainly dead, nay, had been dead four days. He had even now passed into a state of corruption. That was the problem that faced the Saviour after His hot walk from beyond Jordan. Can you not see Him with the attendant disciples, the attendant multitude? There stands the Saviour of the world, in all the majesty of His Person, "stands and stretches out His hands." He, the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His Person, stands waiting to be gracious, waiting to do the mighty deed for which He had come. Yes, HE was ready and waiting: and more, He was longing to work the miracle that would remove such sorrow and bring such joy; for with a sublime touch, the inspired Word tells how His heart had overflowed in love and sympathy to that lowly family when "Jesus wept."

So there you have the two chief personages of a scene that is typical of the life-giving work He came from heaven to do. BUT THERE WAS AN OBSTACLE that seemed insuperable! The dead man was there, needing, oh how greatly, a speedy miracle. The wonder-working Saviour was there, longing, oh how deeply, to work that miracle, but, "the grave was a cave, and a stone lay upon it." That stone intervened between the dead and the living, between the sinner, shall we say, and the Saviour. And, with reverence we say it, He would not remove it. That was not His work. He does not break open a door, a heart. He knocks, He pleads, He waits. He will not force His pardon and peace and power on those who reject Him. So now the stone is the one obstacle that hinders.

Then, with pointed emphasis, He cries, "TAKE YE AWAY THE STONE."

Of course at a word from Him it would have faded into thin air, or have fallen at His feet. But that word He did not speak. He gave this work to them, the taking away the stone. They must do it before He would intervene on behalf of the dead. "Take ye away the stone."

Truly to-day men are needy enough and as truly, God is mighty enough, but between the two, keeping many a soul in the darkness of death, hindering many a blessing, stands MANY A STONE.

Ah, friends, we cry to God to work, when it is for us to work first. We cry to Him to unleash His power, when it is for us first to do all in our power, by prayer and confession, to put away sin and indifference from our hearts and our assemblies; to lay aside the weights the church so often carries, that we so often carry; to abandon unholy alliances with the world, and live more like the pilgrims and strangers we are called of God to be; to show more signs of spiritual life in the midst of spiritual death. Here are some of the stones that stumble, that obstruct. Too often is there association in service with men who love not the Lord and His truth. And men wonder and grieve that the church has lost its power, that the gospel seems impotent. Yet after eighteen centuries the Saviour's power is undiminished, His lustre is undimmed, His love is undaunted. But He WAITS to work, as He waited then, and cries again, "Take YE away the stone."

(2) And now the stone is removed; the last real obstacle is gone. For death is no obstacle to the Prince of Life. And ahl how willing He is to work, how glad to at last be free to intervene, for He cries, "Father, I thank Thee."

"And when He had thus said He
cried with a loud voice, LAZARUS, COME FORTH.” Ah, wonderful Lord! Never man spake like Thee. Here in the presence of such love and power, we are hushed and dumb, we bow and worship. Thou art the Lord, that is Thy name, and Thy glory Thou canst not, wilt not give to another. For this is indeed Thy divine prerogative, having given Thine own life, now to give life to all the dead that come unto Thee. To whom else should men go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

How many times we have seen Him work just such a miracle in heathen lands, when the stones of stumbling have been removed. How often one’s heart has been hushed, one’s breathing still, as, one by one, cannibals and savages have bowed the knee and the heart, have kissed the Son, and in reverent simple faith have claimed His great deliverance from death. And as He did His mighty deed and gave life to the dead, He seemed to cry, “Lazarus, come forth.”

Yet how different a gospel is preached to-day in many pulpits reared in His name. “Man needs no new birth, no further life; already he is divine.” So men lay impious hands upon the ark of God, and seek in human impotence to counterfeit the work of Divine Omnipotence. Be not deceived. That day shall declare it, that great day when with infinite pain yet with infinite justice the world’s Saviour and Judge must pronounce the final solemn, “I never knew you,” to all who will not come unto Him that they might have life.

(3) So the stone having been removed, the Lord of glory has spoken the word of life. Haltingly, blindly, Lazarus comes forth, alive but not yet free. He cannot be left thus, as are so many converts. Again there is a call for human service. “LOOSE HIM,” He cried, “AND LET HIM GO.” For the man had life, but had not liberty, and truly typifies the spiritual standing of multitudes of the redeemed.

How much loosing is needful in the homelands to-day, amongst true believers. Even so it is among converts in the mission field, until heathen chiefs protest, “Your God is too ‘shy’. Why does He take away so much; all our dances and all our devils? Why do you make the way so hard?” And we have often told them how horses which are hard to catch are often let loose in the fields wearing a halter, from which a long rope trails, so that it is easy to walk up quietly behind, seize the rope and so secure the horse before he is aware of it. Even so the sins and habits and superstitions that so often cling, even to true believers, are just so many halters convenient to the adversary, of which He makes full use, and from which they MUST be freed. Oh, may there be many able ministers of the Word who shall seek in the Spirit’s power to loose His people from these habitual halters, so that in place of being led into captivity by the evil one, Christ may lead His people, always, in triumph, and so that in place of grave clothes He may give them garments of praise.

Note in this graphic narrative how large a share in the miracle Christ yields to the disciples. THEY are to roll away the stone. THEY are to loose the man and let him go. All that He can He gives them. Thus with kingly generosity, He, who might have done it all with a word, a gesture, who might have given the priceless boon of this service to adoring angels, loads favour upon favour upon the doubting disciples, as He promotes them partners in His blessed work. Ah, surely this is one of the triumphs of the gospel, that we are not only saved from sin, but saved unto service.

Think how, grave-eyed and tender He must have watched the disciples straining at the stone, must have approved them as they loosed his grave-clothes from off the man. Yet just so, from His Father’s right hand in glory He looks down tenderly to-day; just
so He watches with love the feeblest efforts in His service. And never was the call to that service so pressing, so urgent as to-day. All over the mission field where Christ has been set forth, the Saviour of the world, He has begun to draw men unto Him, so that there comes an increasing cry from the tombs of heathendom, from ungarnered multitudes of men who wait to be loosed from their sins, but who die waiting, for men are slow and late. Ye see, then, your calling, brethren; we are saved, not that we should watch others serve, not that we should leave it to others to "take the prey," but that each, the mightiest and the feeblest should humbly become partakers of His toil, His tears, His sufferings, that in the end we might be counted worthy to become partakers also of His glory.

"Come labour on! No time for rest till glows the western sky. While the long shadows on our pathway lie, And a glad sound comes with the setting sun, 'Servants well done!'"

"Come labour on! The toil is arduous, but reward is sure. Blessed are those who to the end endure; How full their joy, how deep their rest shall be, O Lord with Thee."

Northcote Deck, Solomon Islands.

Spikenard.

"While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof"

(Cant. 1. 12).

It may be of passing interest to us to know what spikenard was. It was made from a plant that grew on the Himalaya Mountains, a scrubby coarse insignificant-looking thing, covered with thorns or prickles but possessing an exclusive aroma. It was related to the Valerian plant that grows so freely in Devonshire, and is valued there as little more than a noxious weed. It derived its name "spike"-nard' from the spike with which it was covered, and "nard" means "pure." It gained its value from the long distance from which it was imported, and also on account of the amount of labour needed to extract the perfume, as each root only yielded the tiniest atom of it.

"Spikenard" in Scripture is quite different from "incense." "Incense" told what Christ was to God. It was the fragrance of all that His work and Person was to God. In other words the delight that God found in His beloved Son. Through grace we are allowed to offer that as a sweet savour to God. And very precious it is to Him.

But "spikenard" is altogether another thing. It is my appreciation of Christ that arises as grateful perfume to Him. How marvellous! "When the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." He sits at His table when we gather to eat the Supper for a remembrance of Him. And our worship or praise from our hearts is then as the smell of spikenard to Him?

Mr. Wigram said that "sin has spoilt our appreciation of the Song of Solomon." Our morality has not much improved since that day and we lose much of the preciousness of the teaching. We should learn through the Canticles the sweetness of union, the intimacy of relationship. We see it in picture all through the Old Testament, starting with Adam. We find it with Isaac, Boaz and others. The greatest event in their lives was the day of their espousals, when they found the object of their affections. And the blessed Lord does look for and delight in the affections of His own blood-bought saints. When He comes into our midst He looks for these to yield perfume to Him.

Turn now to chapter 4. 12-16. Here
He describes His bride as a garden, in which are found every kind of lovely smelling perfumes, "all the chief spices." He had planted that which He intended should be a joy to Him and should minister delight to His heart. And the bride's answer is very beautiful, "Awake, oh north wind . . . blow . . . that the spices thereof may flow out." She desires to answer to His heart. The perfume was there for Him. He should have it. But she also knew that the only way this could be possible, was through suffering. "Awake, oh north wind." The north is always connected with affliction and judgment. It was through the north gate that the sacrifices were brought to be slaughtered. What of "the south"? Ah, that was the place of enjoyment, in the south courts they eat the peace offerings.

And she is content with either the north or the south wind, if only thereby the King attains His end and is satisfied with the fragrance of the "spikenard." Are we? We do not like the north wind and do everything in our power to avoid it. We sometimes sing:

"Blest is the sorrow, kind the storm\nThat drives us nearer home."

But this is something far higher than that. Let us encourage ourselves when the blast is bitter and affliction is sore. He has His reason for permitting the north wind to blow, and the result to Himself will be the fragrance of sweet spices from us for His own enjoyment. I believe the "south" wind always follows the "north." If "He makes sore" He also "bindeth up"; if "He woundeth," "His hands make whole" as well.

We shall see this beautifully in John 11. and 12. For the twelfth chapter comes after the eleventh (in application). The north wind had blown furiously in the eleventh, resulting in the death of the much-loved brother. How those sisters had suffered. Think of those two days waiting for the blessed Lord, and He came not. "Think of their anguish watching their dear one die! Then the funeral! And yet He never came! And now the precious dust must be gone to corruption! But when He did come, He brought the "south wind" with Him. Such healing! Such balm! Not only did He bring their brother back to life. Far, far more. He groaned for them. He wept with them. He sympathized with them in their sorrow, and proved how He cared, and felt for them as they could never have known anyhow else.

Now the twelfth chapter. A unique company. Lazarus was there, just raised from the dead, and Jesus was there, just going to be put to death. They made Him a supper. The King is sitting at His table. Lazarus is there as a guest, and Martha serves. But Mary—how intelligent her faith! She knew that death was before Him, and she realized what was due to Him. If the King was at His table there must be "spikenard" for Him, to send forth its smell to refresh Him. And she had got some! The north wind in chapter 11. had blown upon her garden, and had done its work. Why she had a whole pound of it to anoint Him with. The Holy Ghost labels it as "very costly." In that dark hour of sorrow who can tell what that ointment was to the blessed Lord. We do not read that she said a single word to Him. She realized that at such a time conversation was out of place. "Spikenard" she had got and she brought it, refreshing His blessed heart and filling also "the whole house with the odour of the ointment." One soul present—brother or sister—with some of this "spikenard," this precious adoration of the Lord, though never a word be said, will greatly affect a whole meeting.

"Waste" the world called it. Of course they did. But the Spirit of God values otherwise, and three times over the incident is mentioned in Scripture, and each time that spikenard is described as "very precious."

CHARLES MOORE.
**Scripture Truth.**

**Four Administrations.**

**TWELVE years (of doctors' efforts).** Mark 5. 25.
**TWELVE years (of parental care).** Mark 5. 42.
**TWELVE Apostles.** Mark 6. 7.
**TWELVE baskets full of fragments.** Mark 6. 43.

**WITHOUT doubt there is a significance connected with certain numbers in Scripture. Two, three, four, five, six, seven, twelve, forty: all these, and perhaps others, have thoughts associated with them, with which every student of the Word of God is familiar.**

The thought connected with the number twelve is that of administration. This is easily proved by a reference to many passages of Scripture. For a full elucidation of the fact works like Darby's "Synopsis" and Grant's "Numerical Bible" may be consulted.

Now it must have struck the reader, in studying the Gospels, how the number twelve occurs four times, in four different connections, within the compass of two consecutive chapters. Let us take the references as we find them in Mark.

First there is the case of the woman who was afflicted with a disease that made her life a burden to her. Many physicians had attempted a cure, but all their efforts had been fruitless. They left her worse than they had found her. Now this woman may be taken as representing the nation of Israel, as then existing, in the days when the Lord was on earth. The condition of the chosen people had become sad indeed. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there was nothing, as Isaiah had said, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.

There were many physicians, and the twelve years of the woman's sufferings speak of the administration of these. They had had every opportunity to heal, to bind up, to mollify with ointment. There were priests and elders, with their ordinances and traditions; scribes and lawyers; Pharisees with their phylacteries and long prayers. All these, in one way or another, administered the law, or their interpretation of it. They sat in the seat of Moses. But all their medicaments were in vain. They were not of the right sort. They could not ameliorate the deep moral wounds of the people, nor revive their souls. It needed CHRIST to do that.

Just at the time when the terrible plague began to make itself felt in the life of this afflicted woman, a baby daughter was born to one Jairus, a leader in one of the synagogues of Galilee. She grew up under the fond parental care of her father and mother. How dear she was to them may be gathered from the statement of the evangelist that when she was taken ill, her father came to Jesus and fell at His feet and besought Him greatly to come and heal her. He "agonized" as the word may well be translated.

But all the love and care with which she was surrounded failed to keep her alive. Twelve years of thoughtful kindness and devotion on the part of the parents could not ward off the stroke of death.

Again we have a picture of the Jewish nation. For there was an administration going on in their midst besides that of which we have spoken, and which we may call the official administration of law, mixed with the tradition of the elders. I refer to the loving service of those who held no official position, but who clave to the God of Israel and who thought upon His name. Such a one was Anna, who found her delight in speaking of the Lord to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Others there were, humble and obscure folks,
no doubt, who administered the com-
forts and mercies of God to all who
would listen to their words. They loved
the people who in a special way were the
sheep of Jehovah’s pasture, and for His
dear Name’s sake would serve Him in
this most acceptable way.

But even this loving service, this
tender ministration of the lovingkind-
ness and truth of God, had failed to affect
the nation as a whole. A state of moral
and spiritual death had come upon it.
Even the mighty, epoch-making testi-
mony of the Baptist, with its ad-
ministration of governmental forgive-
ness through the baptism of repentance,
had failed to avert this condition.
Towards God, the nation, as such, was
pulseless and without life.

It was CHRIST, again we say, that
was needed. His power, wielded in
sovereign mercy, could alone meet the
situation. Whether the people be viewed
as corrupted and stricken with a mortal
plague, or whether regarded as spiritu-
ally lifeless, there was no help but in
Him. This we shall see as we go on.

We come now to the third of the four
administrations, which we may call the
administration of the word of the
kingdom, and of its power.

The Lord had already called His
twelve apostles, that they might be with
Him, and that He might send them forth
to preach and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons (Mark
3. 14, 15). The ever-increasing hostility
of the official leaders, the scribes and
Pharisees, made it evident that He could
not use them for the administration of
the things of the kingdom. So that in
this way the very fact of the twelve being
chosen for the purpose was a condemna-
tion and a setting aside of the tradition-
bound teachers of the law.

And now the twelve, having been
instructed in the mysteries of the king-
dom, are sent forth to fulfil their mission.
Their message was that men should
repent; and by means of the wonderful
powers entrusted to them, they cast out
many demons. They also healed many
that were sick, having previously
anointed them with oil (Mark 6. 12, 13).

This was the direct result of the
presence of the King, and was in view
of the full establishment of His king-
dom. It was, in a word, the adminis-
tration of what is called elsewhere “the
powers of the world to come.”

There was that which appealed to the
consciences of men: the preaching of
repentance. And this went hand in
hand with the glad tidings of the king-
dom and with grace that set men free
from the power of Satan and relieved
them in their sorrows and infirmities.
It was the administration, by His twelve
chosen instruments, of what JESUS, the
Son of God, had brought into the world
for the blessing of His wandering and
afflicted people.

Alas, though there was a wave of
transient appreciation, this testimony
of grace was ultimately rejected, and the
administration of the word and powers
of the kingdom suspended until a day
that is yet to come.

This brings us to the fourth ad-
ministration of which we speak.

We pass over, as not coming within
the scope of our subject, the wonderful
“administration of the grace of God”
(Eph. 3. 2, Darby’s Translation) con-
nected with the revelation of “the
mystery of the Christ.” This ad-
ministration, committed primarily to
Paul, fills up the present interval during
which the grace of God towards Israel
as a nation is in abeyance.

What the twelve baskets of fragments
seem to bring before us is rather the
administration of the fulness of times”
(Eph. 1. 10, Darby’s Translation). In
the Gospels, it is necessarily the earthly
side of this, rather than the heavenly,
that is in view.

The Lord has just shown how He
could minister to the needs of those who
were "as sheep not having a shepherd." He had marvellously and miraculously fed five thousand hungry men, besides women and children. For this He most graciously used what His disciples had in their possession: five loaves and two fishes. *Two* speaks of testimony, and the Lord could recognize and use anything that He found among His people that was really a testimony to Himself. *Five* is the number that carries the thought of human weakness, and this was what marked everything in Israel at that time. What testimony to the Coming One existed was in very great weakness; faith was weak, understanding was weak. A general paralysis prevailed, and there was little spiritual vitality anywhere.

This is what seems represented by the five loaves and two fishes. Well might Philip exclaim, as he looked upon the multitude of men: "What are they among so many?" But when to the five loaves and two fishes all the grace and power of the Son of God are added where is the multitude for whom they do not suffice? Not only is there sufficient to meet all the needs of the moment, but twelve baskets full remain, *not lost* (John 6.12), but for future use.

The future use of these twelve baskets full of food will be in the days that are yet to come. Or, to drop the language of type and parable, what the Son of God brought here for the blessing of men. All that came out in Himself while here, will not be lost because of the nation’s unbelief. While sufficing them to satisfy the hunger of those who sought His blessing, it remains in its fulness to be administered in grace and power in the happy and glorious days that are yet to come for Israel and the world. And it will be administered, not by angels (Heb. 2.5) but by men. The heavenly city, described in Revelation 21, will be the scene of the outshining of God and the Lamb. Thence will heavenly influences be brought to bear upon the hearts of men on earth. The TWELVE gates, at which are written the names of the TWELVE tribes; the TWELVE foundations, bearing the names of the TWELVE apostles; the TWELVE precious stones garnishing the foundations; the TWELVE pearls of which the gates are composed; the TWELVE thousand furlongs which give the measure of the city and the TWELVE times TWELVE cubits that give the measure of its wall, all speak of the place that the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, will have in the administration of the world to come.

There will also be an earthly side to this administration, carried on amongst men by those who sit on TWELVE thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19.28). But *what is to be administered* is the important thing, and this is what we may learn from the twelve baskets of fragments, that which is left over, as it were, from the time of the Lord’s life and ministry on earth, for the blessing of those who shall be under His beneficent sway by and by. All that Christ Himself added to the five loaves and two fishes to make them suffice to feed five thousand men and leave twelve basketfuls over; His infinite grace and mercy; His truth and faithfulness; His meekness and gentleness; His authority and power; His wisdom and doctrine; His unfoldings of the ways and counsels of God; His revelation of the Father; all this, and more, He sought to feed the souls of men with when on earth. Many found the hunger of their souls met by His gracious teachings. But being rejected, He has reserved the full administration of all these blessed and wonderful things, as far as the nationality of Israel is concerned, until a future day. And in that day the Gentiles too shall share the rich provision made by His grace. Everywhere the tides of blessing shall roll, and the twelve basketfuls of food shall sustain rejoicing multitudes who shall worship the Lord of hosts and whom He will teach of His ways and who will walk in His paths (Isaiah 2.3).

Harold P. Barker.
Prayer.

18. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

J. N. D. The second weapon which is given to us is prayer in the Spirit; it is that prayer which springs from the energy of the spiritual life when the Spirit is not grieved in us.

W. K. The word is "praying always with all prayer"—praying at every season. There is nothing the enemy more dreads, nothing that the flesh more seeks to hinder, or to make amiss, if there be the form. But so much the more need we to bear in mind the call to habitual and complete dependence.

J. N. D. This dependence must be constant. When it is real, and I feel I can do nothing without God, and that He wills my good in all things, it expresses itself. It seeks the strength which it has not: it seeks it from Him in whom it trusts. It is the motion of the Spirit in our hearts in their intercourse with God, so that our battles are fought in the communion of His strength and His favour, and in the consciousness that we can do nothing, and that He is all.

Q. Wherein does "supplication" differ from this?

W. K. There is encouragement and exhortation to every kind of prayer and at every opportunity, while there is also that character of petition which is sustained in the power of the Holy Ghost, "supplication in the Spirit," which all prayer of the saints is not.

F. G. P. The heart learns to pour out its earnest cry, deepening in intensity from "prayer" to "supplication."

W. K. Another weighty word is the call to "watch unto this very thing," for this supposes the activity of love which is quick to discern in the fear of the Lord and in the bowels of Christ that which might tarnish His glory on the one hand, and on the other whatever would contribute to the exaltation of His name in His saints and testimony. Where this is so, there will be watching in the habit of prayer, "with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." For where God's presence is thus realized, there is no straitness in the affections, but love goes out energetically to Him and in the communion with Him concerning all the saints.

J. N. D. There is amongst Christians too little intercession, because they come to a meeting for prayer, after leading a life of languishing, absorbed by present things. If we were watchful in our daily walk, our prayers would be intercessions, instead of supplications each day for our own faults. What we should desire is, that our individual prayers should be such as to enable us to pray for all saints; without this they will never have this powerful energy of the Spirit.

F. G. P. The host of the Lord has thus been prepared to meet the foe, and to "wrestle in the evil day." The soul is formed by the truth; the conscience good, maintained in the light; the heart peaceful, in the confidence and piety that walks with God, and trusts Him amidst the storms and waves which beat around us. The heart is kept in a right condition before God in this evil world. He has His true place of authority which orders all; the saint too is found in his true attitude of dependence and confidence before Him as expressed in prayer—but prayer which embraces His great interests here on earth, "all saints," in their labours and conflicts, toils and joys.

Collated by H. P. Barker.
A Few Practical Thoughts on the Church of God.

No one who has had experience of the love of Christ for the church can view its present condition without sorrow and shame. We know our oneness "in Christ" with all saints and long for a corresponding expression of unity, knowing well that our desires will never be realized this side of the glory. Many expedients are tried, the futility of which is plain; but there must be a path in which we may please the Lord, and the qualifications for both knowledge and walk are set before us in the apostolic prayers in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. Here, it must be admitted, we all fail, and the sense of our shortcomings should produce in us a chastened and humble spirit and soften the asperities whereby our differences are accentuated and needless breaches occasioned.

To help in the direction we all desire, let us review the subject of the church or assembly of God in the four chief figures employed in the New Testament. A building, whether house or temple; a bride; a city; a body. The three first named are taken from the Old Testament, the last is a revelation found only in the New, a secret hitherto hidden in God (Eph. 3. 9), but which now He desires to make known (Col. 1. 27). Each of these terms suggests a certain moral correspondence in those included under it. This correspondence it is our present purpose to point out.

A Building.

If God has been pleased to make for Himself a dwelling among men, we should expect that He would have it in some real sense a transcript of what He is: this the Son was (John 2. 19) in absolute perfection, and the church is called to be the continuation on earth of His life (Eph. 4. 2; 5. 2). Accordingly we find both in the Old Testament and in the New the distinguishing characteristic of God's dwelling is holiness (see Ex. 15. 13; Ps. 93. 5; Ez. 43. 12; I Peter 2. 5; I Cor. 3. 17). I leave for a moment the question of how this essential attribute is maintained, to point out the three great aspects in which the church as the house of God is presented in the New Testament. In the passage in I Peter, already cited, it is viewed in the attitude of PRAISE TO GOD, offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ. With this the teaching in the epistle to the Hebrews accords (10. 21; 13. 15).

Secondly, in I Timothy we find it in TESTIMONY TOWARDS THE WORLD, the pillar on which the truth is written, the base on which it is supported before men. Where the spirit of error and the teaching of falsehood is maintained, there the church is not as God would have it. In harmony with this, the directions given in this epistle have in view the presentation before men of those moral traits which accord with the character of God.

Thirdly, in Ephesians 2. 22, Jew and Gentile are builded together to be God's dwelling place, and the responsibility of the constituent parts ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER is prominent, according to the exhortation in chapter 4. 2, which as is well known is connected with the closing verses of chapter 2. Holiness is required in those who are occupied in praise to God, and truth in those who are His witnesses before men, but in the third aspect, the great need is love, "forbearing one another in love," being essential to keeping the unity of the Spirit. It should be added that we find in John 13. 35 that love among the disciples of Jesus, as He alone can teach it, becomes a witness before all men.
But in this passage believers are not regarded as forming the house of God, but rather as a family. We may now consider how holiness and love, together with the living presentation of the truth are to be maintained in the house of God during our sojourn upon earth. "Holiness to Jehovah" was the motto on the mitre of the High Priest when he entered the sanctuary in his garments of glory and beauty, and thus Israel was in the power of the love of their espousals, for a brief moment after the passage of the sea (Jer. 2. 2, 3).

When the camp was hopelessly defiled by idolatry, holiness was secured for all those who sought the Lord, by going outside the camp to the new tent of meeting (Ex. 33.). This, however, is illustrative of an entirely abnormal condition. The way of holiness when the assembly is in order is according to the passage just cited from Jeremiah as we learn also from the closing verses of 1 Thessalonians 3. Just as love increases and abounds, so holiness is powerfully promoted. It has been well said, "This power of love maintains the heart in the presence of God, and makes it find its joy in the light of His presence." This is so contrary to our natural thoughts it is not surprising that it is but little known or followed. Each one of us must be conscious that, for this to be brought to pass, true nearness to Christ is needed, so that His love may flow through us to its proper objects. Let us then see to it that when anything occurs to hinder the flow of love, we are not overcome by it. Balm there is in Gilead for every wound and a physician for every sickness, and as we make Christ our spiritual food we shall triumphantly prove it. He will give grace.

We may now consider the assembly as presented to us in Matthew 16 and 18. In the former we see the Lord finding in Peter one who was the subject of a revelation from the Father; really he thus became a living stone, and therefore material suitable for His use in building. All with which He builds is kindred to Himself and imbued with life (see 1 Peter 2.), so that whatever forces Satan may employ, they are powerless against "MY assembly."

In chapter 18. this assembly is viewed locally, disciples are gathered to the name of their Lord, with authority to speak, as also for binding and loosing, in matters within the sphere of their responsibility. In the case supposed in the Lord's instruction, sin has gained an entrance among them and holiness is compromised; this is at once met by love acting in the disciple who had been wronged. With the purpose of gaining his brother, he goes to the one who has committed the trespass and tells him his fault privately (Love is the true instructor in such a case); if he hears him, the purpose of his love is reached and holiness is restored among the company; if otherwise, the visit is repeated with witnesses, and if failure again occurs, then and not till then, the whole matter is told to the church. The voice of the church is now to be heard, and if the offender refuses to hear the church he is to be treated like an outcast by the brother who has been wronged, for love has failed to win and separation becomes necessary, in order that holiness may not be sacrificed by the passing over sin. Finally it seems that verse 18 contemplates action by the church which as we have seen, has title not only to speak as in verse 17, but to bind the sin on the guilty one, which exposes him to the governmental dealings of the Lord, for the action has been bound in heaven. Thus the apparently antagonistic principles of holiness and love really work together for the maintenance of the true character of the house of God.

The question of discipline according to Matthew 18. will be referred to again in remarks on the church as the body of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 3. emphasis is again laid on the holiness of God's temple, warning and instruction being given to
the builders as to the character of their service. Were those who heard them being attached to Christ, the foundation already laid, by spiritual means or to party leaders by carnal means? Let every man take heed how he meddled with the established order of that which was GOD’S building. In Matthew 16. Christ is the builder and all is perfect. In 1 Corinthians 3. man is the builder and the building may be corrupted. To attach to the latter all the security of the former opens the way to ecclesiastical corruption of the worst kind, souls being led to trust their salvation to the church instead of to the Saviour, the church being regarded as the ark by which He saves. Scripture never thus presents the truth. (See the close of Acts 10.

The Bride.

It is surely of deep significance, that such a figure should be chosen by the Spirit to set forth the relation of the saints to their Lord. It is employed, moreover, not only as applying to us in our present waiting state (Rev. 22. 17) but also in our future glorious condition (21. 9), and as an illustration of what the church will be, in her freshness and unsullied beauty, during the eternal ages, when no sin can defile or wandering affection mar her joy (21. 2). How refreshing to remind ourselves, if too often conscious of coldness of heart now, there is an eternity coming, when the Spirit will be unhindered in producing a full response to the love wherewith we have been loved!

"Yet still we wait for Thee,
To see Thee as Thou art,
Be with Thee, like Thee, Lord, and free
To love with all our heart."

A missionary said: "Our Bibles often give us telegrams from glory. A chief spat in my face, and there flashed along space, 'They spat in His face,' and then this, 'From whose face the earth and heaven fled away.'"

Another said, that when abused and beaten there flashed into his mind the words, "Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." And such joy filled him that he said, "If such joy is mine at being merely beaten for Christ's sake, how great must be the joy of dying for Him?"

Although the actual term "bride" is not used in Ephesians 5. 25-27, the love of Christ for His assembly expresses itself according to this relation. Only love could yield such a service. It is declared how He had the church in view, in giving Himself in the past, in His continuous ministry during the present, and that both these activities of love have in prospect the presentation of this assembly to Himself, in perfect accord with His own desires, so that His love may rest in what it has accomplished.

The same relation is typically represented in Genesis 24., but here it is the thoughts of the father for the son in whom promise has been fulfilled, and to whom as the heir all the father's wealth has been given. For him thus dowered and in a figure received back from death (Heb. 11. 10) the father seeks a bride and sends his servant (type of the Spirit) to call her. Two injunctions are laid upon the servant: one, that the bride must be kindred to Isaac (the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one); the other, that under no circumstances must be brought again to that land whence the heirs of promise had been called; for the bride's calling is always to Him where He is. All this has often been unfolded and applied to us, and I only add here, that I think we may learn from Ephesians 1. 19 to 2. 6. that the union of Genesis 24. 67 is typical of the grace which should be realized now, and that the love of Isaac for his wife represents that love of Christ for those who are given to Him by the Father, and are brought to Him by the Spirit's power, a love which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3. 19).
The Song of Songs. Canticle I.

The Assurance of Love—(continued).

The Bride.

2. As the lily among thorns,
   So is my love among the daughters.

THIS is the response of the King. He affirms what the bride has said. She is the lily; but in the valley where the lily grows there are thorns which serve as a background to bring out the beauty of the lily. In the dark valley of this poor world there are those who have none of the beauty of Christ upon them, thorns for the burning, thorns that would only wound Him. But there are also His own, those in whom Christ can delight—the excellent of the earth—lilies among the thorns. They are Christ's sanctified ones, and He has put His beauty upon them. Their excellencies are the more displayed by reason of their dreary surroundings. To have His lily Christ had to descend into the valley of the thorns, yea, He must wear thorns to win His bride. It is by His "one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14).

The Bridegroom.

3. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
   So is my beloved among the sons;
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
   And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

The response of the Bride is immediate. If the King sees excellence in the Bride above all the daughters of women, the Bride sees in her beloved the only one among the sons of men in whom she can find rest, and shade, and fruit. Thus she likens him to the citron tree with its dense shade and luscious golden fruit. Many trees of the wood may appear more imposing to the eye of man, even as men esteem their fellows of more account than the despised and lowly Jesus. Other trees of the forest may give shelter, but yield no fruit, some, too, may yield fruit but give no shade, but this tree alone meets every need. Christ is the true citron tree. Christ is the tree of life. To man's eye, as He passed through this world, merely a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, but to the believer that lowly Man is the only one among the sons of men that can afford shelter, and refreshment, and rest in this dry and weary world. And if, with faith's transpiercing gaze, we look on to the New Jerusalem we see the tree of Life in the midst of the street, by the river of life, growing in its native soil, and there indeed shall we find eternal rest and perennial refreshment. Like the Bride we shall say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

4. He brought me to the banqueting house,
   And his banner over me is love.

In the Bridegroom's presence the Bride has found rest from toil, shelter from the heat of the day, and fruit sweet to her taste. Now her experience deepens; her needs all met she is led into the full enjoyment of the bounties provided by the King. She is brought into the house of wine, to taste the fullness of his joy and the rapture of his love. Not now "his shadow," nor "his fruit," but himself.

So, too, is the experience of our souls; it is blessed to sit down under the shadow of Christ, and in His presence find rest from toil, relief from the burden and
heat of the day, and refreshment and nourishment for our souls. Great as these blessings are, they have in them a measure of relief; but beyond the blessings that bring relief there are others that carry with them richer, deeper, experiences—experiences into which no thought of relief can enter, but only the infinite enjoyment of His fullness. Experiences which answer to the house of wine and the banner of love. Setting us free from earthly things Christ would lead us into His heavenly things. He would give us a taste of the fullness of joy and the pleasures for evermore, there to find His banner over us is love. The banner tells of the conqueror and of victory gained. The love of Christ has conquered. And what a victory has Christ gained for His people! Not a victory such as the poor clay kings of this world gain, who wade to their thrones through the blood of millions of their fellow-men, but this mighty Conqueror gains His victory by the shedding of His own blood—by Himself becoming the victim. And having gained His victory He unfurls His banner, and His banner is love. Love made Him the willing victim; love held Him on His way as He descended into the valley of thorns; love held Him on the cross—no nails of man's forging could quench or the floods drown held Him there. Love divine, eternal, unquenchable, all-powerful, has gained the mighty victory, and the banner that declares His victory is inscribed with His love.

5. Stay me with flagons,
Refresh me with citrons;
For I am sick of love.

The ecstasy of the house of wine is more than the Bride can sustain. There are spiritual experiences too deep for these weak vessels of clay. Was it not thus with the Apostle, when caught up into the third heaven? He heard unutterable words, not possible to utter. Little indeed may such experiences be the common lot of the Christian life, but at times the Lord grants to His people such an overwhelming sense of His love that we are constrained to cry out in such language as a dying saint once used, "Lord, hold Thy hand; it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more." One of the later Puritans well expressed such an experience when he wrote:

"The love, the love that I bespeak,
Works wonders in the soul:
For when I'm whole it makes me sick,
When sick it makes me whole."

6. His left hand is under my head,
And his right hand doth embrace me.

This is the answer to the Bride's call for sustaining power. The banner of love is over her, and the arms of love are around her. She has attained the longing of her heart expressed in the opening of the canticle. She has reached the assurance and enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love. How happy when the saint finds every longing of the renewed nature satisfied by the love of Christ.

7. I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
till it please.

The canticle closes with an appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb the rest of love. The slightest movement would disturb the timid and sensitive roe or hind of the field. With the banner of love over her, and the arms of love around her, the Bride dreads the slightest intrusion that would mar the enjoyment of love. And well may the saint, in the enjoyment of the love of Christ, dread any intrusion that would break up or mar that intimacy of love that may exist between him and his Saviour.

Hamilton Smith.
The Path of God’s Pleasure.

Of all the aged men of whom we read in Genesis 5. Enoch’s life was the shortest. Amid the nine hundred and more years attained to by one and another, his three hundred and sixty-five appear to be quite a brief period.

But he stands out solitarily as the one of whom the mournful words “and he died” are not recorded. Concerning the end of his pathway it is stated: “And he was not, for God took him.” Thus he is honoured in a peculiar way on the Sacred page. For him the power of death was set aside. For him the power of God was asserted in an unusual way.

That which we know of the man so specially favoured is recorded in very brief manner in very few verses. Genesis 5. 18-24; Luke 3. 27; Hebrews 11. 5 and Jude 14, 15 contain all that is revealed concerning him.

If, however, we ponder over these slight references we may discover much of interest and profit.

As the son of Jared he is first introduced to our attention. For some reason unknown his name Enoch was bestowed upon him. Its meaning is “a breath” or “vanity.” It seems to present before us the passing, fading character of man’s life. It says to us that man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish, “that man walketh in a vain show in the midst of a world where “all is vanity” and “a pursuit of the wind” and where “they speak vanity every one with his neighbour.” Here then is man in his natural condition in the midst of “the passing show” which is soon to end under the judgment of God. Surrounded by such a condition of things Enoch’s early days were passed and, until he was sixty-five, there seems to have been nothing uncommon in his career. At that age, however, a son was born to him to whom was given the name Methuselah, which is said to mean, “In his days it shall come,” and is thought to refer to the deluge which occurred the year after his death.

The time of the birth of his son appears to have marked the time of Enoch’s

TURNING TO GOD

for from that period we read, “Enoch walked with God.” Evidently something remarkable transpired to bring about the change which these words indicate. It would appear as if he was “converted” then—to use New Testament language. The account of it is not given, but the result of it is seen. And from that hour until the moment of his translation he continued in his holy happy pathway.

TRAVELLING WITH GOD.

It is to be noticed that Enoch’s walk with God is the first walk of a believer mentioned in Scripture. The Lord God walked in the Garden of Eden—but Adam and Eve had sinned and could not walk with Him. Now amid abounding and increasing evil one steps out from the rest of mankind to travel in what humanly speaking was a lonely way. But “with God” there is no loneliness. “There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee,” said the Psalmist at a later day, or, as it has been translated, “Having Thee on earth I want none else.” All who walk with God have the same tale to tell of entire satisfaction in His presence. What, then, is it to walk with God? We may learn by contrast perhaps. Man in his natural condition pursues his way according to his own will. He is controlled by the customs of his fellows, by the fashions of the age, and, behind these and unseen, by the prince of the power of the air—the devil—the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience. In his rebellious self-will and insubjection to God he endeavours to find pleasure in the company of his fellow rebels, not only fulfilling his own lusts but having
fellow delight with those who walk in the same evil way. To walk with God a man must leave all this which is so contrary and seek only that which is in accordance with His mind. From Enoch’s prophecy, to which I shall refer again later, we may gather that ungodliness was rife among the men of his day. Four times over the word “ungodly” is used concerning the character of the subjects of judgment at the Lord’s return. And the Apostle Peter uses the same term when describing the world which was destroyed by the flood. To be ungodly is to be without God. “No God for me” is the utterance of the lip and life of such.

Enoch “walked with God.” He left the No-God-for-me company, going on henceforth in separation from them because in separation to God. Forming an acrostic, may we not put it thus? To walk with God is to be

**W**illing to do His will whatever the cost may be. To

**A**cknowledge His authority over us in all things. To

**L**ook to Him to direct us day by day in the path of His choice. To

**K**eep His way whoever may turn from it and wheresoever it may lead.

And this is always the path of blessing and of peace and of prosperity. It is the path of God’s pleasure for His own in which He delights to be with them for their succour and support.

The result of Enoch’s course was that TESTIMONY FROM GOD was rendered to him that he was pleasing to God. In what form this witness was given we know not, nor does it matter. Sufficient for us it is to know that in some unmistakeable way the knowledge was conveyed to him that he was acting in accordance with the mind of God.

Blessed indeed is the man who has such a testimony from his Maker, who knows that his conduct is approved of Him—that his words and ways are agreeable in His sight.

As a result, doubtless, of his constancy and devotedness Enoch became intelligent in God’s mind, for intelligence ever follows devotedness, and His purpose was made known to him. We find him TESTIFYING FOR GOD as he prophesies, saying:

“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).

The patriarch lived in the light of the future as though it were already present. He sees the Lord come in the midst of His holy myriads. The world already condemned by Enoch’s walk was about to be judged by the Lord in company with all His own who, like Enoch, had stood apart from it in their way on earth.

The generation of ungodly men of whom Enoch spoke still continues. The flood came and destroyed a part of it; the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorr-rah cut off another part of it later. But yet it exists. Man lives in neglect of God still, and judgment must do its work. Ungodly deeds have been committed—ungodly speeches have been spoken against Him, and man’s ungodliness has culminated in the rejec-
tion and murder of God's Son when in grace He came into the world.

It is perhaps five thousand years since Enoch uttered his prophecy, and as yet it awaits its fulfilment which draws near.

Remarkably enough that prophecy passes over the rest of the patriarchal age, the age of law, of kings, of prophets, of Israel's supremacy, of the times of the Gentiles. It makes no mention of the ministry and sufferings of our Lord nor of the present period in which the church—His bride—is being gathered out to share with Him His coming glories. It looks down the long avenue of the centuries and focuses its gaze on the manifestation in glory of the Lord together with the saints gathered out of all those dispensations.

To-day creation groans in pain. Earth mourns the rejection of the Messiah and cries aloud for Him. And what is in view? Maranatha! The Lord cometh! Hallelujah.

By His cross and passion He has won for Himself myriads of companions for the day of His glory. They walked with Him during the hour of His patience—they will appear with Him in the hour of His power.

For three hundred years Enoch pursued his way of godliness, enjoying the knowledge that his course pleased God, and bearing his testimony by life and lip.

Then came that exceptional day when he was

TRANSLATED BY GOD,
when a man was removed from the world in a way "that he should not see death." The marked man was a missed man. From Hebrews 11 we learn "he was not found." He had walked with God and witnessed for God during three centuries, but now he was gone, whither they knew not.

A little child in telling his story put it thus: "Enoch walked so far with God that God took him home." She summarized it well. Enoch is "at home" with Him with whom he travelled so far, and for whom he testified so faithfully.

We know not how it was accomplished—nor is it necessary that we should. The power of God intervened, and out of a scene of sin and death the servant was caught away.

In 1 Thessalonians Enoch's history is seen repeating itself in some sort in the church of God. They had turned to God from their idols (chap. 1:9). They were serving Him now in the midst of surrounding ungodliness (chap. 1:10). They were taught to walk so as to please God (chap. 3:1). They were testifying to those around (chap. 1:8).

They were awaiting the hour of their translation (chap. 4:16, 17), and looking forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (chap. 3:13), when judgment would fall on the ungodly world around them (chap. 5:2, 3).

Enoch is seen in one other Scripture in connection with the genealogy of our Lord. In Luke 3, his name is found in this thrice honourable association. With his forbears and successors he is glorified by being named in that favoured list, his name of weakness being thus linked with the name of Omnipotence on the page of history.

And may we not say that in some sort the opportunity is afforded us to-day of having our all-unworthy names associated with His all-worthy name. If we are found standing for His interests and confessing His name in this passing world has He not promised that He will confess our names before His Father which is in heaven. That will be a place in history which will abide when all human histories pass from remembrance.

"And like the baseless fabric of a vision Leave not a wrack behind."

Enoch overcame the world. In his course he is seen victorious over all its sin and seduction, and thus he stands prominent as one whose faith we are called to follow as we pursue our pathway of pilgrimage here awaiting the hour of Christ's manifestation in triumph.

Inglis Fleming.
Well Done!

THERE is no Christian reader of these lines, we may be quite sure, who does not earnestly desire that these words of commendation should be spoken to him, or to her, in the great day of review and reward. At the judgment seat of Christ He will take account of His servants, not according to their success, nor even according to their zeal, but according to their faithfulness. To the faithful servant He will say, "Well done." Who would not ardently wish to hear these approving words?

If we are to hear them, however, we must do well. The Lord will not say "Well done" to us on account of what He Himself has done for us on the cross. The gates of glory will be opened to us on that ground, but the word of commendation is reserved for those who by His grace, and by the help of His Spirit, have wrought for His praise during the time of their sojourning here.

There are many whose speech is all that can be desired, but whose deeds are cast in a different mould. "Ye say well," remarked their Lord and Master to His disciples. But what He emphasized was the doing. "Do as I have done." "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." 2

If we are to walk with God, if our hearts are to be maintained in happy confidence in Him, if we are to be free of care in the practical realization of His protecting love, there must, on our part, be patient continuance in well-doing. For Christians, especially those in circumstances of trial, are exhorted to "commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing." 3

The question naturally arises

WHAT IS WELL-DOING?

Let no one imagine that such an inquiry carries its answer on its face. Sometimes great mistakes are made on this score. When God asked Jonah: "Doest thou well to be angry?" he replied: "I do well to be angry." 4 But he was altogether wrong. He was very far from doing well in giving place to his petulance and anger.

So we need to be taught by the Word of God as to what doing well really is. For what is good in the eyes of men is sometimes nothing but evil in the eyes of God. And the opposite is also true: what men regard as evil is sometimes good in God's esteem.

For instance, when Eliashib the high priest made provision for Tobiah, and prepared for him a great chamber within the temple precincts, was he doing well or ill? The man was closely related to some of the leading men in Jerusalem; 5 and though he was an Ammonite, and of a different religion, would charity hold him answerable for that? Why should he not be accommodated in this great chamber? Specicus charity might thus pronounce Eliashib's action good, and charge Nehemiah with bigotry and narrow-mindedness when he "cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber." 6 But the Spirit of God, speaking through Nehemiah, pronounces Eliashib's hospitality an evil act. 7 Thus are the thoughts of God shown to be widely different from those of man as to what is good and what evil.

HOW TO BEGIN.

Our course of "doing well" must invariably begin with what is brought before us in one of the earliest chapters of the Bible. Cain had not done well; far from it. He had brought an offering to God which spoke only of the pride and independence of his heart, and of his unwillingness to face facts. Such an offering could not be accepted. But God said: "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?" 8 It is signifi-
cant that the Septuagint version renders this: "If thou offerest correctly." The doing well that God desired on Cain's part was an intelligent apprehension that sin had alienated him from his Creator, and that, for the Creator's honour, atonement was necessary. Abel's offering showed his appreciation of this; the sacrifice that he made was of a victim that died as his substitute. In this way, he did well, and was accepted.

Our first act, then, must be to do as he did, to come before God recognizing the position in which sin has placed us, and relying wholly on the substitutionary sacrifice of Him who came here as the Lamb of God, to put away sin by His own death. Apart from this we cannot even begin to "do well."

**HOW TO CONTINUE.**

Having started thus with Christ as our Sacrifice and Saviour, we must continue with Him as our great Exemplar. He went about doing good, nor did He ever do anything else. No answer could be found, even by His bitterest enemies, to Pilate's question: "What evil hath He done?" All that He did was superlatively good. No wonder that people "were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well." And it is His steps that we are bidden to follow, ever keeping Himself before our minds as our Pattern.

If there is one thing that astonishes us more than anything else in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth it is the love that He showed, even to His enemies. He always responded to the cry of need. He was ever ready to bless, to heal, to save. And by manifesting this love to others we also shall do well. So we are taught in that well-known passage: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."

The children of God are a kingly race, kings and priests unto God, or as it is put elsewhere, a royal priesthood. We are here in the world to represent God, to set forth His character, and He is love. If we withhold our love from men we shall be misrepresenting Him; it will be doing evil. To love our neighbour is to do well. And this we must do if we would hear the Master's "Well done" by and by.

**WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?**

If any be disposed to ask the lawyer's question: "And who is my neighbour?" the answer may well be: "Who is not?" For all men are included in the term. God has loved the whole world, and the parable of Luke 10. teaches us that the Lord Jesus is Neighbour to the sinful, the straying, the lost, the dying. It is true that God has special regard to some, for we read that "He is the Saviour (Preserver) of all men, specially of those that believe." And we are to act on the same lines, and "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." We are to specialize as God specializes. But our love is to extend to all men. And this, not in theory only, but in a practical way. It is to take the form of doing good. If we thus fulfil the kingly law, we shall do well.

When we cease to manifest love, we may be sure there is something amiss. "Thou hast left thy first love" was said to the church at Ephesus, and it was a proof of her declension. I may be told: "But it was her love to Christ that she had left." Doubtless all declension starts there, but Dr. Moffatt's Translation renders the passage thus: "You have given up loving one another as you did at first."

If we were more true to our kingly character, fulfilling more earnestly the kingly law, there would more deeds be done like that of Deverill Bright. He was on a ship that was captured by pirates and was set to work on the land
in Algeria. He preached the gospel to his fellow-slaves, prayed with them, worked for their welfare, and they loved him in return. His brother sent money for his ransom, and Bright was told he might return to his home in England. He refused, saying, "No, I cannot leave my fellow-slaves; I prefer to stay with them for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ." He was a kingly man. He loved his neighbours as himself. He did well.

Another way to do well is to cherish LARGE SPIRITUAL AMBITIONS. David did this. His great ambition was to "build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel."\(^\text{16}\) In the wisdom of God he was not permitted to do so, but the Lord said to him: "Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."\(^\text{17}\) Not merely did he think well, or desire well, or say well. Heaven interpreted his desire as doing well. Who can doubt that David, in the day of reward, will hear his Lord's "well done" for this very thing?

We, too, may have desires that we may never be permitted to realize. How many have longed to go to China or Africa with the gospel message, and have laid their lives at their Master's feet for the purpose! They have not been permitted to go, but in that their ambition, like David's, was for God's name, and not for any reason that had self as its object, they did well. Other instances will readily occur to the mind, of those who cherished great ambitions for the furtherance of their Lord's kingdom and the glory of His name. The opportunity for fulfilment never came. None the less, they did well, and assuredly they will receive their Master's smile, and His word of approval in the day that is coming.

One more way of doing well must be mentioned, that of GIVING HEED TO PROPHECY. Some appear to think that they do well to avoid this subject, and confine their attention to what they are pleased to call the more practical parts of Scripture. But we read: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."\(^\text{18}\)

The brighter a searchlight is, the more distinctly can distant objects be seen by its means. But no searchlight has ever been invented that can bring to view what lies beyond the horizon. But this is just what prophecy is, a light shining in a dark place, with no horizon-limit. As another has said, "God has seen the whole of this world's course to its finish; and by means of the lamp He has furnished we too may see to the end, and how that end will be reached."

The prophecy of Scripture exalts Christ, and rightly understood it strengthens faith and promotes communion with God. Moreover, it saves from many a disappointment and misunderstanding. How many a zealous worker is bowed down with a weight of depression because his goal seems utterly unattainable! He is toiling for the conversion of the world, believing that the preaching of the gospel will eventually result in this. No wonder he gets depressed, for the world never looked less like being converted than it does to-day! But if he would only give heed to the word of prophecy, he would understand that this day of gospel preaching is to end, not in the conversion but in the judgment of the world; that God's present work is not to save nations, but to take out of them a people for His name\(^\text{19}\); and that God's plan to fill the world with peace, righteousness, blessing and glory will only be accomplished after His heavy judgments have fallen upon those who have rejected His testimony, and that it will be brought to pass by means not of the church but of restored Israel.

Another instance. Men are talking much to-day of a League of Nations to secure permanent peace for the world. One might naturally think that to work for such an object would surely
be to do well. But the "doing well" will rather be the giving heed to the prophecy that shows that just such a league will be formed, and that the nations who compose it will be the support of the great enemy of God and His people in the last days, and that it is precisely when men say "Peace and safety" that sudden destruction shall come upon them. This will lead the Christian to stand aside from the schemes of even well-meaning men; the lamp of prophecy will have shed its light for him upon the dark future of the nations of Europe, and in giving heed thereto he will be approved of God, as doing well.

Thus we see that we are not asked to do great or wonderful things in order to win the coveted "well done." If the Lord had asked us to perform some very difficult task, we would have tried to do it. But He has asked us only to be faithful in little things. If greater things are entrusted to us, grace and help will be given sufficient to enable us to perform them. Faithfulness, however, is what will be rewarded, and this may be shown in connection with little things equally as with greater ones. For the word will be:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things!"

References to Passages of Scripture.
1 Matthew 25. 21.
2 John 13. 13-17.
3 1 Peter 4. 19.
4 Genesis 4. 7.
5 Nehemiah 6. 18.
6 Nehemiah 13. 8.
7 Nehemiah 13. 7.
8 Mark 7. 37.
9 James 2. 8.
10 Revelation 1. 6.

To those who serve the Lord.

Keep fresh in soul. We are hoping to influence other lives for Christ and to bless other lives; but we cannot if we are out of touch with Christ ourselves. If we are going to move other hearts, we must have hearts of our own kept big and fresh; we must have had our own souls touched. And yet there are people everywhere who have gotten out of touch somehow. Their souls have not been kept fresh, as it should be, and they have lost their power because of that. Lost their power! Their activities have outstript their communion, they have grown slack as to the latter. Be sure that your own spiritual life is kept in touch with God. If we are going to come to the highest spiritual efficiency, we must not only keep fresh in soul, but we must have a reserve spiritual power. You cannot have reserve spiritual power unless you constantly freshen your own soul. Build yourself up on your most holy faith. Pray in the Holy Ghost, keep yourself in the love of God. A great violinist went down to Princeton and played for the students and they were charmed with the performance, and gathered around him at the close and said: "How can you do it? Such wonderful music! That must be a wonderful violin!" He said: "It isn't in the violin."

"Well," they said, "what is it? Is it the bow?"
"No, it isn't the bow."
"Is it your arm?"
"No," he said, "it isn't my arm."
"Well, tell us what it is."
"I never try to play in public," he said, "until I first spend hours getting my own soul filled with music, and what you hear is simply the overflow of my soul."

So it must be with us. In the Master's presence we must get our souls filled with the music and blessedness of the message and then pour it out as the overflow in the ears of men. So shall we have such freshness of soul that there will be a constant reserve power; then we shall be spiritually efficient for our Lord.
"I will RUN in the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt have enlarged my heart." (Ps. 119. 32).

His commandments are not grievous yet how few seem eager to run in the way of them, and how many of those who desire to do so stumble and fail and seem not to have the spiritual energy and power that is necessary. Our verse seems to supply the cause. "I will run . . . when THOU hast enlarged my heart." The Christians at Corinth made a sad mess of their testimony, and were not obedient to the commandments of the Lord because they were so straightened, so narrowed in their spiritual affections, so little in the apprehension of the fullness of the love wherewith God loved them.

"BE YE ENLARGED" urged the Apostle, and we need to hear this word and to seek constant enlargement of heart. Many difficulties would disappear if we were strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we, being rooted and grounded in love, were comprehending WITH ALL SAINTS, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge that he might be filled with all the fullness of God.

It is said that when the Forth Bridge was being built, at one point two important girders refused by some inches to come together for the bolts to be driven through. Every mechanical method was tried to bring them together, but to no purpose, and finally all efforts were abandoned for the night. It was summer time, and the sunshine of the following morning was very hot, so much so that the great masses of metal expanded beneath the genial rays, and that was achieved by the touch of the sun's warmth that had defied all the efforts and mechanical wisdom and force. So it would be between this Christian and that, in this place and the other: oneness of mind would prevail, and communion together in faith, love and hope would be known if the hearts of all were warmed and expanded in the love that passeth knowledge. Rigid rules and regulations only leave hearts cold that should be warm. But when the heart is enlarged and the love that never faileth is in exercise we run in the way of His commandments. "And this is His commandment that ye should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." 

Begin at Christ's Circle.

The first circle which should engage a saint now is the circle of Christ's own. "To love one another as I have loved you"; that is my true and really only circle. I may have tangents striking off from that circle, but the moment I have another circle it is not Christ's. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." The friend of Christ can have no other circle but His. As an evangelist, I necessarily form a tangent to this circle, but my simple purpose is to lead souls into this circle. This circle is the Fort; I, as an evangelist, go on a foraging expedition to acquire material for the Fort; the Fort is my circle. I emerge from it; I seek the lost; I pity the suffering; I return to it. The evangelist is not true to his calling if he does not work with reference to the circle—the Fort from which he is agent. Every divinely instructed missionary or evangelist knows that he belongs to the Fort, and their hearts and hands would be devoted to the saints or to the search for them in the first instance—not that they would refuse relief to any sufferer, for we must do good unto all men, but their mission would be marked and characteristic of their being Christ's friends.
MIGHTY deeds have been wrought by the singing of God's people in the past, and God has signalized His approval of it in a marvellous way.

At the consecration of Solomon's Temple, when the ark of the covenant of the Lord was brought "into his place," we find the remarkable expression: "As the trumpeters and singers were as one . . . and praised the Lord . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud . . . the glory of the Lord filled the house" (2 Chron. 5.13, 14).

And when, some years later, Judah was attacked by the Ammonites and Moabites, the soldiers led by Jehoshaphat were joined by a large singing company, and the Holy Ghost records that "when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments and (the enemy) were smitten" (2 Chron. 20.22).

At the sanctification of the Temple in Hezekiah's time, the singers are to the forefront again, and we are told: "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began" and continued "until the burnt offering was finished" (2 Chron. 29. 27-28).

The burnt offering typified the death of Christ. What other effect than joyful song could the death of Christ produce when its meaning is understood?

The details of the ordination of the singers for this service of song, as appointed by David, are full of instruction (1 Chron. 6.31). They were elderly Levites, chief of the fathers, and their residence was in the Temple (Ps. 137.34). Their occupation was unceasing, "night and day" (1 Chron. 9.33). They were special objects of the King's care, and it was His commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, "every day his portion" (Neh. 12.47 and 11.23).

The singers were all "chosen" and "expressed by name" (1 Chron. 16.41). They were exempt from all kinds of taxes (Ez. 7.24). They were divided into two classes, singers of the "first" and "second degree" (1 Chron. 15.16-18).

Chenaniah was a striking type of Christ. He was "chief" singer, he was "instructor about the song," for "he was skilful" (1 Chron. 15.22).

The singers and the porters seem closely connected (1 Chron. 16.37, 38, 42), and both point to Christ. Of Him it is said, "He that openeth and no man shutteth" (Rev. 2.7). Singing is called "prophecy" (1 Chron. 25.1, 2, 3).

There were twenty-four courses of these singers "instructed in the songs of the Lord," so there was to be a perpetual service of song every hour of the day and night. God claimed the entire household of a singer. It was to be a whole praising family. Even the daughters are included (1 Chron. 25.5). Heman, the chief singer, had the largest family, fourteen sons and three daughters. "All these were for song" (ver. 6)

1 Chronicles 26.13 adds, "The small as well as the great, according to the house of their fathers."

This gives us another arresting picture of the Lord (Heb. 3.6). It is as Head over His own house that He is leading the praises in the midst of the church (2.12). The singers received their song direct from the king (1 Chron. 16.7). In Ezekiel 40., the singers are given the chambers with the south prospect. The sunshine helped them to praise. If we keep ourselves in the love of God our praise will not be silent.

The singers were divided into two companies. Asaph and his brethren were left before the ark to minister continuously (16.37). Heman and Jeduthan, with the rest that were chosen, were connected with the burnt offering (40.
But whether they were occupied with the work or with the Person of Christ, it was to be an unceasing ministry, "continually." What else but praise would such occupation call forth? Notice the expression "musical instruments of God" (ver. 42). Now turn to 2 Chronicles 29. 27: "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began." The death of Christ and worship are inseparable.

It appears that more singers were lost during the captivity than any other order. Only 128 return from Babylon (Ezra 2. 41). God, in His mercy, preserved Mattaniah the great-grandson of Asaph (Neh. 11. 7).

Psalm 134 is a song written expressly for the night singers. It is beautiful to trace the Lord as the great Singer in the Psalms. Listen to Him in Psalm 34. He is calling to us, saying "O magnify the Lord with Me, and let us exalt His name together" (ver. 3). Psalm 69. 30 is the utterance of Christ again. "I will praise the name of the Lord," etc. (Ps. 22.). After being delivered from the horns of the unicorn we find the Lord singing, and after calling on all those that fear Jehovah, and all the seed of Jacob to join in His song, He gives a reason for this singing: "For He (Jehovah) hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, but when He cried unto Him He heard" (ver. 24).

Take courage, ye saints of God. We may be only singers of second degree, but this is a song in which the weakest believer will gladly unite.

Psalm 27. 6: Once again the Lord gives us the motive for song, "Therefore I will sing, yea I will sing praises unto the Lord." Look too at Psalm 42. 8. The blessed dependent man, delighting during the night at Jehovah's song, "His song shall be with Me."

Resurrection produces a fresh outburst from His lips (Ps. 40. 3).

We may have been accustomed to think of the Lord as now on high, engaged in His blessed ministry of intercession, but there is also another side, He sings in the midst of His assembly (Heb. 2. 12).

Psalm 35. 28 is very wonderful. It is as though the Lord says to us: "The fact of your singing down there, provokes a fresh burst of praise from Me up here." "Let them shout for joy ... and My mouth shall speak of thy praise."

Hezekiah, another type of Christ, after speaking about the grave, and of being redeemed from the pit, says, "Jehovah was ready to save me, therefore we will sing my songs all the days."

Psalm 138. 5: "Sing in the ways of the Lord." His singing (ver. 1) produces singing on earth (ver. 4). Psalm 149. 5: "Sing aloud on their beds." Isaiah 42: "Inhabitants of the rocks sing." Surely that is ourselves. Solomon's songs were 1005 (1 Kings 4. 32). One feature of the millennium is "the dumb shall sing" (Is. 35. 6).

And we must not forget the memorable occasion, when on the eve of the blessed Lord's sufferings, with the sorrows of Calvary just before Him, He gathered His disciples around Him and they sang a hymn together before going out to the Mount of Olives.

It was when Paul and Silas sang lustily their praises to God, whilst incarcerated in stocks in the inner prison, that the means for their deliverance was effected (Acts 16. 25, 26).

We wait for that moment of joyful triumph when the "new song" shall burst from countless lips in heaven. "And they sung a new song, 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; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5. 9, 10).
The Song of Songs. Canticle II.

The Awakening of Love.

Comments on verses 8, 9 of Chapter 2 will be found in the July issue.

10. *My beloved spake and said unto me,*
   *Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

Hitherto the bride could only catch the sound of his voice, but now she hears the words of his mouth, and gladly repeats what her beloved says. The King would no longer be without his bride; he would call her away from the dark wintry plains to fairer, brighter scenes. His first word would arouse her from her circumstances: "Rise up." His next word proclaims how precious she is in his sight: "My love, my fair one." And lastly, she hears the clear, definite call: "Come away"—telling of the longing of his heart.

And is it not thus the Lord is speaking to His people to-day? Can we not hear His voice saying to us, "Rise up," as He seeks to arouse us from the spiritual torpor that overcomes us and holds us down to earth? Is He not saying to us, "Arise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest"? And again we are reminded by the Apostle, "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

But further, does not the Lord remind us how precious we are in His sight when He tells us how He loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church? Should it not move our hearts to their very depths to hear Him still call His bride "My love, my fair one," in spite of all our coldness, our wanderings, and our breakdown?

Moreover, do we not hear Him calling us away from this poor world, as He says, "Ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world"? And shall we not very soon hear His voice saying, "Come away," as He calls us to meet Him in the air?

11. *For, lo, the winter is past,*
   *The rain is over and gone;*

12. *The flowers appear on the earth,*
   *The time of singing is come,*
   *And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.*

13. *The fig-tree melloweth her winter figs,*
   *And the vines in bloom give forth their fragrance.*
   *Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!*

The King not only calls the bride from her home in the plains, but he unfolds to her a new world of blessing, where neither storm nor winter's blast can ever come, where all is beautiful to the eye, sweet to the ear, and pleasant to the taste—the land of flowers and singing, the land of green figs and the new wine. The presence of the bride is all that is lacking to complete the blessedness of that scene, and therefore the King concludes with the call, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!"

When the Lord gathered His sorrowing disciples around Him, on that last sad night before He left the world, He poured comfort into their troubled hearts by unfolding before them another world, a home that He was going to prepare, beyond this world's wintry night. The storm that was over our heads was about to burst on His Head, and He can look beyond the darkness and the judgment and open to our vision a new home, where faith will be changed.
to sight—the flowers will appear; where the time of weeping will be past, and the time of singing will be come; where the voice of the dove will be heard, as the saints join to sing the new song of glory to the Lamb. There indeed we shall feed on heaven’s fruit and drink of the new wine. And to complete the blessedness of that scene there only wants the presence of the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Long has been the waiting-time—the patience of Christ—but ere He went He said, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself,” and soon, very soon, the wintertime will be past, the waiting-time will be over, He will come to fetch His bride, and we shall hear His call, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!” Well may we sing, with such a prospect before us—

“Beyond the storms I’m going,
Beyond this vale of tears,
Beyond the flood’s overflowing,
Beyond the changing years,
I’m going to the better land,
By faith long since possessed,
The glory shines before me,
For this is not my rest.”

14. My dove, in the clefts of the rock; In the covert of the precipice,
The King has told the bride of a land of sunshine and song, when the winter will be past and the rain will be over and gone; but in the meantime she is yet in the land of winter and storm. But the one who is coming for her is the one who protects her. He likens his bride to a dove hiding in the cleft of the rock, and finding shelter from the storm in the covert of the precipice. And even so to-day, while waiting for the Lord, His people have enemies to oppose, and storms to face; but grace has provided a hiding-place and a covert from the storm. As we read, “A Man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32. 1, 2). In the cleft of that Rock—the Man Christ Jesus, with the pierced side—

how safe from the storm are the Lord’s poor people, who may truly be likened to a timid dove. Well may we sing—

“O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy pierced side,
’Tis only there in safety
And peace we can abide.”

Let me see thy countenance,
let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and
thy countenance is comely.

Through the lattice of her home, the King had revealed Himself to the bride, and spoken to her; but this will not satisfy his heart. He would fain see her countenance, and hear her voice. To his ear her voice is sweet, and in his sight her countenance is fair. May we not say the Lord is not content to reveal His glories to His people and converse with them? He longs for the day when His people will be presented to Him all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—perfect through the come-liness that He has put upon them. And He longs to hear them unite in saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

15. Take us the foxes,
The little foxes, that spoil the vineyards;
For our vineyards are in bloom.

The King has expressed His longing to see the face of His bride, and to hear her voice; but as the foxes, with their young, spoil the vineyards as they break into bloom, so oftentimes evils of a secret and subtle nature, may be at work which hinder the bride from yielding refreshment to the heart of the King.

Christ longs for the company of His people. His desire is to sup with them, and they with Him. To sit at His feet and hold communion with Him, is the “one thing needful.” Our busy service
He can dispense with, but our company He will not be without. Mary yielded this pleasant fruit to the Lord, but not so Martha. For the moment a fox had made her unfruitful. And how often our case is like Martha’s. Some fox— it may be, as nature counts, a little fox—is allowed to work unheeded in the secret of our hearts. Pride, covetousness, lust, unkind and bitter thoughts, murmuring and discontent, irritability and impatience, jealousy and envy, or vanity and levity, may be allowed unjudged, and communion is hindered, and the life becomes unfruitful. We need to keep sharp watch against the inroads of these foxes, and expel them with ruthless hand if they appear.

16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.

The King had paid a brief visit to his bride and was gone; but in that short interview he had awakened her affections, even as in a later day—a resurrection day—the Lord, at another short interview, could turn “slow hearts” into burning hearts. The King had revealed himself to the bride through the lattice: He had poured into her ear the report of a land of sunshine and flowers, a land of rest and song, a land of joy and plenty: He had called her to arise and come away to that happy land: He had disclosed the longings of his heart to see her face and hear her voice, and as she listens to these wonderful unfoldings, her heart is stirred, her love is awakened, and in the realization of his love and devotion, she exclaims, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” He becomes the absorbing object of her heart, through the realization that she is an object to him. And thus it is that Christ deals with His own to-day. He reveals Himself to us; He unfolds to us all that His heart has purposed for us; He tells us how He longs to have us with Him face to face, and to hear our voices as we raise the new song, and thus once again, as He talks with us by the way, He makes our slow hearts burn, and gives us the deep consciousness that He is ours and we are His. And thus, not through the bare statement of a truth, but, through the experimental realization of His love, He speaks to our hearts in such wise that each one is compelled to own with great delight, “My beloved is mine, and I am His.”

He feedeth among the lilies.

17. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.

The King has already likened the bride to the lily, and has unfolded to her all the thoughts of his heart, and thus she is brought to realize that his food and his delight is in herself. During the night of his absence and until the marriage-day, “He feedeth among the lilies.” During the night of Christ’s absence what is there to minister to His heart save His beloved people? It is still true, “He feedeth among the lilies, until the day break and the shadows flee away.” He would indeed have us with Himself in the glory where He is according to His prayer, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am,” but, during the time of shadows, He delights to come to His own, according to that other sweet word, “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” How true are the words of an old divine, “The believer hath a heartsome life, and a rich inheritance, Christ here, and Christ hereafter.”

Turn, my beloved: be thou like a roe, or a young hart,

Upon the mountains of Bethel.

The bride expresses the longing of her heart for other visits from the King, even as the roes and the harts come down from the mountains by night to feed in the plains. So, indeed, may we welcome every occasion on which the Lord comes into the midst of His people as they pass through this dark world.

Hamilton Smith.
WE have received a copy of The Banner of Israel, a magazine devoted to the futile effort of proving that the Anglo-Saxons are the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. The leading article deals with Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image (Daniel 2.) and asserts that the stone cut out without hands which smashes this image to powder is none other than the British Empire, which becomes in consequence the fifth and last great world-empire, filling the whole earth and enduring for ever. We are asked to give some help as to this.

We wonder that the writer does not see the falseness and folly of his own assertions. He says, "We therefore learn that the fifth kingdom [the stone] would be cut out of the Roman Empire without human effort." As a matter of fact, we learn no such thing. The legs of iron and feet of iron and clay in the image represent the Roman Empire, and the stone is not cut out of them at all. It never had any place in them. An image is something upon which the hand of man had wrought, the stone is untouched by the hand of man. It is a kingdom altogether diverse from all that had gone before it.

He continues, "Whether we take this language [i.e. a stone cut out without hands] in a political or geographical sense this is true of Britain. . . . For, geographically, it was separated from the continent of Europe by natural means, as geologists well know, and compared with Empire or Continent it was but a stone to a mountain." It will be noticed that in order to establish his theory on the geographical side the writer substitutes Europe for the Roman Empire, as though they were one and the same, which everyone knows they were not. Britain was separated from Europe geographically long before there was any Roman Empire for it to be cut out from. If Britain is the stone, and the vision is to be interpreted geographically, then it must smash the Continent of Europe to powder, not politically but geographically, and then it must grow until it becomes a great mountain, i.e. to use the writer's comparisons, it must cease to be an island and become a continent so vast as to fill the whole earth. To such an absurdity does this false interpretation of prophecy lead us.

Dealing with the matter politically, he says, "Our kingdom [England] was set up 'in the days of these kings' (ver. 44); and nearly all its wars have been directed against the extremities of the image, i.e. the nations comprising its feet. That we 'broke' them and have grown into a great Empire which fills the earth is also true. We need not elaborate this, as the Germans are never tired of telling the world for its edification that it was England which destroyed the might of Spain, France, and Holland, extended the Empire at their expense, and now aspires to universal rule. The career of the Empire is not yet finished, nor is the fate of the image, but as far as events have matured they prove an absolute identity between the Fifth Monarchy and the Anglo-Saxon dynasty."

But "nearly all its wars" have not been directed against the nations mentioned. "That we broke them" is not true, they still exist as nations and powers to be reckoned with. Nor is it true that the British Empire fills the earth, for it covers not more than one-fourth of the earth. Great it undoubtedly is, but it does not fill the earth, as the prophecy says the stone will after having broken the image to pieces, nor has it any desire to do so.

The vision and its interpretation are plain enough to those who have not some strange theory to uphold. The stone is a kingdom which is not built up or formed by the wisdom of statesmen, or founded upon victories gained by military leaders; no mortal hand carves out its destiny or builds up its power, but it is set up by the God of heaven. It is the introduction of Christ, according to Psalm 2., where God says, "Behold I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion."

"I will declare the decree: the Lord
hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. 2. 7, 8, 9).

It is not by a series of wars and conquests extending over the course of centuries, that the image is destroyed by this all-powerful "stone," but by one swift and decisive blow. This could only be by divine power, and this is the power that will operate when the moment comes. The image has not yet been destroyed, all the glory of its past will be gathered up in the last phase of it which has yet to appear, and all its power will be used to "make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17. 14).

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19. 15, 16).

Christians pray with more or less intelligence and fervour, "Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come." When the stone moves against the image it will be the answer to this prayer. Christ is the stone, He was rejected at His first coming by the great builders of this world's social, political and religious structure, for the princes of the world crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2. 8). But the rejected stone has been raised up. And "ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL, IT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER" (Matt. 21. 44). No other word than that is needed to show us who and what the stone is.

"Anglo-Israelism" is a pernicious system of teaching. In the first place, it diverts those who are caught by it from the heavenly hopes and out-of-the-world character of God's ecclesia—called out assembly. The calling out of this assembly from all nations is the special work of the Holy Spirit in this period, and to turn Christians after something else is the work of the devil, and means serious loss to those who are influenced by it, for such are not working with God, are not building according to the plans.

Then it denies the fact that a special intervention of God in judgment is necessary before righteousness and lasting peace can fill the earth, to which all Scripture bears witness. Then it connects with a Gentile nation—Gentile in spite of all efforts to prove the contrary—the glory and power which are Christ's alone, and which He will exercise in connection with His people Israel, who are yet to be redeemed by His power from amongst all nations where they are scattered. It turns the eye of hope and faith from Christ, who is the only hope of the church, or of Israel, or of the nations, and centres it on an Empire, which, though, in the mercy of God, may be somewhat more righteous and liberty-loving than others, will yet be weighed in the balances of God and found wanting, and will have to give place along with all others to that kingdom, "which shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2. 44). "FOR HE MUST REIGN, TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET." (Editor).

Glad Service.

H AS Christ become to us such a living, bright reality that no post of duty shall be irksome, that as His witnesses we can stay at the quiet homeside, or go to the distant service among the heathen, with hearts more than glad, more than satisfied, and most glad, most satisfied, when most sad and most stripped, it may be, of earthly friends and treasures? Let us put all of our treasures into His hands; then He will never need to take them from us on account of heart idolatry; and if in wisdom and love He removes them for a time, He will leave no vacuum, but Himself fill the void, Himself wipe away the tear. (H. T.)
Jerusalem.

The foundation stones of the Hebrew University have been laid at Jerusalem. The day was declared a public holiday and six thousand persons witnessed the ceremony, which was a deeply moving one and produced an effect which will long remain with those who witnessed it. The site is said to be the finest available. On the one hand it looks down upon Jerusalem, and on the other to the wilderness of Moab. It is remarkable how the hopes and ambitions of Jewry centre for the time being in the University, which is practically the first constructive effort of Zionism.

Dr. Weymann delivered an address in the course of which he said (we quote from Palestine):

"We have to-day laid the foundation stones of the Jewish University, which is to be erected on this hill, overlooking Jerusalem. Many of us will have had our thoughts cast back to the great historic scenes associated with Jerusalem, scenes that have become part of the heritage of mankind. . . . A week ago we were keeping the Fast of Ab, reminding us that the Temple had been utterly destroyed and the Jewish national political existence extinguished apparently for ever. But throughout the long centuries we, the stiff-necked people, have refused to acknowledge defeat, and 'Judea capta' is once more upon the eve of triumph. Here, out of the misery and desolation of war is being created the first germ of a new life. . . .

It seems at first sight paradoxical that in a land with so sparse a population, in a land where everything still remains to be done, in a land crying out for such simple things as ploughs, roads, and harbours, we should begin by creating a centre of spiritual and intellectual development. But it is not paradox for those who know the soul of the Jew. It is true that great social and political problems still face us and will demand their solution from us. We Jews know that when the mind is given fullest play, when we have a centre for the development of Jewish consciousness, then coincidently shall we attain the fulfillment of our material needs. I do not suppose that there is anyone here who can conceive of a university in Jerusalem being other than a Jewish one. The claim that the University should be a Jewish one rests upon the values the Jews have transmitted to the world, from this land. Here in the presence of adherents of three great religions of the world, which amid many diversities build their faith upon the Lord who made Himself known unto Moses, before this world which has founded itself on Jewish law, has paid reverence to Hebrew seers, has acknowledged the great mental and spiritual values the Jewish people have given to it, the question is answered. The University is to stimulate the Jewish people to reach further truth. Am I too bold if here to-day, in this place among the hills of Ephraim and Judah, I state my conviction that the seers of Israel have not utterly perished, that under the aegis of this University there will be a renaissance of the Divine power of prophetic wisdom that once was ours? . . . Manifold are the preparations yet to be made. Some of them are already in progress; some, like the actual building, must necessarily be postponed until the happy day of peace arrives. But from this day the Jewish University is a reality. Our University, informed by Jewish learning and Jewish energy, will mould itself into an integral part of our national structure which is in process of erection. It will have a centripetal force, attracting all that is noblest in Jewry throughout the world; a unifying centre for our scattered elements. There will go forth, too, inspiration and strength, that shall revivify the powers now latent in our scattered communities. Here the wandering soul of Israel shall reach its haven; its strength no longer consumed in restless and vain wanderings. Israel shall at last remain at peace within itself and with the world. There is a Talmudic legend that tells of the Jewish soul deprived of its body, hovering between heaven and earth. Such is our soul to-day; to-morrow it shall come to rest, in this our sanctuary. That is our faith."

This confidence in learning and the learned, these hopes, resting in the University and its professors instead of in the Lord and in His house which has yet to be built, and when built will be the centre of light and wisdom for the world, proves that Israel still has the heart of stone, the old heart of unbelief. They need "the new heart" and "the new spirit." This no government, however kindly disposed towards them, can give them. It is the Lord alone who can take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh (Ez. 36. 26). And when He does this they will walk in His statutes and keep His judgments, and will dwell in the land and be His people, and He will be their God.

To those who know what is the only way by which rest and blessing can come to these people of the weary foot, it is saddening to hear their accepted and
gifted leader saying about the University, "To-morrow our soul shall come to rest in this our sanctuary, that is our faith." We know well that it is in GOD'S sanctuary alone that they will find rest. How different the faith and hopes and blessed certainty of the sons of Korah, who, not looking to men and their wisdom, but to God's altar and His house, could sing, "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars. O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God, blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah." (Ps. 84. 3, 4). It is this faith in God that will not be disappointed.

Confidence in the wisdom of men instead of in God is not, however, peculiar to Jews. Gentiles are just as guilty of it, and so Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God, is to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness.

It does but prove the absolute necessity of the new birth that these people, after centuries of sorrow, should still be blind as to whence their blessing and true restoration will come. We quote again from Palestine.

"There is a pregnant story which illus- trates the conception Jews have of a great house of learning, and the part it has played, and will play, in Jewish history. When Jerusalem fell the most famous Rabbi of his day, Rabbi Jochanan Ben Zaccai, was asked by Titus where he wanted to go, and what he desired to have. The Rabbi answered: 'Give me Jabneh and her wise men.' Jabneh was then the seat of the Jewish Academy, and the illustrious Rabbi, in this memorable phrase, expressed his conviction that when the Jewish State and polity came down in ruins, Israel and Judaism would be saved by Jewish science and Jewish sages. The history of 1900 years is one long testimony to the profound truth and wisdom of the Rabbi's insight. Judaism and the Jewish people have been saved in exile by Jewish learning and Jewish sages. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem is the first edifice which the Jewish people erects on its return from exile to its home. As in the past a house of learning saved, so a Hebrew University is a guarantee of a renewed and freer life, a life along the great line of Jewish tradition."

No, it is not by learning that the Jews have been preserved from perishing as a nation, for the Greeks of old had learning as great as theirs and they perished. It is God who has preserved them, to whose word they are still a stiff-necked people, and it is through Christ that He will save them: that same JESUS whom they still number with the transgressors. Ed.

"Treasure in your Sacks."

THEIR sacks were the receptacle of the treasure which, said Joseph's steward, God had given to his brethren.

Very good; the gift was from God by whatever instrumentality He was pleased to give it; but then the sacks were both limited in capacity and very perishable. They could not contain much treasure, nor last beyond a brief period. They were of use, but only for the moment. And this is true of all sacks that carry our treasures here below—the treasure may outlive its sack, but the sack must fail. The "outer man" which carries the "inner" must certainly perish, while this is "renewed day by day." The casket wears out, the jewel becomes the brighter.

Hence, the Lord tells us to lay up our treasures in heaven (Matt. 6.) where it is secure against time, and thief, and rust. Heaven is no sack, no flimsy, fading, destructible shelter; it is a "safe" instead of a "sack." No rude hand may dislodge the treasure that has heaven for its depository.

If so, the affections and desires turn instinctively to heaven—like the bee to its hive, or the bird to its nest: "where your treasure is your heart will be also," a fact as natural, and a piece of philosophy as profound, as the greatest scientist could announce.

That treasure is Christ Himself, and the reason why heaven attracts the hearts of His saints is just because He is there. J. Wilson Smith.
Practical Thoughts on the Church. No. 2.

A City.

It is well to remember, in considering the church under this aspect, that it is not so presented during the present period of Christ's rejection. Now is the time of suffering with Him (see 1 Cor. 4. 8; Rev. 1. 9). The attempt to seize the "temporal power" and to administer the kingdom politically, during the absence of the King, has been every way disastrous. The church takes the character of a city, as descending out of heaven, invested with the glory of God, when the throne of God and of the Lamb is in it (Rev. 21. 9, 10, and 22. 3). We do indeed read of a "Jerusalem above" and that "we have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"; but these are spiritual ideals, not present actualities, and are fulfilled to us now in the person of Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. We may add that in man's day he too has built many cities, Enoch and Babel being those first named. In these no foundations are mentioned, and faith looks for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

A city is a centre of authority and administration, and it is in the coming age, when the throne of God and of the Lamb (the crucified One must have His rightful place) is in it, that the church is presented under this symbol. The twelve angels at the gates, on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb on the twelve foundations of the wall, point to three forms of government appointed by God, which have a place in the city. It is not difficult to appreciate that the whole description has been given, not only that we might know what awaits us in the future, but that there should be a moral correspondence now with our actual state hereafter. If the church is to be a witness of the surpassing riches of divine grace, during the reign of righteousness; so now grace should be testified to by the offering prayer for all men, and the going forth of the gospel for all, as in the day to come the water of life will issue from the throne in the city. The loyal heart will not shrink from judging itself by this standard, and will discern in the transparent gold, the walls great and high, the ever-open gates, the jewelled foundations, and the character of the light, symbols of virtues which should come out both individually and collectively.

It seems worthy of note that when we come to the close of the description of the heavenly city, the Spirit ceases the employment of symbols, with evident purpose to stir our affection by using the simplest words to convey the sense of what our joys will be in that day of glory: "His servants shall serve Him," more literally, "His bondmen's hall yield Him priestly service, they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever." This is not description of the city, but the plain statement of the portion of those who compose it.

The Body.

Just as the revelation of the building of His assembly, in Matthew 16., is the answer by the power of Christ to His rejection on earth, so the great truth of the body of Christ is the triumphant answer to the rejection of testimony to Him in heaven. This testimony given in the early chapters of "Acts," was opposed by the exterminating persecution raised by the devil and led by Saul of Tarsus; but just when success seemed within his grasp, the power of the Lord was exercised, not to crush by judgment, but to save by grace. The voice that stayed the persecutor in his mad career assures him that the apparently defenceless folk he is seeking to extirpate from the earth are one with the
glorified Nazarene in heaven. This is the first intimation of the mystery, which it was afterwards the glory and joy of the Apostle to make known. Had his first purpose succeeded, is it too much to say that the power of the throne in heaven would have suffered defeat, and that the hosts of Satan were mightier than the exalted Head?

It is surely a stimulating thought, that all the power of the throne is in exercise to maintain us here in some measure of true testimony, while it is also solemnly true that all the power of Satan is in operation to oppose. The fact is that the body is sustained here in life, "Christ in you, the hope of glory"; but that unity which is evidently the prime thought connected with the body (see I Cor. 10, 17; 12. 13, Rom. 12., etc.) has as to its manifestation grievously failed. Nevertheless it is the privilege of every gathering of saints, as of every individual believer, to walk in the light of this unity.

The figure of "the body" is employed as applying to the church in three ways in Scripture. In chapter 12. of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, it is said "ye are Christ's body," not precisely "the body of Christ," which would exclude believers elsewhere, but the saints at Corinth had that character locally, and the analogy of the human body is largely developed, in order to move them to act towards one another according to this relation. Comparing this with Romans 12. we find there the many owned "one body in Christ," yet different measures of faith are recognized and exhortations as to individual responsibility given. Conversely, in Corinthians instruction is afforded that the diversities of gift should not interfere with practical unity.

In Ephesians 1. 22, on the other hand, the body is viewed according to the ultimate purpose of God, and embraces all the saints who have had part in the baptism of the Spirit during the time of the sojourn of the church on earth. Elsewhere it is used to designate all the saints on earth at any one time; thus it will be seen that the body never represents anything incomplete, for no thought of mutilation or imperfection would be suitable to Christ as Head.

In this last sense, it is mentioned three times in Ephesians 4. 1–16. In verse 4 as a motive for keeping the unity of the Spirit, for the body is one. In verse 12 we see it being edified by means of the ministry of gifts, given from the Head. In verse 16 the whole body is seen in the exercise of the functions proper to each contributing part, with the result of the entire structure building itself up in love. The language is worthy of the closest attention; a modern translation may be given to stimulate thought: "Dependent on Him, the whole body—its various parts closely fitting and firmly adhering to one another—grows by the aid of each contributing link, with power proportioned to the need of each individual part, so as to build itself up in the spirit of love." This will be effected in the measure that each member carries with him in his intercourse with others that portion of the love of Christ which he is enjoying, thus becoming a channel of that love to them. But even in the passage at the close of Ephesians 1., where, as we have seen, the body is regarded according to the ultimate purpose of God, as the fullness of Him who fills all in all, there is a present and practical application to us: for the prayer is that the saints might know consciously, as working towards them, the surpassing greatness of the power of that might, which has already wrought in the resurrection and exaltation of the Son of Man to where He now is. In considering the call of the bride, the operation of this power was applied to the gracious energy of the Spirit in bringing her from the distant land of her nativity into relation with the bridegroom in the promised land, but its peculiar manifestation is in the realm of death, sin's penalty, whose power is thereby broken. The
answer to the prayer will be found in our conscious union with Christ now. A further result of the experience of this power, by which Satan has been absolutely defeated, will be found in victory over him and his wiles as in chapter 6. In Psalm 25, the Lord is seen exulting in the putting forth of this power for Himself, and in all the joy of that triumphant scene it is our high privilege to enter in association with Him.

Now let us examine under three heads how the fact of the unity of the body, ever true in Christ, should affect us in our assembly relations. In the first place it is the Spirit’s antidote to the various forms of independent action, the result of the operation of man’s will in divine things. It is quite natural, in the present state of Christendom, for local assemblies to isolate themselves, as though action could be taken without reference to others; but the body is one, and any action rightly taken according to Matthew 18. 18 carries with it a claim upon the acceptance of all others, owning the same unity, and this is, or should be, universal. Difficulty there will be in carrying out the truth; the foolish pretension to infallibility, in order to impose an unrighteous decree, must of course be refused, and a remedy found in patiently turning to God and the word of His grace. The working of party spirit will too often carry some away and hasty action alienate others, but if unity is sought in love, gathering power will be manifested and souls blessed.

Secondly, in partaking of the “one bread,” at the Lord’s table, we give visible expression to the unity of the one body (1 Cor. 10. 17); therefore any fellowship which does not in principle embrace every member of the body falsifies the character of the institution, and it does not seem too much to assert that a fellowship based on narrower lines than the unity of the body has no claim to set forth the Lord’s table. This follows from the statement in chapter 11, that when, in the assembly, each one was taking before others his own supper, this was not the Lord’s supper at all. In connection with this subject I may quote a few sentences from a letter recently written. “Founded on the communion of the blood and of the body of Christ, partaking of the table of the Lord (which is all that is said of it) is the answer of faith to our wonderful position as of the body of Christ, setting forth as we partake, what we are, with all that are Christ’s as one body; while chapter 11. is what we do as answering to the deeply affecting desire of the Lord expressed through Paul, even from the glory where He is. . . . It is the centre of the assembly’s worship, where with full hearts we may give back to Him in praise something of the fulness of what we have received.”

In practice, under present conditions, it will be found impossible to gather all, too many of the members not being manifested as such; but here the Colossian side of the mystery helps, for the unity of the body is formed not only by the baptism of the Spirit, but also by Christ indwelling each one as life (Col. 1. 27 and 3. 11), and it is important to see that when He who indwells is expressed, as in Colossians 3. 12–14, a fellowship of life thereby exists, no human arrangement being needed to form it. If, then, any in whom Christ is practically manifested are by authority excluded, it is evident that Christ is also excluded in the member in whom He lives. By acting in accordance with this truth, holiness and unity are both maintained, and the Lord is honoured both vitally and in the institution.

But this leads directly to my third point, that, however scriptural our thoughts, and correct our statements, when we come to the carrying out the truth so that it should have a living expression, all will be in vain, if love is not only taught but practised, for love is the uniting bond of perfectness. As illustrating this, we may notice how in Ephesians 4. it is not enough to exercise forbearance—if that were lacking, open
violence might result—but in order to keep the Spirit's unity forbearance must be "in love"—the difference is immense. Reference may also be made to 1 Corinthians 16. 13, 14, at a moment when strenuous action was demanded; the word is "let ALL that ye do be done in love."

It is well known how the Spirit has wrought in the last days of Protestantism, to promote unity among believers, and how the enemy has counteracted this purpose, all too successfully, so that the meetings of saints formed by the energy of the Spirit to gather to the Lord's name, as a witness to unity, have in our hands too often become a means of maintaining division. Nevertheless the truth abides in the Person of our exalted Head on high, and in the Spirit and Word below, and if the beloved disciple had no greater joy than this, that his children were walking in the truth, we know he was truly reflecting the mind of heaven. Does it not stimulate our souls to seek for ourselves and others, that this should be true? It is to help in the fulfilment of this that this paper has been written.

C. E. H. WARREN.

"The Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3. 13).
"The second man is out of heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 47).
"As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly"

JOHN 3. 13 is the "fons et crigo" of the One revealed in Jewish Scriptures as "Son of Man." Such as Psalm 8. 4, 80. 17, Dan. 7. 13, etc., but not yet known to the Jews in the true glory of His person. Any idea they might have of Him would be merely what the title would naturally suggest to their minds. It would lack entirely its divine and heavenly nature, and all depending on it would be deficient to it in that character. John 3. 13, as indeed all the gospel in an extended way, is the assertion of His claim to a divine and heavenly mission, exceeding the bounds of Judaism as conceived by their carnal minds (cf. John 8. 15), while at the same time fulfilling the purport of it according to God. In lowering Him in their "judgment after the flesh," they lowered the idea of their own religion; and, relatively, in so doing, they nullified their capacity to understand Him, and with Him the purposes of God through Him with respect to themselves. John 3. 13 asserts His heavenly character. It is not His place, locally, "Who is in heaven" is participial, giving His character; not a time tense, as though He was personally there at that time.

Now if John 3. 13 carries us back to the fountain head, the divine and heavenly nature of Jesus, 1 Cor. 15. 47, 48 carries us forward therefrom to the purposes of God in man; and plainly they cannot be effectuated in the first man, "out of earth, made of dust," εκ γῆς, χαλικός. The second man is "out of heaven." They are not, the one from earth, the other from heaven, leaving as it were earth and heaven behind them; but they are out of earth and heaven respectively, bringing their characteristics with them. (For the use of these two prepositions cf. Rev. 21. 2). As therefore John 3. 13 sets forth the divine and heavenly nature of Jesus, the "Seed" of the purposes of God in man, so 1 Corinthians 15. 47, 48 sets forth the fruit of this seed in a new race after Christ, for "as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly"; and that not only in character now, but in due time in fashion likewise; for "as we have borne the image, εἰκών, of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

E. CROSS.
5. His Relation to "All Things."

It is little to be wondered at that so many questions have been raised from time to time concerning the Son of Man. The first on record is the inquiry of Bildad the Shuhite in Job 25. In view of God's majesty and holiness, he asks how man can be right with Him—"Man, that is a worm? and the Son of man, which is a worm?" David next asks in Psalm 8, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?" (He finds the answer: Bildad did not. Three times is that answer cited in the New Testament, as we shall presently see.) Next, the Lord Himself inquires of His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matt. 16. 13). Then, in John 12. 34, we have the Jews asking, "How saiest Thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" The words of Christ, uttered some while before, had evidently rankled in their thoughts. It is in chapter 8. 28 they are recorded. Finally, in Hebrews 2. 6, it is again questioned, "What is man? or the Son of Man?"

1. In Hebrews 2 the important matter in view is, Who is to be over all in the coming age of blessing, when the powers of that age shall publicly benefit the habitable world which is to come, when all iniquities shall be forgiven and all diseases healed, when Satan shall be cast out and the glory of the Lord shall flow over the earth—who then shall have "all things" put under him? The answer is, Man—the Son of Man! Whatever place angels may have had in the past, we are told, "He has not subjected to angels the habitable world to come of which we speak" (5, N.T.). Great warriors have risen up at various times and sought to get the world at their feet; Alexander and Napoleon tried and failed. One, and One only has God destined for that exalted place; and that One He first made "a little inferior to angels for the suffering of death"; and then—after He had tasted death for "everything"—He raised Him from among the dead and set Him over "everything," crowning Him at His right hand "with glory and honour."

What a place for man! for the Son of Man! and what grace it is on His part of which we read—He associates us with Him as companions in His glory and gladness, being "anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions (1. 9). Nevertheless, Ephesians 1 carries us higher still, as we shall see. We do not yet behold all things put under Him publicly; but the place is already His; and, at His coming again, He will appear in His glory; and, "when Christ who is our life is manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory." Meanwhile, in the language of Hebrews 2. 9, faith says, "We see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (N.T.). How worthy He is to be glorified thus!

2. In Ephesians 1. 21-23 the Spirit takes us up to the heavens, to see Christ set down at the right hand of God; where the supreme place is His over "all things" in heaven as well as in earth; where He is "above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come"; where, citing Psalm 8, with more extensive application, it is said, He has put all things under his feet. This is according to the counsels of God; and, wonderful to relate, we are again seen associated with Christ in this still more glorious supremacy, and in a still more intimate way, for we read, God "gave Him to be Head over all things to the assembly, which is
We feel it impossible to express the excellent grace and beauty of this relationship, or to find words to indicate the marvellous majesty and dignity of it, or to evince the profound blessedness and unfading fullness of its everlasting stability and glory. God and Man,—Man and God,—in relations that are according to the love of God!—we are so accustomed to the opposite,—we hardly know how to approach this divine theme. May the Holy Spirit guide us.

Before the earth's foundations were made, before the great mountains were formed, before the fountains and rivers flowed, the waters of the sea appeared, the divine pleasure centred in man; so we are told in that incomparable eighth of Proverbs. Wisdom, whose counsel, piety, strength, understanding, riches, honour, and enduring righteousness are abundant, is personified there. This is the wisdom of God,—"that hidden wisdom which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor. 2.7)—our Lord Jesus Christ. He was "daily His delight rejoicing always before Him" (30) in that far-distant time; and it was then, before the world was made, that the divine thoughts travelled forward and found pleasure in man, as the next verse tells us: "rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men." What if Satan should mar God's handiwork when that fair creature man appeared on the earth? What if he should fall under sin, death and corruption? What of the divine pleasure then? Christ would come to redeem him; come into his place, though Himself be sinless; come to bear his sins, and...
be made sin to righteously deliver him; come to vanquish His captor through death, and rise again in triumph; securing man's everlasting blessing for the pleasure of God; and, Himself, the Son of Man, becoming the new Head of those He has thus saved and brought into new life; His delights in the sons of men, instead of being for ever lost, are thus infinitely greater, and eternally secure.

It was in Him, the Son of Man, that God found His delight; and the place of supreme dominion over all things was that which He counselled for Him; but, first, He made Him "a little lower than the angels." After the failure of the created man, it must have given great joy to God to see the Son of Man, in all His lowly grace and perfectness, passing through scenes of sin and violence to His praise and honour. Amidst the gloom and darkness of this world, how lovely His path shone, in heavenly light, under the approving eye of God! He walked in Jewry, but the Greeks came, and said, "We would see Jesus." This was a divine indication that God would gather the Gentiles as well as Israel to Him; and He said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Nevertheless, He must die first, therefore He added, "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." The Son of Man must be lifted up! therefore He goes up to Jerusalem.

In all His ways He was acceptable to God. "I do always those things that please the Father," He said; nevertheless we read, "The Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourg He, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him." Thus did fallen man, Jews and Gentiles, to the One who was so perfect in God's sight; but He rose from the dead the third day, and God exalted Him to His throne. Rejected of men, the Son of Man was seen by Stephen standing at the right hand of God. There was the One whom God delighted to honour—Man in the highest place in heaven—the Son of Man glorified! Thence He will be brought forth publicly soon, as Daniel 7. 13 foretells, "with the clouds of heaven," and receive dominion and glory over the earth, where He was so shamefully treated before.

Samson's riddle will be explained in Him. Honey and meat abundantly will be brought out of the strong and out of the eater; and God shall be eternally honoured by the Son of Man, though He had been so deeply dishonoured through the created man, Adam. The administration in heaven and earth shall, in the hands of the Son of Man, be to the praise of God's glory. "Hereafter," the Lord Jesus said to Nathaniel, "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." He will still be the delight of the heart of God. He was so in His humiliation: He will be so in His exaltation. Ruin may come into God's creation, as Psalm 80. says it had done in Israel; but the Man of the right hand, the Son of Man whom God had made strong for Himself, is the divine resource in the presence of any failure. He is the One who brings everything right for God Himself eventually. Moreover, not only is He always well pleasing to God, but He has glorified God. Truly God has already glorified the Son of Man, as we have seen;—He has glorified Him in Himself; but, what is so precious indeed to think of, is, God has been glorified by the Son of Man! For ever Man will be present with God as His glorifier! What an eternal triumph in Man over Satan who led man to dishonour His Creator.

At the last passover, when Satan had entered into the betrayer, Judas; and when Judas had gone out; Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." It was Satan himself who entered into the son of perdition: not merely a demon. Now he had gone out;
and the true relations of God and man are declared by the Lord. **MAN GLORIFIED BY GOD and GOD GLORIFIED BY MAN**. The former in the glory above, and the latter through the cross.

"By Him Who died
And all God's nature glorified;
His righteousness and grace displayed
When Christ for sin atonement made."

And he shall reign till all things are brought into order according to the mind and counsel of God; then He will give up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father; and, Himself, as Man, to whom God had put all things in subjection, shall be subject; and God shall be all in all;—God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The deep and infinite blessedness of this is inexpressible. God, in all the glorious perfection of His own nature and being, all in all: Man, in all the beauteous grace that is seen in Christ, eternally subject to God, whom He has glorified and who has glorified Him.

7. The Son of Man and Angels.

"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24. 27). "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (30). "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory" (25. 31). With such stirring and astonishing language does the Spirit speak of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ;—as the lightning shineth!—on the clouds of heaven (N.T.)!—and all the holy angels with Him!

These three expressions from our three verses all appear to signify the presence of angels at that glorious time. He "maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire," we are told. Of one angel we read, "His countenance was like lightning." Again, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (Ps. 68. 17): "Who maketh the clouds His chariot" (104. 3). Psalm 68. 18 is quoted of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ in Ephesians 4. 8; and we bring these verses together, to show from Scripture that, both in figure and fact, the attendance of angels is indicated at that glorious time, when the Son of Man comes. The presence of "clouds" has often been remarked by students of the Word. "Behold He cometh with clouds!"—The assembly will be caught up "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air!"—and, "a cloud received Him out of their sight" when He left the earth! There are numerous other scriptures, but we give these as elucidating our subject.

It is very touching to think of the wonderful service of angels in relation to man; and we best learn this as we follow their activities in regard to the One who in grace has made us His for ever. In connection with both His humiliation and His exaltation above them, we see their beautiful and unselfish ministry; and when He comes in majesty and splendour they come with Him. As He lay a babe in the manger of the stable it was an angel who announced to the shepherds that the Saviour was born; and a multitude of the heavenly host joined him, and voiced their praise to God. "Glory to God in the highest," said they; and, seeing in that child the pledge of what is yet to come, when He returns to reign, they added, "and on earth peace"; and, though angels were passed by, for "He took not on Him the nature of angels," yet they rejoiced as they saw man to be the special object of the divine counsel and delight, and they concluded their wonderful laudation by saying, "GOOD PLEASURE IN MEN!" Then they departed and returned into heaven.
It was true, as Psalm 91. 11 foretold, the angels of God were given charge concerning Him. Satan, knowing this, tried to prevail upon Him to tempt God. In this the enemy of Christ failed, as in the other temptations; but, when these sore trials were passed, and the forty days and forty nights in the wilderness without food were over, we are told, "Angels came and ministered to Him." Moreover, when in the garden of Gethsemane, He faced the bitter cup which He was about to drink, and knelt alone before God His Father, and prayed concerning it, "an angel appeared to Him from Heaven strengthening Him." When He had passed from among the dead, an angel rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and sat upon it; saying to the women, who came there early, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and say to His disciples that He is risen from the dead." Moreover, when in the garden of Gethsemane, He faced the bitter cup which He was about to drink, and knelt alone before God His Father, and prayed concerning it, "an angel appeared to Him from Heaven strengthening Him." When He had passed from among the dead, an angel rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and sat upon it; saying to the women, who came there early, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and say to His disciples that He is risen from the dead." Two angels spoke later to some who were in perplexity, when they found the sepulchre empty, and said, "He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke to you, being yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinners and be crucified, and rise the third day.'" Then, when He ascended to heaven, as the disciples stood looking upward, two appeared to them, who also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Angels were given charge over Him, they ministered to Him, strengthened Him, spake of His resurrection and of His words, and gave His message to the women; they told the wondering disciples that this same Jesus who had ascended to heaven would return; meanwhile their service continues today for those who belong to Christ, as we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out for service on account of those who shall inherit salvation" (Heb. 1. 14. N.T.). When, however the Son of Man returns in glory, we see them having a very special place with Him.

First of all, when Christ comes for the assembly, the archangel's voice will be heard, and we shall be caught up "in the clouds." Then, when the Son of Man is brought to receive the dominion, glory and kingdom, that all on earth should serve Him, He comes "with the clouds of heaven" (Dan. 7. 13). In Revelation 14. 14 (the last mention of the Son of Man in Scripture) he is seen with a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand, and He sits on a white cloud—it is His chariot, as He comes to execute judgment. We are told that He will send His angels (for they will then be the Son of Man's), and they shall gather the offensive and the lawless out of His kingdom. The harvestmen are the angels (Matt. 13. 39, 41). The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will render to each according to his doings. In Luke 12. 8 we read, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; but He that shall have denied Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (N.T.).

We see then the high and honoured place they have in relation to the Son of Man. If John beholds a Lamb in the midst of the throne in heaven, and the saints and the living creatures immediately surrounding Him, he also sees "many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders and their number was ten thousand times ten thousands and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." They delight in His exaltation and glory; they rejoice to ascribe perfect praise to Him; they gladly own the value of His death; and they responsively answer to the divine decree—"LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."
Lessons that Christians may learn from the War.

2. Unity and Concentration.

In the war that the issues at stake were so tremendous that every other consideration must yield to the one great object of beating the enemy. German statesmen and war lords evidently imagined that Britain had so many internal troubles, and that there was so much disaffection throughout her colonies and dependencies that she would be unwilling to enter the war, or would be unable to prosecute it with any prospect of success.

This malignant hope was soon proved to have no foundation. The colonies rallied to the help of the Mother Country; the great dependency of India—said to be seething with disaffection—proved loyal at heart, and gave men and money freely to the cause. Nearer home the rebellion that was threatening in Ireland melted away, and the militant suffragettes became quite gentle-spirited, except in their attitude towards the mighty foe.

The party spirit in politics—always a most conspicuous feature in the British Parliament—slowly died away, and it became evident that there must be a Coalition Government, composed of men of all parties, prepared to be for the time of no party, but all for the good of the State.

Only a few days ago the Secretary for War (Lord Milner) spoke as follows on this subject: "It is an uplifting thought that in this, the fiercest trial through which our country has ever passed, we are a more united nation than we have ever been in living memory. Party warfare, class differences, industrial disputes, all exist no doubt, but they are all submerged. We are ashamed to pursue them when the existence of our country and the whole future of humanity are at stake."

If such words can be truly uttered in regard to the nation's unity in face of the menace of Prussian militarism, is it possible to speak in a similar strain as to the state of the church in the presence of an adversary more formidable by far than any foe of flesh and blood could be?

For what saith the Word? "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6.12), and Satan also works by cunning craftiness, waiting to deceive. How glad we should be to answer the question in the affirmative! Instead, alas, we must reluctantly confess that division, discord, and contention are still rampant in the ranks of Christians who profess allegiance to the Prince of Peace. And this is part of the devil's plan.

There are times, of course, when those who own the truth of God's Word and bow to its authority must cease to walk with others who make light of its teaching, and set up standards of their own, disparaging the Person and work of our beloved Lord. Unity at the expense of truth is disloyalty to the word of truth, to the Spirit of Truth, to Christ who is the Truth, and to God from whom all truth has come. But the serious admission must regretfully be made that dogmatic assertions, questions, disputes as to the methods of service—all these things and many more, serve as a pretext for open rupture, the setting up of party tabernacles, and the wrecking of Christian fellowship. It is nothing short of treachery to Christ, for those who profess to be under the leadership of the Lord Jesus to ignore His plain commandments, and to fight amongst themselves for party shibboleths and non-essential phrases, for there is no surer way than this of bringing the Lord's name into discredit and of hindering the work of God. Let us in God's name close our ranks, judge our "striving about words," and stand together firmly for the Faith. Fellowship, Love, Unity, Inter-dependence—these are the terms we must express in a practical way.

Let us cultivate love for all the saints, prayer for all men—let us "love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King," and set our face sternly against party spirit, sectarianism, and every element of cleavage. God help us so to do!

WALTER B. WESTCOTT.
"In His Hands."

IN His strong hands who all commands
How blest to be,
To know no fear, with Him so near,
WHO DIED FOR ME.

Ah, in that hour, infinite power
Was all His own,
Yet all laid by He chose to die,
Forsaken, lone:

That with Him where shines glory fair,
Where He has gone,
He might me bring, His praise to sing,
Through ages long.

What will it be, His face to see!
How blest the thrill,
When, this scene past, He shall at last
My vision fill!

How will the sight give great delight
Beyond degree,
When, each veil drawn, I see the Man
Who died for me.

Oh joy supreme, to meet the gleam
Of His love-smile!
How does it cheer, while waiting here
A little while!

I trusted Him in life's full brim
Of buoyant youth:
I said, Oh Lord, I take Thy word
And trust Thy truth.

The foregoing lines were written by the beloved author of them during his last distressing illness. He is now with the Lord. The following letter gives some touching details of his last few days on earth.

My Dear Brother in Christ,
On being called early one morning to the bedside of our beloved brother, A. Stevenson, who had had a time of great suffering and was now nearing that time when he would behold the One whom he had loved and served so long, I hastened to see him, to find him just able to whisper those lovely lines—

"The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks."

His sister said, "What do you think he has been saying?—'I would like to send you word of the welcome I get up there.'"

I said, "But A., you do not need to wait till then, you can tell L—— now what sort of a reception you will get.'" A happy smile lit his face as he motioned for his well-worn Bible and told me to turn to the forty-fifth Psalm and read from the tenth verse. When I reached the middle of the fifteenth verse he raised his feeble hand and said, "'With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought in'; that's it, that is the welcome."

With love in the Lord,
Yours affectionately,
J. E. Tait.
The following is a brief song of praise such as he loved to sing to the Lord.

"The King in His Beauty."

Psalm 45  

LIKE a pent-up fountain bursting,
Like an overflowing well,
Like a ready writer thirsting,
I must of Thy beauty tell.

Thou art fairer than the fairest;
Is the bursting of my song.
Thou art rarer than the rarest,
All the sons of men among.

Grace into Thy lips is pouring,
God hath all Thy worth confessed,
Far beyond all creatures soaring,
He hath made Thee, the Most Blest.

Thou hast loved the way of rightness,
Hated that abhorred by God.
Path of light's translucent brightness,
To His glory Thou hast trod.

Therefore hath He Thee anointed
With joy's oil in great degree,
Far beyond all those appointed,
Thy companions yet to be.

All thy robes with myrrh are smelling—
Cassia, aloes, all perfumes,
From Thy palace—love's own dwell-
ing—
Where eternal beauty blooms,

And Thy love is ever vernal:
Vast as ocean without shore—
PEERLESS MAN AND GOD ETERNAL,
Thou art blest for evermore!

Oh! the perfect moral beauty!
Oh! the wisdom of His ways!
Sacred privilege, not duty,
'Tis to bow and give Him praise—

For His wisdom, all-excelling,
For His truth so firm and sure,
For His love that knows no quelling—
GIVE HIM GLORY EVERMORE!

A. STEVENSON.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

A TITLED lady, on whose estate dear
A.S. lived, sat by his bedside not many days before he passed into eternity, though she went before him, unexpectedly and suddenly. He said to her, "If you will permit me, I should like to repeat to you part of a verse from the end of the second Psalm—'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.'" The lady was visibly affected as he spoke these words, the truth of which he had proved so long. We commend this blessed sentence to the notice of our readers as he commended it to his visitor. They are familiar words, and simple words, but how full is their meaning for all who do put their trust in Him, who is the Son of the Father, the Saviour of sinners, and the coming King. There is a helpful note in the Scofield Reference Bible on this sentence. It is as follows, "'Trust,' is the characteristic O.T. word for the N.T. 'faith,' 'believe.'" It occurs 152 times in the O.T., and is the rendering of Hebrew words signifying to take refuge (e.g. Ruth 2. 12); to lean on (e.g. Psa. 56. 3); to roll on (e.g. Psa. 22. 8); to stay upon (e.g. Job. 35. 14).

How full of significance! We come as strangers, having no claim upon Him except that which our need gives, and we find A REFUGE in our loneliness and destitution and fear of judgment to come (richly deserved), under His wings. There we are ever safe.

He gains our confidence; we feel that however others may treat us, He will never fail; we may LEAN UPON His strong arm in our weakness; but better still we may LEAN ON His bosom in our sorrow, as John did. We are welcome there; wonderful place of comfort and rest!
We may ROLL ON Him our cares. Whatever bewilders or threatens to affright us, we may cast upon Him—not some, but all our care, for He careth for us, and His peace, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison our hearts and minds.

And we may STAY OURSELVES UPON Him and not judge by appearances, or listen to the questions of our own hearts, or the croakings of them that believe not. He is all, and He is true, and though dark the night and fierce the storm, He abides our rock, our anchor, and our hope.

"I AM NOT ASHAMED," wrote the man who knew Him best and so had the best right to speak, “FOR 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.”

Yes, “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” The dying saint could not have quoted better and more suitable words to the lady who was so soon and so suddenly to pass into eternity, for all a helpless sinner needs is Jesus. And all a suffering saint needs is Jesus; whether we labour or languish, and whether we live or die, now and for ever He is all-sufficient. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

A.S. sent the following last message to his brethren four days before he died—

"Thank God for the day I trusted in Christ;
Thank God He has kept me at rest, and sufficed;
And soon where His glory surpasses compare
I shall be with Him, and FOR EVER be there."

Qualified to Serve.

A REAL servant of the Lord, if checked and hindered on one side, is ready for whatever opportunity offers, however small and insignificant it may be, like Moses, who though not able to deliver a nation, will yet help the women who went to water their flocks (Ex. 2. 17). The Lord wants servants who can begin with much patience, and end with "having nothing, but possessing all things" (see 2 Cor. 6.). No servant of God ever proved himself fit for service but according as he was able to act under pressure. Joseph was most unrighteously cast into prison, and most ungratefully detained there, before he was fit for the position which God had designed for him. David had to endure at Ziklag a combination of the greatest sorrows and distress before he was fit for the throne of Israel.

It is of the greatest importance that we should know in our own souls the reality of the truth which we propound. If we learn it in the secret and solitude of God’s presence we shall be saved from the stumbles which are necessary to convince our consciences that we have gone beyond our measure and that there is in us more sound than substance. My power depends on my being a practical exponent of the truth which I present.

A man devoted to the interests of Christ is like a spruce fir tree; one shoot striking upwards, not detaching from, but encouraging all other branches to follow.

The low state of soul in others gives the one who is devoted to Christ the opportunity to show the right way: to be a leader in lowliness and devotedness.
These wells may suggest many things, but, pondering the words, there rises to mind the Saviour's illuminative saying: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." With this springing well of living waters then, in mind, let us turn to that old-world incident in Gen. 26. 18. "Isaac digged again the wells they had digged in the days of Abraham his father."

(1) Here we find one of the primary truths of God: EVERY GENERATION MUST KNOW GOD FOR ITSELF. EVERY MAN MUST FIND GOD FOR HIMSELF. Abraham's labour was of no avail for his son. The fact that the father oft had drunk deep of that refreshing spring could not slake Isaac's thirst. The young man had to re-dig the well and find the life-giving water for himself.

Even so the travail of our fathers as they sought the living waters in their thirsty land will not avail to quench our thirst for eternal things. We must find those life-giving waters, each for himself. Yet surely that is largely the error that ails the so-called Christian church to-day. The God of the fathers has not become the God of the sons. That stalwart faith, tested and proved by those gone to their reward, too often is only a theory, even a myth, with the present generation.

Men have largely confused the knowledge of God with the character which results from that knowledge. Now character is like a draft, payable partly in posterity. Our fathers travailed in faith, and lived their lives for God, and we in some sense have entered into their labours. Reaping where they have sown, we have profited by their piety. And men to-day blindly take credit to themselves for character so inherited. Yet too many such have merely formal faith. They only know God by proxy. Such knowledge has undoubtedly a restraining effect from excesses in sin. Yet it is still-born and cannot propagate itself. It is not life. It is merely the reflection of life.

A common cry in periods of financial depression has been "Back to the land," the primary source of wealth. A safe and sure cry in these days of spiritual bankruptcy is, "Back to the Book," "Back to the God of our fathers," the only source of life. A national religion, a family religion is not sufficient. We need, each, a personal religion, a contact each for himself with the Saviour. "And Isaac digged (for himself) the wells... of Abraham his father."

(2) IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO LIVE IN THE STRENGTH OF PAST BLESSINGS IN OUR OWN LIVES. Often we too need to re-dig the springing wells of blessing that once flowed in our own lives. How many Christians are parched and dry, who once overflowed in gladness around? And how many hearts feel hopeless of ever regaining the first flush of life and love that once transfigured them? Yet that is not God's ordinance for His own. OH, DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WATER OF WHICH THE SAVIOUR SPAKE IS MERELY A MIRAGE, TO BE PURSUED, BUT EVER TO ELUDE US! The kind of well He meant was A SPRING THAT KEPT ON SPRINGING. He wills it that our souls should never know when drought cometh, but should ever be "as a watered garden." God give us a divine discontent with our present possessions, that we too, with Isaac, may dig and dig again.

(3) SPRINGS ARE PRESENT IN THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACES. The land was arid enough, when Isaac...
digged, and burnt up by the fierce sun. Rain was infrequent, and streams were absent. All must have seemed most discouraging. Yet the fact that his father had found and drunk deep of that water, impelled Isaac to dig and find. There need be no arid deserts for God’s children. However unlovely, however unlikely, however cold and hopeless, your heart may seem, God’s blessing is waiting, waiting for your seeking, for your digging.

On a sugar plantation the valuable crop was often ruined by drought, so that many thousands of pounds were often lost in a year. Then an engineer came who asserted that, being on a river flat, water was present all over the estate. Spear wells were driven in, and connected with central pumps, and an abundant supply of life-giving water discovered, which at once made droughts a thing of the past. Abundant water had been there for years, still and silent, and only waiting to be tapped. And, oh, thirsty soul, there need be no drought of heart with God. Springs of blessing, of fresh blessing, of richer blessing, lie hidden, deep in your own soul, waiting only to be tapped.

(4) WHY NECESSARY TO RE-DIG? In that country, as in all hearts, wells do not keep open of themselves. The sandstorms of the desert swept over that land, and little by little, the wells were choked. And “hearts, deceitful . . . and desperately wicked” have their storms of passion and of sin, and just as surely, need constant cleansing—the washing of water by the Word. We need to keep short accounts with God, if springs are to flow.

But further, the wells were blocked because “THE PHILISTINES HAD STOPPED THEM.” Incredible though it may seem, these wells held no value to the Philistines. One might have thought that anyone would treasure water in such a thirsty land. But they did not. And equally one might expect that “living water” would be prized, in such a world of drought and death as this. But no, supremely true is it that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit . . . they are foolishness unto him.” How many Philistines there are to-day, opposed to and opposing the truth, who set themselves to stop the wells of blessing in those around them!

(5) SOME OF THE WELLS.

(a) The well of the Word of God. How men have done their best to pollute and choke it! Yet those words that once thrilled your heart are still living and life-giving; they still retain their power to assuage man’s thirst of heart. Yet this is the well that the Philistines have set themselves first of all, and above all, to “stop.” To-day in their subtlety they do not call themselves Philistines. Mostly these “higher critics” call themselves Christians, yet by the clear searchlight of the Spirit we know that “these are wells without water,” for whom there can be but one destiny; “to whom,” alas, only “the mist of darkness is reserved for ever” (2 Pet. 2. 17).

Oh, then, again “give attendance to reading” the Word of God, the fountain of light; drink deeply of the Saviour according to His own blessed word (John 7. 37-39). “Open wide thy mouth,” thy life, thy heart, for there are still “waters to swim in.” “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust!”

(b) The well of prayer. How needful, yet how often “stopped”! Yet, “God fades out of the life of the man who does not pray.” In the foreign field, we know full well the one plan of campaign. We know that, never was there such need for intercessors, never such rewards, as to-day. As we seek His face, may God lay upon our hearts that burden which only finds relief when the spring of prevailing prayer again gushes forth.

(c) The well of the Spirit’s fullness. If we have once known that ecstasy
of heart which comes from being truly "filled with the Spirit" may we never be content with memories. We need constantly the exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, that we may be revived and that there may be the constant upspringing of thanksgiving. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5. 19, 20).

(d) The well of joy. The joy of the Lord is to be still our strength. A joyless Christian is a libel on his Master; he is a contradiction in terms. And nothing is so infectious as joy. Nothing may be so enduring as the joy of the Lord. Why, "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" is meant to be your happy and abiding experience. God give you back your joy!

(6) Yet there comes a time when it is NOT EASY TO RE-DIG THE WELLS. Isaac found it so and so may we. It meant "striving" (ver. 20). It meant sweat, and labour and toil, and perhaps some failures, but it is worth it all. And one thing is certain, we shall not dig far or long before, like Isaac (ver. 24), we shall meet with God. He will be found of us. THE WORLD THIRSTS, and God has ordained that each of His own shall bear the water of life, brimming, it may be trembling, to some of these thirsty souls. May our own wells, then, be cleansed; may the springs of our own hearts be unstopped, that we, like Isaac, may more and more be "fruitful in the land."

NORTHCOOTE DECK, Solomon Islands.

"One Mind in the Lord."

EVEN the most obtuse intelligence recognizes the desirability of onemindedness in any fellowship. To this general dictum the Christian fellowship presents no exception. To attain this desirable end, we frequently resort to all sorts of human expedients.

But the Apostle Peter exhorts his readers to unfeigned love of the brethren. When the Apostle Paul heard of two women in Philippi having a difference he inserted in his encyclical letter to the Philippian brethren that he besought these women to be not merely of one mind, but to be of one mind in the Lord.

When quarrels are patched up by human ingenuity they invariably break out afresh, but if "one-mindedness in the Lord" asserts domination over our spirits, difficulties disappear, or become the opportunity for grace to abound because there cannot be schism in that mind. It might be asked why the Apostle should take so much trouble about two women falling out in such a large company. The assertion can be made that their looking askance, avoiding and ignoring each other could not possibly affect ministry. But he knew that the Spirit of God is cognisant of the very thoughts of the heart.

The spiritual atmosphere of a Christian company is determined by thought. To use the words of another, "The company cannot but be affected by what we think of each other." The effect of evil-speaking is at once evident, but the effect of depreciatory thought is none the less deadly.

In the beginning of every difficulty between brethren there is usually a right and a wrong, but the one who is right is very liable ere long to go very far wrong, simply through the consciousness of being right. The pride of life is such an insidious principle that we are hopelessly lost as exponents of the grace of God if we allow ourselves to be controlled by its dictation.

The mind that was in Christ Jesus is the remedy, and to be of one mind in the Lord (Phil. 2)...

T. OLIVER.
"A Slave to my Body."

Some lines from an old divine which deserve to be read very carefully. (J. W. 8.)

"INCREASE in the love of Christ; for, as that grows, there is a decrease of the love of sin, yea of the immoderate love of all inferior things. As the sunbeam eats out the fire, this divine and heavenly love consumes the other.

"All our love is too scarce or poor for Him, when it is collected and drawn all together to run only to Him; and therefore there is none to spare upon the flesh and the lusts of it, nor upon any creature but as He allows and appoints. The sense of His love takes up the whole soul; and He, lodging in it, is that 'bundle of myrrh' that hath a virtue to preserve the Christian from the corruptions of lust.

"The love of Christ is strong as death, kills all opposite affections, and alone is worthy of the soul, the noble, immortal soul. Oh, how it is abased when drawn down to sensuality, and so made a slave to its servant—the flesh. A Roman philosopher says: 'I am greater, and born to greater things than to be a slave to my body.' How is it that being capable of the highest good we should forget ourselves so far as to serve vile lusts? Far be it from us. God hath called us to holiness.

"Fly all unlawful and forbidden delights, and those that are lawful (N. B.), do not engage your hearts to them, love them not immoderately, and they can scarce be loved without excess, if loved at all. If you use them, yet love them not; reserve that for purer enjoyments." (Robert Leighton.)

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God robbed of His Due.

"CHRIST should ever be the material of our worship, and He will be in proportion as we are led by the Spirit of God. How often, alas, it is otherwise with us the heart can tell. Both in the assembly and in the closet how often is the tone low, and the spirit dull and heavy. We are occupied with self instead of with Christ; and the Holy Ghost, instead of being able to do His own proper work, which is to take the things of Christ and show them to us, is obliged to occupy us with ourselves in self-judgment, because our ways have not been right.

"All this is to be deeply deplored. It demands our serious attention both as assemblies and as individuals. Why is the tone of our public meetings frequently so low? Why such barren-ness, such wanderings? Why are the hymns and prayers so wide of the mark? Why is there so little that really deserves the name of worship? Why is there so little in our midst to refresh the heart of God? So little that He can speak of as 'His bread for His sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto Him'? We are occupied with self and its surroundings, our wants, our weakness, our trials and difficulties; and we leave God without the bread of His sacrifice. We actually rob Him of His due and of that which His loving heart desires." (C. H. M.)
WHEREVER the English language is spoken Bonar’s beautiful hymn:

“I heard the voice of Jesus say, ‘Come unto me and rest.’”

is known. It tells of rest, of life, and of light, not only proclaimed to all by the lips of infinite compassion and love, but known, also, as great realities in the lives of those who have heard the Saviour’s voice. We are not criticizing the wording of the second stanza of this rightly beloved hymn when we call attention to the exact words of Scripture. They are:

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21. 6).

Notice carefully that it is not the stream of the water of life that is offered to the thirsty, but the fountain, and we believe that there is a reason for this. The Lord knew that the stream would be polluted; that Higher Criticism, New, or German Theology, Eastern Philosophy and all manner of “doctrines of devils” would be poured into it by those who hate the truth. So that as the stream flowed onward there would be in it a terrible admixture of error and truth, the error gradually predominating until the whole stream became polluted. And this, alas, is taking place, so much so that Dryden’s terse lines—

“Some truth there is, but dash’d and brew’d with lies; 
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.”

might well be applied to much that passes for gospel preaching. It was said sorrowfully to us recently in a northern town, by one who knew the truth and wanted it, “I have been to every orthodox place of worship in this town but I have not heard the gospel in any of them.” We fear that this town does not stand alone, for the time has come “when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and turn away their ears from the truth, turning to fables” (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). But how terrible is the responsibility of those who while professing to be channels for the living water are pouring forth falsehood instead of truth, and how hopeless we should be if we had nothing but the stream to turn to. But it is not the stream that is offered to us, but THE FOUNTAIN! There is no pollution there, from it the living water springs up pure and fresh and free.

“O Christ, He is the fountain, The deep, sweet well of love.”

And if we thirst of Him we must drink. We need neither preacher or priest to stand between Him and us, and He invites us to come to Him. The work of the Holy Spirit is to call attention to Him, and the whole purpose of the Bible is to tell us things concerning Himself. In Him is all blessing, “neither is there salvation in any other.” In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, and every treasure of wisdom and knowledge. He is the fountain of the water of life, and it is Himself that He gives. He places Himself and all the blessedness that there is in Him at the disposal of the thirsty. The pure river of water of life will flow in the holy city in the millennial age when nothing will enter to defile (Rev. 21. 27; 22. 1), but now, whether for salvation or satisfaction, sinner and saint alike must turn to the Fountain, to Christ Himself. All our springs are in Him. All else will fail, and every earth-born stream will run dry, but His sufficiency is inexhaustible and eternal, for He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

EDITOR.
Paul pressed onward. The calling on high in Christ Jesus was before him. Forgiven, justified, saved and reconciled to God through the death of His Son to start with, he still urged forward to the heavenly goal.

The same grace which called him has called us. The same love of God which blessed him has blessed us. The same race which he ran is ours also. The same goal to which he hastened is before us too. The same power which strengthened him is given to us likewise. May the same purposefulness which marked him be also found with us. "Ye have known my purpose," he could say.

Although the apostle apprehended the things of the Spirit in an exceptional degree, and saw the glorious range of heavenly and earthly administration of which Christ is the Head and Centre; and the assembly united to Him as His body in His exaltation over all things; yet, though filled with unspeakable joy at the prospect, and with the glories of all that greatness, nevertheless, present labours for others marked him, whilst sorrow and trials beset his path, in the midst of which the love of Christ made him more than a conqueror. Divine purpose in Christ, and counsel as to divine ways, filled his mind. The mystery, Christ and the assembly, and the riches of the glory of the mystery rejoiced his soul, yet snares, slanders and persecutions were always about him. He himself ensnared none, he slandered none, he persecuted none, he preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. Unseen realities, their vastness and stability, as secured in Christ—his hope within the veil—filled his keen vision, nevertheless he was practical beyond others. "I laboured more abundantly than they all" he wrote—"yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." His activities were both intense and varied. He was most spiritual, yet quite natural; and if there be an explanation of his exceptional energies, it lies in the fact that the former gave character to the latter, the inward to the outward, the unseen to the seen, the spiritual to the natural, the heavenly to the earthly. It is here where most get astray; and one is often pleaded for to the neglect of the other.

The Lord Jesus is now at the right hand of God, and our life is hid with Christ there. We are to be with Him where He is. Meanwhile, our pathway has to be pursued to the end. The goal is still ahead. It is ours to press forward. Endurance is needed; but encouragement and cheer will not be lacking as we travel onward. Let us take an illustration. It was a bright, spring morning. The air was fresh and fragrant when we started off upon a three-mile walk. From the river valley we were to ascend about six hundred feet. The goal before us was a meeting to be held in a hall at the very top of the hill. Our view was certainly circumscribed when we began our journey, although it was very fine, and the thought of what was at the end imparted interest and glad anticipation. As we climbed higher and higher the view became more expansive and beautiful; but, though we saw vaster grandeur than when we started, yet we noticed that thorns and thistles, such as were beside the path at the beginning, still grew quite near to us.

Just so is it in our pathway heavenward, trials and sorrows beset our way. The rising scenes of divine glory spread their beauteous charms before us however; the goal shines ahead; and as we ascend we increasingly apprehend the breadth and length and depth and height, which Christ is the centre of; and His surpassing love constrains us.

"For we are dear to Christ Are lusted with His love."
NOTWITHSTANDING the children of Korah died not."

This short striking statement is interjected between verses 10 and 12 of Numbers 26. No explanation is added. The "why?" and the "wherefore?" of the exception are not narrated. The fact only is stated in its simple brevity.

The judgment of God overwhelmed Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all that appertained unto them (Num. 16. 32-33) because of their high-handed rebellion against Jehovah and His servants. "They went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation."

One would not have discovered from that account that any exceptions whatever were made. All seemed plunged into the same condemnation. Whence, then the "notwithstanding" concerning the children of Korah?

The sovereign mercy of God came in and spared them. This alone. Apart from it they would doubtless have been cut off also, even as nothing but the sovereign mercy of God spares us and saves us to-day from everlasting woe.

Dathan and Abiram were left without descendants. The children of Korah, being delivered, continued his name. And for their descendants, "For the sons of Korah" to sing was Psalm 84 prepared.

They were to be singers of the praises of Him who had revealed Himself as a Saviour, and they were among those whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and then they waited on their office according to their order (1 Chron. 6. 31-32).

The psalm is based on the knowledge of redemption. (And it is only the ransomed who can rightly raise the song of salvation.) Those who were ruined have been recovered in the undeserved, unqualified goodness of God. Therefore it is that with glad hearts they chant His praises and rejoice before Himself.

The Psalm is divided into three sections of four verses each. And each section contains an ascription of blessedness to the man who is one of the favoured of the Lord.

The first portion presents Jehovah's DWELLING-PLACE.

His dwelling is their delight, and they cry:

"How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O, Lord of hosts."

The tabernacles of God were lovely in their view. The God of the tabernacles dwelt there between the cherubim, an He was their soul's satisfaction.

"My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

He was their portion, and thus His courts were their pleasure. He alone could meet the longings of their souls, and after Him it was their heart and flesh aspired. The heart of man is too large for anything material to fill. This world or ten thousand like it can never answer the heart's yearning to be filled full. God alone is enough for this.

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

One of the most worthless of birds and one of the most wandering of birds have places of refuge and repose. And Jehovah's altars are the refuge and repose of His people. The burnt-offering altar speaks of perfect acceptance in virtue of Christ's perfect atone-
The golden incense altar setting before us our perfect approach as we respond in acceptable thanksgiving and praise, presenting His graces and beauties before God.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee. Selah."

In the sense of Jehovah's favour and of their nearness to Him they would voice His praise continually. And He dwelt in the midst of the praises of those who knew Him as their Redeemer.

And if this was so in the days when the sons of Korah sang their sweet song, how much more should adoration flow from our hearts to-day. Now God is fully revealed, and in virtue of the cleansing value of the precious blood of Christ He has brought us into His marvellous light. There we can be without a fear, without a misgiving. And there in the presence of God, known in the fullness of His grace, we can be happy worshippers. The Father seeketh worshippers, and He finds worshippers in those who know Him as revealed in Christ the Son. Knowing Him they love Him, and loving Him, they worship Him in spirit and in truth. Truly, "blessed" is their lot. At home with Him now in spirit they gladly acclaim His worthiness. And soon the Father's house will be their eternal habitation and resound with their everlasting hallelujahs. But even while they await the call to the home of joy on high some of the joys of that home are already known to them in the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.

The second section of the Psalm (vers. 5-8) opens with another character of "blessed"-ness. It deals not with the rest but with the road. It speaks of the TESTING-PLACE

and the singer sings

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the ways of them."

Such a one will not be detained by man's schemes or the world's attractions. "Go forward" is his watch-word. He will press on, refusing enticements and entanglements. The sense of the passage is gained better if we omit the words "of them," supplied by the translators at the end of the verse. The heart is set on the highway here, as it is set on the home in the verses we have already considered. The soul is seen addressing itself to the journey to the home and learning His sufficiency in a new way. His strength is in Jehovah.

"Who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."

The valley of Baca is the valley of tears (Baca is the singular form of the word Bochim, the place of "Weepers," (Judges 2. 5). We have to travel along a tearful, toilsome, testing track. But all the exercises of heart only lead us the more to rely upon Himself, and experiences painful to nature become a well, a source of spiritual refreshment. Moreover, the Lord knoweth the trials of His own, and sends a rain of heavenly ministry upon His inheritance when it is weary. This fills the pools and covers our course with blessings. The flowers of faith and hope spring up fresh and fair, and bloom to His praise amidst the barrenness around.

"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

From one stage to another the pilgrim passes on. The strength for the way is given. The strength for the day is known.

The love of the heart of God has opened His home. The strength of the hand of God maintains His people journeying thither. No reserves of power have they in themselves. It is supplied as needed, and the supply never fails.

"Live a day at a time" was the good counsel of an established Christian to a young mother who was almost over-
whelmed by her manifold duties. And in her case the wisdom of that word was proved. The necessary grace was ever ministered a day at a time through many years of varied testing.

Do not attempt to shoulder tomorrow's cares. Do not attempt to tread tomorrow's path. Christ who is with you to-day will be with you tomorrow too. And grace will be granted tomorrow without fail, but it will not be given to-day. You may not need it to-morrow.

The Lord of Hosts is enough for the pathway you have to tread. He is your Father, and He cares for everyone of His children. He will never leave you nor forsake you in time of trouble. Lean on Him, lean hard on Him, and you will prove the power of His arm in every emergency.

"O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah."

Here is comfort too. Our God is the Lord God of hosts. He has almighty and universal dominion. But then He is not only the Lord God of multitudes of holy ones, He is also the God of the failing individual believer—even of Jacob. He is our personal God. He carried Jacob through his "few and evil" days of pilgrimage, and He will carry us even the feeblest of His own. Turning to Him we may cry, "Hear my prayer," and know that His ear is never closed to our supplication.

Coming to the third section of the Psalm we find the Lord is the HIDING-PLACE of the godly one amid every danger and every difficulty.

"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed."

God is ever the refuge of His distressed people. Never has He failed them. Faith can always say "God our shield." In the midst of circumstances most contrary and foes most furious that shield is a perfect defence. No weapon can reach the soul sheltering there. And we are shielded and secured not because of any merit we possess but because of His anointed—because of Christ. For Christ's sake God blesses every believer. For Christ's sake He has cleansed us from all our sins. "For Christ's sake" He covers us in all our sorrows.

"For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

One day in His courts exceeds the joys yielded by a thousand in other surroundings. "God's worst is better than the devil's best," as someone has said. While another phrases the same idea thus: "God's doorstep is a happier rest than downy couches within the pavilions of royal sinners for a lifetime of luxury." Yes! So it is indeed. The one who has tasted the food of His table is spoiled for every other. There is no sense of loss, but, on the contrary, a sense of infinite gain for all who abide with Him. The devil's delicacies may please the palate of the worldly wanderer from God, but the Christian walking in the Spirit is a full soul and loathes the honeycomb with which the foe would seek to entice him away from the well-spread board of his God and Father.

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

He is all to His own. Sun and shield and source of supply of everything that is needed for all our way. Nothing will be lacking, nothing will be kept back which would be beneficial for the one who walks in uprightness. In him we have a hiding-place until travelling days are over and the goal is reached and the heart rests in His presence eternally.

Communion with Him leads to confidence in Him, and in that confidence the believer exultingly cries:

"O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." 

INGLIS FLEMING.
What We Have Come To.


"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

NOTE.—The remarks ascribed to various persons in the following Bible Study are taken verbatim from their published works as follows: J. N. Darby's "Synopsis" and "Notes on the Epistle to the Hebrews," S. Ridout's "Lectures on Hebrews," C. A. Coates's "Mount Zion," W. Kelly's Answer to a Correspondent in "The Christian Annotator." The questions (Q.) and remarks following the initials of the collator are supplied by himself.

C. A. C. There is a grandeur and majesty about this paragraph which at once arrests attention, and it is well that we should have some idea of the great things which are here put in contrast to all that savours of Sinai and law.

Q. Are these things, to which the Hebrew believers were said to have come, arranged in this order for any special reason?

J. N. D. The enumeration of the families which compose this glorious company gives to us the whole history of the last days. The order to be traced seems to me to be this: the enumeration begins at the first step of the ladder to go up to its highest step, even to God, and comes down again to the millennium.

Q. How many subjects are named in these three verses? For instance, are the city of "the living God" and "the heavenly Jerusalem" one subject or two?

J. N. D. There are eight particular subjects. The conjunction "and" which unites them, being repeated each time, serves to distinguish them.

Q. Is there any significance in the fact of eight subjects being mentioned?

S. R. Eight suggests a new beginning; it is the number of the new creation, therefore, the basis whereon grace rests, and the atmosphere in which the new-born soul lives and delights.

Q. How can Christians be said to have come to these eight things?

W. K. To this whole order of things, which will only be manifested in the millennium, the Hebrew Christians (and of course the same thing is true of all saints since) are said to have come, i.e. by faith. Not to Sinai and its associations of death and terror, but to these blessed and eternal objects of glory they stood related, through the known efficacy of what was accomplished to bring all in.

Q. It is not yet quite clear to me. Take Mount Zion for instance. How can Christians be said to have come to it?

S. R. Mount Zion speaks of the perfect grace of God, a grace which shall be exhibited in connection with Israel during the millennium, and I would add, on through eternity. For us it is the great principle of grace as contrasted with the law. We have come to all the blessing which will be given to
Israel from Zion. We have it in a spiritual sense even now, as we enjoy the blessings of the new covenant.

C. A. C. In the "age to come" Israel will derive everything from God on those principles of grace of which the Old Testament Zion is the familiar and appropriate symbol. But we anticipate that day; our blessings and relationships with God are altogether on the ground of His grace. We are come to mount Zion.

Q. How is Mount Zion emblematical of grace?

J. N. D. Zion came at the end of the whole course of responsibility. As to the law, the result was "Ichabod" ("the glory is departed"), for the ark was in the enemies' hand. The only link with God was broken. Then God came in and chose David. David founded the temple on Mount Zion. This was a new link with God in grace when responsibility was ended.

S. R. You will remember that Mount Zion is contrasted even with Shiloh (see Psalm 78. 60, 68) where the tabernacle was first set up—the last stage, we might say, of the wilderness journey of the children of Israel. It represented mingled law and grace; it was not pure grace, and the result was that even the ark of God was carried into the Philistine's land. When it was brought back, it was put away at Kirjath-Jearim, the city of the woods, where it was lost sight of, and the people had no divine centre.

When God began to work in grace again, when He chose out—not King Saul, who was the people's choice, the man who was excellent according to the flesh—but chose David, the youngest of eight sons (significantly the eighth) from following the sheep to set him as leader of His people, it was in perfect grace. He chose Mount Zion and put His name there, and said, "This is My rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

Q. Now we pass on to the second subject, "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." What is this?

J. N. D. The church in its heavenly position is seen in contrast with Zion on the earth.

S. R. The earthly Jerusalem is a type of the heavenly, and we know that during the millennium the communication between earth and heaven will be intimate and constant. The kings of the earth will bring their glory and their honour unto that heavenly city. There is our home, dear brethren; even now we are linked with it.

Q. Why is the thought of the city introduced here?

C. A. C. A city is man's ideal, and has been from the earliest times (Gen. 4. 17; 11. 4). A city represents established government, and it stands connected with fallen man's desire to take possession of the earth. But man has no right to the earth, and therefore man's city must come down. It is a mark of faith in all the ages that the saints have not been satisfied with man's city. Every true saint on earth has looked for God's government to be set up here (Heb. 11. 10).

Alas! many believers nowadays seem to be occupied with the wrong city. Politics have to do with man's city. It is sad to see Christians wasting their lives on politics. It shows they have not come in the faith of their souls to "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

Q. Going now to the third subject mentioned, the innumerable company of angels: how have we come to these?

H. P. B. The Jew was familiar with the thought of angels. The very law to which he clung tenaciously was appointed by their instrumentality (Acts 7. 53; Gal. 3. 19). Their existence and guardian ministry was one of the great fundamental traits of Judaism. Angels had frequently appeared to men either singly, or in twos and threes. The
Hebrew Christians to whom our epistle was addressed would naturally fear that in ceasing to be Jews they would lose all this. But the opposite is the truth. Angels are now sent forth to minister, not for the sons of Israel, as such, but for the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1. 14). We have come to them all, in their innumerable multitude. In this respect Christians are not one whit behind Jews in privilege; nay, they go infinitely beyond them.

Q. Why, in mentioning the angels, does it add "to the general assembly"?

H. P. B. A note to the translation in Conybeare and Howson points out that this phrase properly means a festive assembly. Moffatt’s translation renders it: "to myriads of angels in festal gathering." (So also Weymouth, and the Twent. Cent. N.T.). Many a time has there been joy in the presence of the angels over the repenting sinner, and there will be a peculiar utterance of angelic joy when the Lord descends for His bride "with the voice of the archangel" as well as His own shout and the trump of God. The angels, holy, sinless denizens of heaven, will undoubtedly rejoice in all the fruition of God's fast ripening counsels of grace. To that festive moment, that time of heavenly rejoicing, we by faith have come. We anticipate it in a way that makes it very real and sweet to our souls.

Q. Is there any significance in the statement that those who compose the church of the firstborn are written, or enrolled, in heaven?

J. N. D. They were not born there, not indigenous like the angels. They are the objects of the counsels of God. It is not merely that they reach heaven: they are the glorious heirs and first-born of God, according to His eternal counsels, in accordance with which they are registered in heaven. They have the anticipation of no other country or citizenship than heaven. The promises were not addressed to them. They have no place on earth. Heaven is prepared for them by God Himself. Their names are inscribed there by Him.

Q. Why are they called "the first-born"?

S. R. Just as Israel is the firstborn upon earth, the church is the firstborn in heaven.

C. A. C. We may trace the thought, typically, in the history of the tribe of Levi. That tribe was taken as representing the firstborn sons of Israel, and they got no inheritance in the land of Canaan. Jehovah was their inheritance (Deut. 18. 1, 2). A man is registered where he has his possessions. The church of the firstborn belongs to heaven, and has its possessions there.

Q. Why is God spoken of here as the Judge?

J. N. D. It is God in His character of Judge for the bringing in of the millennium.

C. A. C. God has revealed Himself in Christianity as a Saviour-God and as the Father, but He does not cease to be "the Judge of all." In Christianity God maintains all that is due to Himself as Sovereign Ruler of the universe, at the same time that He makes Himself known in the glories of His grace.

S. R. We are brought to the One who will judge the ungodly, but who will never condemn His people, though He judges their ways. We have come to Him; we no longer shrink from Him.

Q. I have always found difficulty in understanding the next clause: "the spirits of just men made perfect." Who are these "just men"?

J. N. D. The saints of various dispensations before the church. Those whom the righteous Judge owned as His before the heavenly assembly was revealed. They had finished their course, they had overcome in conflict, they were waiting only for glory. They had been connected with the dealings of God on the earth, but—faithful before the time for its blessing was come—they
had their rest and their portion in heaven.

S. R. Those just men of whom we were reading in the eleventh chapter.

Q. When and how are the spirits of these just men made perfect?

C. A. C. They will reach perfection along with us in resurrection.

J. N. D. They are "made perfect," they have run the race, but have not yet received the crown. It is with them as with those who, among the Greeks, had won the prize in the stadium; the reward was not given immediately. They had to wait for a special festival on that occasion.

S. R. These just men will be made perfect when we are made perfect; but meanwhile their spirits rest in the presence of the Lord.

Q. What have we to do with the spirits of these just men?

S. R. We will share companionship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; converse with Abel about his sacrifice; talk with Enoch about his walk with God; speak with Jacob of the manifold chastenings of God, with Moses of his path.

J. N. D. We are not come to the new covenant, but to Jesus the Mediator of it. I am associated with Him who is the Mediator; that is a higher thing than if merely come to the covenant. Having come to the Mediator, I am come to the prospect of all the blessedness for earth. It is sweet to know earth will have it, but ours is the better part.

H. P. B. The blessings of the new covenant, forgiveness, righteousness, peace, relationship with God, the gift of the Spirit, being taught of God, etc., are all ours. Though the new covenant is not made with us, the blessings promised therein are ours in that we have come to the One through whom all will be given by and by. The Hebrew believers might wonder if in abandoning Judaism they would not be shut out from these covenant blessings. This passage would reassure them.

J. N. D. The earth will be benefited by the shedding of the blood of Christ: it cries peace instead of vengeance as Abel's did. The blood of sprinkling is the blood of the new covenant. Although it has an application at this present time, this blood belongs especially to the millennium. It is grace that speaks; and the shed blood cries to obtain pardon and peace for those who shed it.

C. A. C. This is the basis of everything—whether we think of heavenly grace, or earthly blessings such as will be known in the age to come, all have their foundation in THE BLOOD.

S. R. Think of the effect the enumeration of these things would have upon the Hebrew Christians. How unseen things would be seen to outweigh all earthly advantages; what force it gives the closing exhortation in the light of eternal realities.

Collated by H. P. Barker.

The Effect of Pressure.

Sometimes when the Lord allows pressure to come upon His servants they fall to abusing the wind instead of reefing their top-sails and making all snug until the storm is over. The wind may be unsympathetic, but it is only the pleasure boat that complains. The sturdy man of war puts out to sea, assured that he will outlive the storm and be ready for service again when required. David was greatly distressed at Ziklag, but he "encouraged himself in the Lord." We must be watchful lest we miss the qualification and lose the opportunity of serving in patience and lowliness.
The Heavenly One.

"The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (or as it should literally read "out of heaven.") "As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 47, 48).

Reader, what do these words convey to your heart and mind? Have you ever weighed the contrast they set forth? the contrast between the life that man after the flesh can live at his best, and the wonder of the life that was expressed in the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus. That life, though lived in the earthly circumstances in which other men moved, was absolutely different in its source and moral character, its purpose and relationships, from every man of Adam's race. All they were earthly, speaking of the earth, and in their highest and best thoughts never able to rise above it; but He, although born of a woman, and hence as really and truly man as He was the eternal Son of the ever-living God, was not of Adam's descent or of Adam's character. All that His humanity displayed was out of heaven. In humble dependence upon the Spirit of God, may we reverently inquire what these things mean.

Life.

Life, like those other associated words, love and light, is beyond the power of final human definition. Its manifestations may be described, its powers, its relationships, occupations and objects may be presented to our gaze, but it is beyond the measure of man's limitations to fully analyse what it is in itself. If this is so in regard to life as we know it in its various forms on earth, how much more so when we consider life as it relates to heaven. In the first place, that which is heavenly cannot be grasped or understood by earthly capacity. Only the Spirit of God can illuminate the inspired scriptures and lead our souls into the appreciation of the life of Him whom to know is life eternal. This is evident from the fact that when He was here, heaven was appreciative but earth was silent; all on high were filled with joy, but men saw no beauty that they should desire Him; the Father's voice told forth His delight, but His own people received Him not. Only those whose ears and eyes were opened by divine grace, heard, saw, contemplated, handled the Word of life, and received the manifestation of that eternal life which was with the Father.

Life was in Him, and the life was the light of men. Heaven was His home, and when He came to earth He brought here the atmosphere of that place. As men on their travels carry with them the character of the land to which they belong, their mother country, and in other lands are strangers and foreigners, so our Lord was in every sense a heavenly stranger on earth, and His life bore witness of the home from which He came, the Son of man which is in heaven. He tabernacled amongst men whose homes were here, He moved on His way a homeless stranger. Not for Him the plans and schemes of earth's monarchs and peoples; not for Him to govern the land of His pilgrimages; not for Him to divide the inheritance of the nations. He neither made the crooked ways straight, nor the rough places plain. At another time He will do all these things, but on the occasion of His sojourn here He was a wayfaring man upon a journey to a kingdom which lay beyond. Man had no welcome for such an one, the world took no account of Him.

Relationship.

The relationships of His life were in heaven. His conditions were altered
but the love of the Father in which He abode was the same as it had been before the world's foundation. For all who had eyes to see, there was unfolded to their gaze such a life as was with the Father; they beheld His glory as of an only begotten with a Father—a life lived in unclouded heavenly light, in the love of joy, in the peace of communion with all that was above.

Character.

What character this gave to all His ways! Truth, absolute truth, marked Him, for His vision was not clouded by the mists of earth; the truth of things concerning God and man as they are viewed from heaven was His standpoint. At the same time grace and compassion and tenderness were there for the poor slaves of Satan, who had no strength to free themselves and were too blind to see the glory of the light which was shining in their midst. Under such conditions love and sorrow go hand in hand. The deeper the love that would draw its objects into its own blessedness, the deeper the sorrow when that love is rejected and its offers treated with contumely. How many an earthly love has broken down when thus refused, but His was heavenly and it was perfect; and with love that was never quenched He went on His way, until at last the supreme moment came, and in the fullest expression of love, He gave Himself, the just for the unjust.

Motive.

Then how far removed from the motives begotten of earth, and which centre in self, were the governing principles of that perfect life. Men seek to possess that they may enrich themselves. He came to give, not to be ministered unto but to minister, not to be served, but to serve. Poorer in circumstance than the creatures He had made, He possessed no place to lay His head, and yet in the consciousness of Heaven's resources could say, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Resource.

Nothing so clearly reveals the character of a man's life as the resource on which he leans. Here was one who leaned wholly on Jehovah and drew all He needed from the supplies of heaven. When some proposed to fight with the sword for His defence, His reply was that twelve legions of angels would immediately be given by the Father, if He should request their aid. Truly He was from above and the springs of His life were there. The Father had sent Him and He lived on account of the Father.

Object.

The objects men pursue by nature must be earthly, for they can neither rise above it nor see beyond it. But our Lord's vision was bounded by no such limitations. The object of His life was in heaven. "I came not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me," and this was the food of life which gave energy to all His doings. It distinguished Him from all other men: they might have high and benevolent purposes before them, philanthropic works for the amelioration of the lot of others submerged in the sea of human life, but such objects, even if attained, are confined to the short span of time. He, on the other hand, lived for the glory of God and laboured that men might know Him and find their eternal portion in His love. He viewed eternity from Heaven's standpoint, and He commended the true philanthropy of God by giving His life a ransom for all, opening in His death the only way through which men can reach God.

Teaching.

In the teaching of life, men's words and their acts are frequently at variance;
our Lord’s words were the exact expression of what He was, and His actions never contradicted His speech. His theme was heaven, He testified of that which He had seen and heard. The words of His mouth revealing the Father’s name were as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom which flowed from His lips was like a flowing brook, whose source was on high. It was heaven’s music here below, heaven’s thoughts, heaven’s ways, heaven’s love. No wonder that men marvelled at the graciousness of His words, and that His enemies were forced to confess that never man spake like this man.

Then there was the destiny of His life; He knew whence He came and whither He went. The path of life was not bounded for Him by death, but stretched beyond in resurrection into God’s eternity. Alone He trod the path of life, the corn of wheat from heaven, but He will do more, He will endure the cross and despise the shame, that through His death there may be brought forth fruit after His own order, in His own redeemed, for God. This all-important subject we will consider in our next.

James Green

Patience.

Until the day shall break, and shadows flee
Which from infernal regions earth invade,
And He whom every human eye shall see
Shall come with might and majesty arrayed—
Till then shall violence unfettered reign,
And guiltless blood the field of battle stain.

Till He shall come, whose voice like thunder loud
The pillars of the universe shall shake,
And all the arrogant and godless proud
Shall at His presence like the aspen quake—
Till then the man that to the earth lays claim
Shall nations sack with sword and fire and flame.

Till He shall come, to whom by right belong
The throne, the kingdom, glory, power, and might,
Till He shall plant His foot upon the wrong,
And from the dust lift crushed and bleeding right—
Till then shall kings and kingdoms rise and fall,
And woeful wars for hapless victims call.

Till He shall come, who shall the glittering sword
Into a ploughshare beat, and ruthless spear
Into a pruning-hook, must red blood poured

Forth from the fainting heart the earth besmear—
Till then when shall appear the Prince of Peace
Must fearful sights and sorrows sore increase.

Until that day with earnest voice we cry,
Come, O Beloved: Why delay so long?
Our importunity do not deny:
Come in Thy love so mighty, true, and strong.
Already beams of morn the night clouds lace;
Come, Jesus Lord, we long to see Thy face.

J. Boyd.
Mr. Frederick Harrison writes in the *Daily Express* of September 3rd, 1918, of what he calls "this blessed hope." The article in which the words occur define the hope which the writer considers so "blessed." Final victory in the War is to be the road to "freedom, civilisation and peace." "International union and arbitration" are to be introduced, and all is to be established on a firm basis by the nations cementing "a lasting league of peace."

It is to be feared that many, even Christians, have their hopes fixed upon a future such as is here outlined. And this, notwithstanding the clear delineations, found in the Word of God, as to the circumstances in which this present age will reach its end. We do not deny that a league of peace may be formed. We are convinced that it will. But the formation of it will be like the sculpturing of a snow man when the days of winter are just about to give place to the dawning spring; or like an edifice erected in an island which is in a few days to be devastated by an earthquake.

The instructed Christian does not fix his hopes on anything of the kind. For him there is what Scripture calls "THAT blessed hope" (Titus 2. 13), namely, the coming of the Lord. And what will His coming mean? Dr. F. B. Meyer, presiding at one of the so-called "Advent Testimony" meetings held recently in London, declared that "we welcome the dawn of the new era in which Jesus Christ will be supreme, and His words the foundations of society." Is this indeed what the coming of our long looked-for Lord and Saviour will mean?

A thousand times no! The coming of the Lord will mean, first of all, the instant transference of all who really belong to Him, whether alive on the earth, or dead, to heaven. But this will be but the preliminary to their coming out of heaven with Him (Rev. 19. 14) when He comes to deal with the nations in judgment and establish His throne in Zion. His coming thus will mean the casting of the wicked into a furnace of fire (Matt. 13. 50); and the sorting out of the nations according to the attitude they have assumed towards His tried and persecuted (Jewish) brethren, especially during the period of the great Tribulation that is to come (Matt. 25. 31-46). It will mean the destruction of the Super-man, the incarnation of Satanic craft, the fierce opposer of Christ and His people (2 Thess. 2. 8). And finally it will mean the establishment not of a triumphant Democracy but of a perfect Theocracy, with Christ Himself as Supreme Sovereign of the Universe, King of kings and Lord of lords. Peace will follow, durable and universal (Ps. 72. 7); wars will cease, prosperity will abound, sin will be restrained, and the good will of God toward man will ensure happiness through the knowledge of Himself that will then be all-prevalent. Oh, glad and glorious hope!

"THAT blessed hope" will be brought to fruition when the miserable counterfeit which the gifted writer referred to above calls "THIS blessed hope" has been shown to have been built upon the "and.

We are sometimes asked the question whether things happening in the world to-day point to the imminence of the coming of the Lord. We believe that they do. They indicate that the end of the age is at hand, though they have nothing to do with that part of the "blessed hope" which may be fulfilled at any moment—the translation of the saints to meet the Lord in the air. Let me endeavour to show you how this can be.

We are on a voyage, let us suppose, from England to America. Our ship is bound for New York, and we have already been several days at sea. We begin to anticipate the near end of the voyage, nearer indeed for us than for our fellow-passengers. For it has been arranged that the boat that brings the pilot out to the ship shall take us off, and land us on the Long Island coast where our friends will greet us.

One morning we observe what I may call the first sign of the approaching end of the voyage: *sea-gulls!* Days ago we
left the British birds behind, and out in mid-ocean not a feather did we see. But now the screeching and squawking of the American birds as they fly around the ship is a welcome sign that New York is not far off.

Later in the day we see the second sign: fishing-boats! Some of these boats come a long way from the coast, three hundred miles or more. But they are American boats, and their presence in the waters around us are a proof that the ship is approaching the port for which she is bound.

Next morning we catch a glimpse to the northward of Nantucket Island, and soon afterwards we perceive the smoke from the factories and mills on the low-lying coast of Long Island, fresh indications that the terminus of the voyage is at hand.

All these things, be it noted, have nothing to do with the pilot-boat, which is to take us off the ship. Suddenly while we stand on deck looking around and ahead, the boat we are looking for looms up from amid the slight haze to the southward and comes alongside. The pilot climbs up and we climb down the ladder and thus take leave of the ship in which we have travelled across the ocean. She goes on, without us, to her appointed goal; while we are received by our waiting friends, to whom the pilot boat has borne us, with a welcome that seems all the sweeter after the weary monotony of the voyage.

The ship is like the age in which we are, and various things which we note around us are signs that it is rapidly nearing its end. But we (Christians) are to be fetched clean out of this age to be with our Saviour, before the end is reached. He Himself is coming for us, to take us home. Oh, the welcome that awaits us there! When we are gone, the age will go on, without us, to its appointed goal, a goal that is surely not far distant.

For us, the immediate hope, glorious and blessed, is the coming of the Saviour to fetch us out from this present age, according to 1 Thessalonians 4. 14-17.

H. P. BAker.

Too Good to Hear Alone.

A MISSIONARY visited some Singhaese villages in Ceylon. Stopping one day at a house, only one woman was to be seen. The missionary sat down and talked with her. Suddenly the woman sprang up and said: "This is too good to hear alone; I must find some other women." In a short time she returned with five.

"'Too good, this Word, to hear alone,' thus thought Samaria's daughter standing by the well; And hastening village-wards she quickly brought others to hear what Jesus had to tell. 'Too good to hear alone, and I must share With other folks the gladness of this Word,' So spoke a daughter of Ceylon who ne'er Before the gospel of God's grace had heard. And we, who know the power of Jesus' name And countless precious gospel blessings own, Can we account ourselves as free from blame Whilst myriad souls in heathen bondage groan? Oh, may these women make us feel some shame And deem that Word 'Too good to hear alone.'"

(Selected.)

The Cry from the Four Winds.

"How long is it," asked an old Mohammedan woman in Bengal, "since Jesus died for sinful people? Look at me, I am old, I have prayed, I have given alms, I have gone to the holy shrines, I am become as dust from fasting, and all this is useless. Where have you been all this time?"

That cry was echoed from the icy shores of the farthest north-west territory. "You have been many moons in this land," said an old Eskimo to the Bishop of Selkirk, "did you know this good news then? Since you were a boy? And your father knew? Then why did you not come sooner?"

"How is it," asked a Peruvian, "that during all the years of my life I never before heard that Jesus Christ spoke those precious words?"

It was repeated in the white streets of Casa-Blanca (North Africa). "Why," cried a Moor to a Bible-seller, "have you not run everywhere with this Book? Why do so many of my people not know of the Jesus whom it proclaims? Why have you hoarded it to yourselves? Shame on you."

We may not all be able to go forth north, south, east and west, but are we interested in the sending out of the gospel? If so how shall we help it?

(Selected.)
Ch. 3. 1. *By night, on my bed,*

*I sought him whom my soul loveth:*

*I sought him, but I found him not.*

**The night visit of the King has awakened the affections of the bride. But it was only a visit; he had revealed himself through the lattice; he had unfolded to his bride the vision of another and a brighter world—a world of sunshine and song; he had called her to arise and come to that good land beyond the mountains and the hills; and then, having awakened her affections, he had withdrawn to his own place, and the bride is left behind in the night. She has heard of the day and looks forward to the daybreak, but she is yet in the night. The presence of the King will bring the day, even as his absence makes the night. So too we may say it is the presence of Jesus makes our day, and the absence of Jesus makes our night. But if the bride is left behind in the night, she is left with deep yearnings of heart for her beloved. She has been aroused from her slumbers. Love has been awakened, and now she delights to speak of her beloved as the one that her soul loveth. Four times over she uses the expression, "Him whom my soul loveth."**

But awakened love is not content without its object. Love makes her a seeker. Hitherto the Bridegroom has been the seeker, but now at last the bride is the one that seeks. As with a hardened sinner, so with a sleeping saint. Christ must first be the seeker. There would be no seeking sinner, if there was not first a seeking Saviour. If the Son of Man had not first come to seek and save the lost, we never should have heard of the poor publican who "sought to see Jesus." If "Jesus Himself" had not drawn nigh to the two sorrowing saints on the road to Emmaus, they never would have returned to Jerusalem, that same night, to find "Jesus Himself" in the midst of His own.

Further, we do well to remark that it is the Bridegroom himself that is sought by the bride. It is not the daybreak, the time of singing, or the land of song, that she seeks; it is a person, himself that she longs to see. In her eyes he is fairer than the fairest land, and better than all the blessings that he brings. When love is awakened, Christ alone can satisfy the heart of the Christian. As home-sick saints we welcome the thought that soon the last tear will be wiped away, the last sorrow will be passed, and the last enemy overcome; but as love-sick saints we want "Jesus Himself." To the dying thief, saved by grace, the Lord could not only say, "To-day shalt thou be in Paradise," but "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The heavenly city, with its walls of jasper, its gates of pearl, and its streets of gold, would be no heaven without Christ. There, indeed, will be "songs and everlasting joy," but Christ is the theme of the song and the source of the joy. "The Lamb is the light thereof."

But this seeking bride will yield us further instruction. Love has been awakened; love has made her a seeker, but she does not at once obtain the object of her quest. Though she sought the Bridegroom she has to admit, more than once, "I found him not." Why is this? Is she not seeking the right person? Indeed she is, but at first she seeks him in a wrong way. She says, "On my bed, I sought him." She sought him, but, at the same time, she sought to retain her ease. She was not at first prepared to forgo her own comfort in the quest for her beloved. How many of us would like to have
Christ if we could spare the flesh. The love of Christ would impel us to follow after Christ, but the love of ease would hold us back. We seek Him, as it were, on our bed; and therefore we find Him not. We forget the word which declares, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

2. **I will rise now and go about the city, In the streets and in the broadways Will I seek Him whom my soul loveth:**
   
   **I sought him, but I found him not.**

The power of love prevails with the bride, and she says, "I will rise now and go about the city." She overcomes her love of ease, but only to fail again. She had sought her beloved in a wrong way, she now seeks him in a wrong place. He is not to be found in the city streets and broad highways; he feeds among the lilies. And we too may fall into the same snare. We would like to have Christ, but, we would like to have Christ and the broad highways of this world. But if we cannot have Christ and spare the flesh, neither can we have Christ and retain the world. If the cross witnesses to the dying love of Christ, it also expresses the undying hatred of the world to Christ. Cast out by the world, He has "suffered without the gate," and if we would find Christ we must "go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

3. **The watchmen that go about the city found me:**
   
   **Have ye seen him whom my soul loveth?**

For the third time the bride fails in her quest. She has sought the Bridegroom in the wrong way, she has sought him in the wrong place, now she appeals to the wrong people. The business of the watchmen is to govern and keep order. They may administer righteousness, but they cannot help in the quest of love. "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness," the Gallios of this world will deal with it; but if it is a matter of "love" and "Jesus," then, in the world's sight, it is only "a question of words and names," and the world "will be no judge of such matters." Or if at times they turn judge, in such matters, it will only be to persecute the seeker after Christ. In vain, therefore, do we appeal to an arm of flesh, though Christians, from early times, have fallen into this snare only to learn that the princes of this world have crucified the Lord of glory. Like the blind man of Bethsaida, with his partly restored sight, we are apt to view men out of all proportion to their true importance. We "see men as trees walking." But the love of Christ would bring us, like the disciples of old, to see "no man any more save Jesus only."

4. **It was but a little that I passed from them,**
   
   **When I found him whom my soul loveth:**
   
   **I held him, and would not let him go Until I had brought him into my mother's house, And into the chamber of her that conceived me.**

When every hindrance is overcome—the bed, the city, the watchmen—it was but a little ere the bride found her beloved. And when found she "held him, and would not let him go." And may we not say, in our day, the one great need of the Lord's people is this same energy of love, which, overcoming every hindrance, links the soul to Christ, and will not let Him go. But alas, in the light of the prevailing apathy and lack of affection for Christ, we have once again to cry with Isaiah, "There is none . . . that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee" (Isa. 64. 7). In the day of His presence on earth there came a time when many professed
followers "went back and walked no more with Him"; but the twelve "held Him, and would not let Him go." The Lord asks, "Will ye also go away?" And thy reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And in these days of His absence in glory, when the love of many grows cold, when hands hang down, and knees grow feeble, when again many turn back and walk no more with Him, how imperative it is that we should stir ourselves up "to take hold of Him"; and, having taken hold of Him in the affection of our hearts, refuse to let Him go.

In the close of the first canticle the Bridegroom conducts the bride into the banqueting house of the King, but in this closing scene the bride conducts the Bridegroom into her mother's house. For the earthly bride the mother represents the nation of Israel (Rev. 12). Not until God's earthly people give the King His rightful place in connection with the nation will they come into blessing. For Christians, Jerusalem, which is above, is the mother of us all. We may attempt to bring Christ back to earth—in other words, we may seek to connect Christ's name and authority with this world—but it will be in vain. Christ is not to be found in the city and broadways of this world, and if He is not found here, He cannot be enjoyed here. He can only be known, and enjoyed, in connection with the heavenly scene where He is and to which we belong. If, as we have seen, He can only be found "without the camp," the "mother's house" would teach us that He can only be enjoyed "within the veil."

5. I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem
By the roes, and by the hind of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love
till it please.

The canticle closes, like the first, with the earnest appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem, that nothing should be allowed to disturb the enjoyment of love between the Bridegroom and the bride. And in like spirit we may well sing—

"Take Thou our hearts, and let them be For ever closed to all but Thee;
Thy willing servants, let us wear The seal of love for ever there."

HAMILTON SMITH.

Praying and ministry of the word are put together in Scripture; therefore if a servant of the Lord knows the character of service to which the Lord has called him, he will pray for those whom he has to serve, he will learn what they require. Every fresh bit that you get for yourself is not merely to strengthen yourself, but to enable you to meet the need of those you serve.

The Sufficiency of Christ.

From a letter from France, the writer of which has since died of wounds in hospital.

"How pleased I am to think that my beloved Saviour... is a wonderful comforter in the hour of need, and a source of strength always. My poor pencil cannot sing His praises, or pour out half the thanks due to Him, yet He knows that I rely solely upon Him, and am quite content to put my trust in Him, satisfied that He knows best. His hand can be discovered in everything, and I for one have never been nearer to Him than I am now. I have learned more this last six weeks by hard experience than churches and troubles had ever impressed upon me at home."
The End of the Wrestling.

With the relaxation that the "cease fire" signal has brought, we need watchfulness of spirit and renewed energy in faith and prayer lest we lose the peaceable fruits of righteousness that God intended the sorrow and exercise of these past years should yield us. The time has come for us to consolidate our gains, to hold fast to any advance in the knowledge of God that we may have made.

This of course is entirely an individual matter. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness; each has been affected in a way peculiar to himself, and none can enter the secret chambers of another soul to discover there exactly how sorrow works within it; the Lord only can do that. But each for himself should be fearful lest he lets slip the blessing which God has purposed for him by this night of wrestling through which we have come. To have had the sorrow and to miss the joy, to toil and labour without compensation, above all, to go back and lose ground spiritually, which we must do unless we advance, will not bear contemplation! It would be like Jacob crippled but not clinging; Jacob broken and beaten without the divine blessing; Jacob halting on his thigh with no strong hand to uphold him, and no sun to shine upon him! The Lord in His infinite mercy grant that none of us may be like that.

The patriarch was brought to feel that there was neither life nor blessing for him apart from God, and he realized at the same time that God was waiting to be both to him. So he clung to God with a grip which plainly said, "Without You I am nothing, have nothing, can hope for nothing." But there was confidence in it also, as he cried, "I will not let thee go except Thou bless me." There he triumphed, and what made him triumph was the sudden perception that God had only thoughts of blessing towards him, that God was more to him than all he had lost, or could lose. Read the story in Genesis 32. 24-32.

It is this new realization of what God is that will turn our Peniel to profit. We shall rise up from the grave of our cherished hopes, look up from the discovery of our own failure and corruption, our disappointments, our fears, and our sighs, transfigured and victorious, consciously in the favour of God, having power with Him because we have discovered the secret of His heart towards us, which is only blessing; and having power with men because we know by travail of soul, and in our personal experience, the God whom they need: the God who only can do them good.

Corsica or Galilee?

The man who is supposed more than any other to have given form and expression to modern German thought and feeling, declared years ago that, "Corsica has conquered Galilee." By that he meant that the sword of Napoleon was mightier than the cross of Christ, and that the faith of the Son of God had been swept from the field by the "god of forces." This godless teaching became "the faith of young Germany," and the spring and spur of its genius; and it was glorified as that which described the chief blessedness of man, for one of its propagators wrote, "Ye have heard men say, 'Blessed are the peacemakers'; but I say unto you, blessed are the warmakers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahve (i.e. Jehovah), the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve."

[Odin was the supreme god of the Teutonic tribes, the bestower of wisdom and valour; cattle, horses, captive enemies, and even the old and frail members of the tribes were sacrificed to him until the middle ages.]
In this philosophy and its effects there is a distinct harking back to a brutal paganism, the result, doubtless, of a revival of energy on the part of that particular, powerful, diabolic spiritual being in the unseen world—one of those that rule under Satan the darkness of this world (Eph. 6.)—which was worshipped in Germany before the delivering light of the gospel reached the masses there. The giving up of the gospel, and the rejection of the Bible by the great teachers of that nation, opened the way for this darkening spiritual influence to reassert its domination over the minds of millions in Central Europe.

The fact is that men are not as independent of outside forces as they imagine, and it is certain that where God's authority is thrown off, and His enlightening and liberating Word is discarded, men fall under sinister spiritual influences and are swept backward, downward, and hellward.

Ephesians 2. 2. and 2 Thessalonians 2. 7-12 are scriptures that leave no doubt as to this. It would be well if men, while condemning German militarism, now that it has disclosed its unspeakable character and infamies, would trace it back through its ready instruments to its cause and source, and take warning and turn to God, and hallow His name, and seek His Kingdom, for He only can deliver us from evil of a spiritual sort, and He only is the preserver and Saviour of men.

But now that the Germany of the militarists lies in ruins, and its dishonoured leaders have fled the field; does it follow that the sword is broken for ever? Or to reverse Nietzscbe's famous phrase, Has Galilee conquered Corsica? No, these two, the power of man and Christ crucified, have not been in visible conflict on the fields of Flanders and France. The weapons of the gospel of a Crucified Christ are not carnal. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. It is gathering out of the world a bride for Christ.

This great evil which had entrenched itself so strongly in Central Europe has received a deadly wound, but, to use the language of Revelation 13., that deadly wound will be healed. It, as well as every other evil, will, in God's own time, be confronted by the Lord Jesus Christ, for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. It will rise up again; not, perhaps, exactly in the same region, but it certainly will arise, for militarism is to be one of the chief powers and features of the Beast who will gather the armies of a Confederated Europe together to fight against the Lamb. Then these two great forces will come into final conflict. Revelation 17. 12-14 and 19. 11-12 describe the result of that conflict; the Lamb will triumph then.

Let us, beware of being deceived into thinking that the crushing of the terrible menace of militarism means an advance of the Kingdom of God. It is God's mercy and long-suffering with His creatures that it is crushed for the time being, and for this we give grateful thanks. But "the whole world still lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5. 19, N.T.). And "the course of the world is still according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2. 2). It is not according to God, and it is appointed unto wrath. Our hopes do not lie in any schemes that it may evolve, but we look FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Titus 2. 13, 14).
Faithful Witnesses.

PRINCE COLONNA, the Mayor of Rome, has recently paid a visit to England. His reception in London was such as is due to the worthy representative of a great and allied nation.

He comes of an ancient family famed for many a noble deed. But perhaps the noblest of all the Colonnas was the Duchess Julia Gonzaga Colonna, who lived in the sixteenth century.

At that time a very remarkable work of God was beginning in the countries of western and southern Europe. The dawn of a new day was breaking, and on all sides the great truth of justification by faith, without the works of the law, was being preached in the astonished ears of men. This was a new thing indeed, and utterly different from what they had been wont to hear from their Romish teachers.

Separation from that corrupt church was not as yet seen to be the path of faith and obedience. Though taught of God and enlightened by His Word, many yet hoped for a renovation of the church from within.

Among the earliest to be converted was the Duchess Julia Gonzaga Colonna. Her exercises were great, and it was only little by little that she was led into freedom of soul, through seeing the results of the redemption work of Christ.

One of the best known writings of Juan de Valdés, the Alfabeto Cristiano, really consists of a conversation between the Duchess Colonna and himself. Her questions express the doubts and anxieties of her soul, and the young scholar sets himself to solve her difficulties and lead her into the full light of the gospel.

Others, too, many of them of noble birth, were being converted. They did not separate from the Romish Church, but met together for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and edification. Sometimes these gatherings would take place in the spacious mansion of Juan de Valdés, but more often in the palace of the Colonnas, which thus became the meeting-room of the little company of believers in Naples.

Juan de Valdés usually took the lead, preaching the gospel, and expounding the Word of God. Among the believers who met in this simple way, to help and edify one another, were some of the most exalted rank. The Duchess of Camerino was one. Then there was the Lady Isabel Manrique de Briceno, sister to the Archbishop of Seville, Inquisitor General and persecutor of the saints. What must he have thought of his sister's attendance at such meetings? There was also the famous General of the Capuchin order, Ochino, the most eloquent preacher of the day. Of him the Emperor, Charles V, said that he could make the very stones weep. Cardinal Bembo testifies of him as follows: "Never have I heard sermons more useful, more full of love, more penetrating, than his." Ochino had been led to Christ through the quiet testimony of Juan de Valdés, and delighted to take
his place with his brethren and sisters in the faith, in the meetings at the Colonna palace.

Besides these there was the well-known poet Flaminio, who afterwards translated the Psalms into Italian verse; and Pietro Carnesechi, Protonotary of the Pope, and ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara.

None of this distinguished company, however, was more remarkable than the Duchess Colonna herself, once a proud leader of Neapolitan society, now a humble disciple of Christ. The historian describes her thus:

"Her extraordinary beauty was celebrated by both poets and artists, her portrait being painted by the famous Sebastian Piombo, and Tasso himself making her the subject of one of his most exquisite sonnets. Thus favoured by fortune in every way, surrounded with the magnificence of wealth and of high rank, in the flower of youth, the noble lady did not hesitate for a moment to reckon all these advantages as empty and vain for the sake of the knowledge of Christ."

The gatherings of these devoted believers were not allowed to continue long. The Inquisition began to scent heresy, and the Duchess Colonna was one of the first to be molested. Happily for her, the Lord called her to Himself, and her death delivered her from the hands of her persecutors. Juan de Valdés also died in peace, before the cruel Inquisition could get him within its clutches. The little company that was gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, from time to time, in the Colonna palace was dispersed; many of them were banished, but at least one of the best-known ones, Pietro Carnesechi, suffered a martyr's death.

May the record of the lives and testimony of these faithful ones of four centuries ago stimulate us less zealous ones to greater fervour and devotedness!

H. P. Barker.

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The Heavenly Family.

"As is the heavenly (one), such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 48).

WHO are these of whom the Scripture speaks? Is it possible that any can be compared with the heavenly one, our Lord Jesus Christ? Are any kindred to Him, of His order, partakers of His life? The Word of God is not silent as to these questions, and plainly does it tell of that new race which has been formed, not amongst angels but amongst men. Once they were guilty before God, lost and undone, without hope and without God in the world. Upon such divine grace has wrought, and being born anew by the power of the Holy Spirit, their eyes have been opened to see their lost condition, and to see the Saviour taking upon Himself their judgment when He laid down His life for them on the cross that He might redeem them by His own blood. Through the peerless work of Calvary their past has been blotted out, and a vista of coming glory shines before them. But besides a past settled, and a future secured, they have a present portion in the life of Him who has redeemed them (Rom. 6. 8-11; Col. 3. 1-4). God has given to them eternal life and this life is in His Son.

The basis of all that is wrought in the believer for God's glory and in testimony to man, lies in the fact, that in God's sight the old Adam life has been ended in judgment at the cross, and that a new life has been given in connection with Christ risen from the dead. This transfer from the old head or source of life to the new is the subject of Romans 5. 12-21. In the world a man may be
naturalized from one country to another; he takes a new position, comes under a new government, but in his nature he is the same as he was before; English, German, etc., as the case may be. But in divine matters when a man is, so to speak, naturalized from Adam to Christ, he becomes partaker of the nature and life of Christ, he is identified with Him in the likeness of His death, and, also, of His resurrection. Christ died unto sin once, but in that He lives in resurrection, He lives to God; and in consequence the believer is called upon to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is to accept this fact, which is true in God's account, in the same way as he learned the forgiveness of his sins, on the principle of faith. It therefore follows that the Christian will not henceforth be occupied with seeking to improve the old nature, but will rather turn his energies to the cultivation of the new; and still further he will see that it is not his business to improve the world where the Adam life finds its sustenance and home. Like his Master he is a stranger and a foreigner on earth, like Him his path is a journey through it. The life he possesses belongs to heaven, it is supported by heaven's resources, and is capable of producing the same heavenly fruit which marked in every detail our Lord's ways. He walked through earth's changing scenes and circumstances, wholly dependent upon God and obedient to His will, living by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God. In all this He was the pattern for the new life which has its source in Him, for "he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked."

The origin of the Christian's life is then entirely heavenly, and the relationships that belong to it must be heavenly likewise, for "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

ONE IN RELATIONSHIP.—His own words express it: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to my God and your God." He associates us with the sonship of His own risen manhood, in the fulness of the Father's love and the revelation of the Father's name. It will take little consideration to perceive that sonship such as this must give character to the Christian's life after a new and heavenly order. To be loved as the Son is loved, and graced in the acceptance of Him upon whom that love rests in its infinite fullness, fills the heart with rest and peace and joy. That love becomes the Christian's home, and the rock of his strength in a world of sorrow, trial and death. All things else may be moved, but this never; circumstances cannot alter it, nor death separate from it.

ONE IN CHARACTER.—Life can only produce fruit after its kind. The characteristics of our Lord's life were, dependence, obedience and love; all He did was done for God, His thoughts and His words were governed by the word of God. Herein lies the contrast between the natural and earthly, and the spiritual and heavenly. Men do great things from love to their fellows, will lay down their lives for their friends, but not for God. They praise the independence and force of character which will carry them through to the end they seek, but are never found waiting for God.

It is not surprising, for how can a nature to which disobedience is natural, obey; or how can that which is not subject to the law of God, neither can order its ways according to His word? We may agree that all this is only too true of those who know not God, but the danger is very real, that the Christian may shape his ways according to the principles that are approved amongst men, may so far forget his heavenly life and calling as to join hands with those whose object is the education of man in flesh, and whose schemes are directed to the improvement and peace
of this world, which Scripture assures us lieth in the wicked one (1 John 5. 19).

ONE IN MOTIVE.—Love was the spring of all that our Lord said and did. And love is the motive that actuates the new life; we love because He first loved us. Love urged Him on through His path of sorrow and grief, to the last great sacrifice, that the world might know that He loved the Father, and it is not the motive of fear or the obedience of legality that marks the true service of His own, but the constraining of love to Him in lowly hidden acts or more exalted deeds.

ONE IN RESOURCE.—The Holy Spirit connects the saint on earth with Christ in glory, and by His supply produces thoughts, affections and desires which have as their object the magnifying of Christ. The believer can and does view things from heaven's standpoint, and knows that none of the world's resources are needed to further the development of his life, or advance the work of God. He, like His Master, is a giver to the world, not a receiver from it. His power consists not in having wealth, position, fame or honour, but in having Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and by being strengthened with all might by the Father's Spirit in the inner man.

ONE IN OBJECT.—As in the case of our Lord, whose purpose to fulfil the Father's will flowed from the deep knowledge of His love, so will the fullness of the same love lead the Christian in the same path of His will. It will increasingly become his desire to know and to walk to His glory. We have to learn the way He leads, the guidance of His eye, and there is no other way of knowing His will for every detail and circumstance as they arise than by constantly living in communion with Him and learning in secret the subjection of our wills to His. It is the increase of the full knowledge of God that will fill us with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and produce that fruitfulness of good works which is pleasing to Him.

ONE IN TEACHING.—"As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." This is the true witness of life, that which in its testimony to men cannot be gainsaid. Men may contradict words, but cannot but feel the force of that which is presented to them in daily life. But such a witness is not to be imitated, nor produced by resolve to do such and such things; it is the fruit of life and of the Spirit. It is produced from the inward man of the heart growing in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control; this was the blessed witness of our Lord Himself amongst men. To this end the discipline of the Spirit in our daily circumstances is continually in exercise; this is the good for which He causes all things to work, that we may be more and more conformed to the image of God's Son.

ONE IN DESTINY.—"Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," stupendous fact. Called with a heavenly calling, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, a member of His body the church, destined to share His headship over all things, the believer waits for his Lord from heaven, to add the last touch to the Divine purpose, by changing his body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory.

Reader, what does your heart reply to these things? Are you set to cultivate the Adam or the Christ life? Is your object the glory of God or the advancement of man? Are earth's schemes or heaven's purposes commanding your interest? The league of nations for universal peace, or the coming of the Lord to reign? Remember that it cannot truly be both, for a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, while singleness of eye means the filling of the whole body with the light of God. Disappointment follows from working on bad material and from pursuing a wrong object.

The conditions that make for growth, and the hindrances thereto, may occupy us on another occasion.

James Green.
The House of God.

When the Son of God came into the world, for the first time in its history a divine Person was upon earth. The Creator was come into the creation. He made it at the beginning, and had spoken to it in various ways all along its history, but never before had He come into it, as One having part in it. The body of Jesus was the true temple—the shrine in which the fullness of the Godhead dwelt. The eternal Son was there personally, the eternal Father was there in testimony, and the eternal Spirit was upon Him and in Him. The Godhead glory shone through the human veil, and in His death the veil—His flesh—was rent, and God came fully to light, and "God is love." He was declared in His nature.

The Person of Christ became the point of attraction for everything that was of God upon earth. Those that were gathered to Him became the stones, the living stones of a new structure, in which God was to take up His abode, when Christ would be no longer here. These He builded together for a habitation of God, and on the day of Pentecost the Spirit of God occupied the building. He would have filled the whole earth with His presence, had it been suitable; but never had it been more unsuitable for a dwelling than at that moment, for it was freshly stained with the murder of the Son of God. There was no part of the earth habitable but that assembly in the upper room in Jerusalem. From that spot, if I may use a figure, the waters of death had been rolled back, and the heavenly Dove could find a resting-place. As soon as ever there was a spot in creation in which God could take up His abode, He filled it with His presence. The house of God will in the end take in the vast redeemed creation. At the present moment it is limited to believers.

The next thing is that it is by His Spirit God dwells there. If it is His Spirit, it is as equally God as if it were the Father or the Son. But it is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Spirit, and this is important to notice. God is before us objectively in the Father; the Son became man, that He might be servant to the Godhead, and the accomplisher of the Father’s counsels; and the Spirit is the One who has undertaken all subjective work in our souls, and who connects Himself with that work, as the spring and power of life in us, and as the means by which we enjoy all the blessings that are ours in Christ by the will of God. By the Spirit we are born again, sealed, anointed, know that we are children of God, enjoy the love of God, mortify the deeds of the body, live to God, are led into all truth, know the deep things of God, know things to come, and contemplate the vast expanse of glory which stretches out before the vision of faith, radiant with the golden light of infinite and everlasting love. By Him our souls are nourished with all that God is as revealed in Christ. He is also the power of all worship, and service and prayer. He dwells in our bodies individually, uniting us together as one body in Christ, and He dwells among us as His habitation.

If we understand this, we shall have no difficulty in seeing that He will never direct attention to Himself as an object, but will turn the thoughts of all to God as revealed in Christ. He will "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 15.); "He shall testify of me" (15.); "He will guide you into all truth . . . show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (16.). You will find everywhere in Scripture that He is here to occupy the heart and mind with God and Christ—the Father and the Son.

He is here in a twofold way, as in us and as with us. "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14.).
The Son of God built the house, and He is over it as Son (Heb. 3.); but He is not said to dwell in it, nor is God, except by the Spirit (Eph. 2. 22), and in love (1 John 4. 12). The Spirit dwells in our bodies, but that is a different idea from dwelling in the house. It does not seem to me that it could be said of the Holy Ghost as indwelling us, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," for there you have two; whereas the Spirit dwelling in us, unites Himself with us as the power of our life. It does not seem to me that the Spirit indwelling me could be said to address me. We have also, "the Spirit said unto Philip," and "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" (Acts 8.). Besides, believers are built together for an habitation of God by the Spirit, and this is an entirely different idea from indwelling our bodies. Neither are the activities of the Spirit confined to the saints, which would have to be the case were He only here as in the bodies of the saints.

The house of God is down here. But though it is down here it is not linked up with things down here, nor as of this old creation. It is altogether linked up with heaven. As Israel was brought out of Egypt, that God might dwell among them (Ex. 29.), so are we brought out of the world for the same purpose. It is the first instalment, if I may use the expression, of that "breadth and length, and depth, and height" which will be filled with the glory of God in the coming day. Looked at in its true character it belongs to the new order of things which are heavenly. It is also, in a way, "the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28. 17). Every believer is part of this structure; not only when gathered together in assembly, but at all times, and in all places, even when a thousand miles from the nearest Christian. He has not, when isolated, the companionship of those who love God, and this causes a sense of loneliness in the soul, and his longing is after those of his own company; but in his isolation he has ever the Holy Spirit both in him and with him, and therefore his heart and mind may at all times be occupied with Christ, and he has always access to the Father; and he finds in his wilderness surroundings that nothing but Christ is indispensable, and, perhaps, only in his isolation could he learn this.

The Spirit is here, and here to put us into contact with both the Father and the Son, that we may have fellowship with them, and also that we may be able to serve God acceptably. The Spirit does not occupy us with Himself, though we need to know something of the greatness of the gift bestowed upon us, but His delight is to occupy us with Christ. And though it is neither the Father nor the Son who dwell in the house, by His power the individual may have the joy of the presence of both in love (Jno. 16. 23).

In the light of God we have fellowship with one another, and the company of those that love God is to be greatly esteemed. But we must not forget that the overcomer is addressed in each of the seven churches of Asia. To trust in the church is to trust in a broken reed. No one is to be trusted but Christ. Paul's troubles began in real earnest through coming into contact with those who led in Jerusalem (Acts 21.). The world, pure and simple, was not the greatest difficulty against which he had to contend; from it he expected nothing but persecution; but the leaders at Jerusalem led him into a snare. Saints are only valuable to me in the measure in which they turn my thoughts to Christ in heaven. When they bring themselves before me, as those in whom I may trust, they are working of my ruin. The great value of the house of God lies in the One who has taken up His abode there—the Holy Spirit, and He is the power by which we are occupied with Christ.

I have spoken of it as "the gate of heaven." The light of heaven is there, and flows through it in every direction. God was at the top of Jacob's ladder, not at the bottom. I do not doubt it is
a millennial picture, but I use it as an illustration of the house of God at the present moment, as the gate of heaven. It is where the light of heaven breaks forth upon the world. Paul speaks of it as the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3). It upholds the truth, and presents it before men; not by preaching or teaching, for the church, as such, does neither, but in practical godliness. God was manifest in the flesh of Christ, and His moral characteristics shine out in His house. It ought to be radiant with living light. Every stone in that structure should tell forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. There is not a ray of light anywhere else under the sun. In that "Gate" I may taste a little of the good of heaven before I am glorified. But not only this, for in spirit I may enter through the "Gate" into His presence, who has gone into heaven itself, for the power of the Spirit, who is in that "Gate" can conduct me to the source of the light that fills the "Gate"—to the Father Himself; and indeed this is just what He delights to do.

I am not speaking about preaching or teaching, but about the blessedness of the house of God, in which He dwells by His Spirit, and where the household is fed with the bread of heaven, and where the light of heaven shines amid the surrounding gloom. It is the place where all the grace of Christ that is upon earth resides. Not where it is found, for all in the house get all the grace they possess from the living Head in heaven. It is also the place where the love of God is known as it is in the hearts of men. Not where it has been manifested, for that was in Christ (1 John 4.9), and not where you and I have witnessed it, for that was in His death (1 John 3.16); but it is where it is tasted and enjoyed in the midst of those in whose hearts it has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. It is the sphere of divine affections.

Now, as to the world: as I have said, the house of God is the witness and support of the truth before men. The saints are the epistle of Christ. It may be greatly obscured and blotted by elements of the world coming in, and by the unfaithfulness of those who compose the building, but the heavenly light is nowhere else in this world. It may be—has been—an unfaithful witness, but there is none other. Through its unfaithfulness the world has, humanly speaking, suffered loss. Had divine love characterized the profession of Christianity the world would have had testimony that the Father sent the Son (John 17.21); but through its unfaithfulness the world has to stumble on in the darkness; but true or false, faithful or unfaithful, it alone is the pillar and base of the truth.

In what I have said I am thinking of the house more in the way it comes before us in 1 Timothy. In 1 Peter 2. it is viewed as the place where sacrifices of a spiritual nature are offered to God by Jesus Christ. Those who compose the building are also the priests who offer those sacrifices. Of course such sacrifices cannot be offered outside the house of God, for God as revealed by Jesus Christ is unknown outside the limits of God's house. The priests and the house are one.

No one but those in the house of God possesses any of the blessings of Christianity, for it is on the principle of faith every blessing is possessed, and all believers are in the house. But no soul finds the blessings in the house, but in Christ (Eph. 1.), neither were they made good to him by the assembly, but by the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 1.). In the house the Spirit speaks of Christ, and of the grace and love of God in Him; and there Christ is before every eye, and the beloved Object of every heart, and the theme of every tongue. I speak of the house in its true character. Man and his pretensions have disappeared, and Christ is everything, for there the Holy Spirit of God has His way, and He delights to direct the mind and heart to Him.

J. Bovo.
The Song of Songs. Canticle III.

Chapter 3. 6 to Chapter 6.

The Communion of Love.

The Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ch. 3. 6. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the powders of the merchant?

In this canticle we no longer see the Bride resting upon her bed, calling forth the grace of the Bridegroom to arouse her flagging energies and awaken her waning love. She is rather presented as enjoying the communion of love and coming up from the wilderness on her way to share the glories of the King. The daughters of Jerusalem inquire, "Who is this?" or as it can be translated, "Who is she?"

Strictly the scene presents a beautiful picture of Israel. Of her the Lord could say, "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness," and again, "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought" (Hos. 9. 10 and 13. 5). It is true that Jehovah "drew them with cords of a man," and "with bands of love," into a land flowing with milk and honey, but they turned from the Lord and went after strange gods. Yet in the days to come God will again bring Israel into the wilderness, will there "speak to her heart," and from thence open to her "a door of hope" that will lead to the kingdom glories of the true Solomon (Hos. 2. 14-23).

The Church, too, has her wilderness journey—the time of her earthly pilgrimage—before the end is reached in heavenly glory. In this lovely canticle we see the unfolding of this journey, not in its weakness and failure, but according to the thought of God, taken in the communion of love. For the wilderness has its privileges as well as its privations, and this the Song presents, for the journey is made in the King's palanquin. Moreover the very privations become the occasion of calling forth a sweet odour, just as the path of the Bride is marked by the smoke of ascending incense, and perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and with all powders of the merchant. There is spiritual significance in the fact that the powders of the merchant are compounded from plants gathered in the wilderness. The trials, the testings, and the privations of our wilderness journey, when taken from the hand of God, become the occasion of developing the graces of Christ, which ascend as "an odour of a sweet smell" even now, and will be found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It is this aspect of the wilderness journey that the Song presents, not the wilderness with our infirmities and God's provision, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the wilderness with its privations and its privileges, as in the Epistle to the Philippians. Paul has to taste the privations of the wilderness, but he rejoices greatly in the Lord that his trials become the occasion of calling forth the grace of Christ in the saints as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." And we, like Paul, can turn our privations into privileges if we but see that every trial is a God-sent opportunity to call forth some Christian grace. Alas, how often the trials by the way call forth some ugly exhibition of the flesh—its tempers and its violence, its envy and its pride, its impatience and its murmuring. We open the door to the flesh by letting our wilderness circumstances come between our souls and God. Let us but keep God between ourselves and
our circumstances and then indeed they will call forth the graces of Christ. Faith, hope, love, meekness, lowliness, long-suffering and patience will be the outcome of the trials, and our journey through the wilderness will be fragrant before God with “myrrh and frankincense” and “all powders of the merchant.”

Friends of the Bridegroom.

7. Behold his couch, Solomon’s own:
Three score valiant men are about it,
Of the valiant of Israel.

8. They all hold the sword, experts in war:
Each hath his sword upon his thigh
Because of fear in the night.

The bed, or litter, on which the Bride journeys through the wilderness is provided by the King. In like manner the Christian has not to travel at his own charges, or according to his own thoughts, but in the way that God has provided. This, however, entails conflict, and hence the wilderness journey, while developing Christian graces, also calls for Christian warfare. For this we need the “valiant men.” Paul not only exhorts Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” but He also says, “Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2. 1-3).

And the soldiers that accompany the litter are well equipped. They (1) “all hold swords”; (2) they are “expert” in the use of their swords; and (3) they are ready to use them, for “every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.”

So too the good soldier of Jesus Christ is armed with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 4. 17). Paul reminds Timothy that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

But to have Scripture is not all that is needed. We must be expert in the use of Scripture, and so Timothy is further exhorted to have “an outline of sound words,” “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 1. 13; 2. 15).

Moreover, we must not only be “armed” and “expert” but ready—every man with “his sword upon his thigh.” It was so in Nehemiah’s day. “Every man had his sword girded by his side, and so builded” (Neh. 4. 18). The moment of attack will give no time for girding on the sword. We must be ready to “preach the Word,” in season and out of season.

9. King Solomon made himself a palanquin
Of the wood of Lebanon.

10. Its pillars he made of silver,
The base of gold, its seat of purple,
The midst thereof was paved with love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.

The introduction of the valiant men is followed by the description of the palanquin, or litter, which they are called to defend. In the details of the palanquin do we not see set forth great truths as to the Person of Christ—the support of our souls and the foundations of our faith? The cedar wood speaking of His perfect humanity, fragrant and incorruptible; the pillars of silver telling of His redeeming power; the gold, of His divine righteousness; the purple, of His royalty; and the pavement of love, of divine love, the foundation of all. Love comes last; as one has said, “There is something beyond gold, there is nothing beyond love.”

These are the vital truths that the enemy is opposing and Christendom
giving up, but for which the good soldier of Jesus Christ must contend.

11. Go forth, daughters of Zion,
   And behold King Solomon
   With the crown wherewith his mother
   Crowned him.
   In the days of his espousals,
   And in the day of the gladness of his
   Heart.

The daughters of Jerusalem had been occupied with the Bride and the bridal procession, but now they are called to behold the King. Our wilderness journey with its trials and conflicts will end in the Kingdom glories. We have known the King in this wilderness world with the crown of thorns, but we shall yet behold Him in the day of espousals with the crown of glory. The wilderness journey will soon be past. The day of espousals is coming when His people will be presented to Him "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Then indeed will be "the day of the gladness of His heart," when "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53. 11).

HAMILTON SMITH.

The Bright Morning Star.

Ye who love the Lord of glory,
   Men of heavenly race;
Ye who know the deathless story
   Of His everlasting grace;
Ye, who worldly glories scorning,
   All for Him forsake,
Soon the Star of cloudless morning
   Bright upon your eyes shall break.

Ye who tread this waste in sorrow,
   Weary of the way,
Watching till the signs of morrow
   Pierce the welkin cold and grey,
Where eternal Love is beaming
   In that region fair
Is the Star of Morning gleaming,
   Brilliant beyond compare.

Where the glory shines supernal
   Has our home been made;
Never foot of foe infernal
   Dare those precincts pure invade.
He is there who bore our sorrow,
   For our sins was slain;
Here we watch until the morrow,
   Wait until He comes again.

Let our love then not be waning,
   Faith must never fail,
By the grace of God sustaining
   Certainly we shall prevail.
Let us bear reproach, rejection,
   Let us faithful stand,
Spite of cowardly defection
   Manifest on every hand.

What have we on earth without Him?
   What in heaven high?
How could we distrust or doubt Him,
   Knowing that He cannot lie?
Never has He promise broken,
   Wherefore should we fear?
He will come as He has spoken,
   And the day is drawing near.

All impatient is our longing
   Our Belov'd to see,
Where His ransomed thousands thronging
   At His footstool bend the knee.
Let us then in faith invite Him,
   Let no spirit dumb
Cause us to so ill requite Him,
   As not once to bid Him come.

Oh, we love Him! We adore Him!
   This He knoweth well;
Let us come and kneel before Him,
   At His feet His praises tell!
Let us tell Him how we sorrow
   While He stays away,
How we long to greet the morrow,
   And the glorious Star of Day.

Star of the Morning,
   Herald of the day,
For the hour of Thy returning
   Wait we here and watch and pray.
STAR OF THE MORNING,
   HERALD OF THE DAY,
FOR THE HOUR OF THY RETURNING
WAIT WE HERE AND WATCH AND PRAY.

JAMES BOYD.
A Savour of Christ, or of Man.

"WE are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish," said the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 2. 14; nor could a higher expression of true Christianity be given by man. That wonderful savour cast its fragrance on all hands; and saint and sinner alike felt, however little they may have appreciated, its heavenly influence. But it rose up to God in its perfect redolence, and spoke to Him of the charm of that life that was marked continually by those "things that pleased the Father."

And this was, through grace, the odour that this devoted servant of the Lord expressed as it ascended up to heaven—"a sweet savour of Christ." Could any testimony be sweeter, richer, or more fragrant to God? What a reproduction of that lovely life that shone, in its moral perfection, without a single intermission, from the manger to the cross! How sweet its savour to God!

Every quality that is worthy of right esteem was centred in, and exhibited by, that life. Is truth estimable? It was there. Righteousness, love, lowliness, patience, compassion, unselfishness, everything that God as man could show, was seen in that life. What a combination of moral perfections were there, and there as nowhere else! Hence the unique and sole and exclusive glory of "the Man Christ Jesus."

He alone was the true bread that came down from heaven, the only Man who "knew no sin," but who for that very reason was qualified to give His life in atonement for others. Well might Paul, in this very connection, ask: "Who is sufficient for these things?" but also give the answer: "Our sufficiency is of God." For, apart from that, what could there be but failure?

Look at Peter in Matthew 16.; after having confessed, under the teaching of the Father, that Jesus is "the Son of the living God," and being pronounced "blessed" for that confession, he shortly afterwards opposed the words of his Master, when asserting His coming death. "Pity thyself, Lord," said he, "this shall not be unto Thee."

Little did Peter know the meaning of his own words. They meant the denial of the cross and all that flowed therefrom, the accomplishment of that for which the Son of the living God had become incarnate, so that He might go into death for the glory of God and the blessing of poor sinful men. What a fearful mistake on the part of Peter.

No wonder that the Lord rebuked him with such terrible severity, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." He savoured of man! His offence was directly of Satan, even though prompted by the amiability of nature and its misdirected feelings of kindness.

This is the test and touchstone all the way through. The cross is the crucible; and the three leading languages that framed its indictment only betray the combined and concentrated enmity of man, religious, forensic, or scientific; man in every conceivable state in his opposition to that one essential display of light in darkness, good amid evil, and God in saving grace toward a world of sin. Thank God for ever that no savour of man could prevent the blessed Lord from going to "the death of the cross" and proving surely that its shame, deep as it was, was no deterrent to the carrying out of the will He had come to accomplish.

To-day, with its terrible seductions of worldly schemes and delusions, the moral power of the cross must be sought, and the savour of man eschewed and dreaded. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." J. Wilson Smith.
**Scripture Truth.**

**Will the Church go through “the Great Tribulation”?**

**Notes of an Address.**

*Read Rev. 3. 10-12; 4. 1-4 and 10.*

It has been rightly taught that it is the catching away of the church from earth to heaven, as taught in 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17, that frees the way for “the things which must be hereafter” to commence. There is a certain class of teachers, however, who are pressing that the church must go through “the great tribulation.” But a little examination of the Scriptures read will prove that this is not so.

If the church has to go through the great tribulation, the Lord could not have announced, as He does to the Philadelphian assembly, “Behold I come QUICKLY,” nor would the church be able to say, “Even so come; Lord Jesus,” if His coming for her follows instead of precedes the tribulation.

The Scriptures teach distinctly that the Lord’s coming can be expected at any moment by His church. The difference between the hope of the Christian to-day and that of the Jewish believers who will come into evidence when the church has been taken out of the earth, is this:

The Christian is listening for the shout of the Lord Jesus, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and will be translated from earth to heaven in the twinkling of an eye. Whereas the believing Jew in a future day, if instructed, will know “the time of Jacob’s trouble” —“the great tribulation”—must purify the nation of the awful sin of crucifying Christ and accepting Antichrist, and that at its close the spared remnant will be ready to acknowledge the once-despised Nazarene as their long-waited-for Messiah.

That the church will not go through “the great tribulation” is evident from Revelation 3. 10: “Because thou has 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.”

Keeping His word in verse 8 refers to the whole testimony of God in the Scriptures, whereas keeping the word of His patience, in verse 10, is connected with the cherishing of the hope of the Lord’s return. We know that He desires to come infinitely more than we desire that He should come, and that our desire is begotten within us and sustained by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now those who teach that the church will go through “the great tribulation,” tell us that “the hour of temptation,” or “hour of trial,” does not refer to the time of “the great tribulation.” Be it so. Their contention can only strengthen our position. Seeing that “the great tribulation” will take place in the latter half of Daniel’s seventieth week, which closes up the time of judgment, it follows that the tribulationists must allow “the hour of trial” to precede the “great tribulation.”

If, then, the church is to be kept out of that which the tribulationists states is prior to “the great tribulation,” it is unthinkable that God would first keep His own from the lesser trial of “the hour of temptation” and then place them into the subsequent and fiercer trial of “the great tribulation.”

This is putting the matter according to the contention of the tribulationist. But “the hour of trial,” we believe, clearly includes the whole period of judgment from the rapture of the church to the setting up of the Millennium, and therefore includes “the great tribulation.”

Then further notice the exactitude of the language:

“I also will keep thee from THE HOUR of temptation.”
Note, it is not merely a promise to be kept out of "the temptation," but to be kept out of "THE HOUR of temptation."

And seeing that the temptation or trial will come upon "all the world," or "the whole habitable earth," there can be no escape possible, but by being taken off the earth altogether. And this is just what is meant, for to be taken out of "THE HOUR of temptation" is to be taken out of time and therefore to be placed in eternity.

The great clock of time—the sun in the heavens—must be left far behind.

With these conclusions how fitting is the next word: "Behold I come QUICKLY: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

When we come to chapter 4. 1, John hears a voice saying:

"Come up hither, I will shew thee things that must be hereafter."

It is the voice of the Lord Himself. The doctrine of the Lord's coming could not be established upon that verse, but once that doctrine is established, the invitation to John becomes typical of the invitation that the church shall hear.

"The Lord Himself shall come And shout the quickening word."

Just as John in vision was caught up at the close of "the things that are" (chaps. 2. and 3.), and before the period of "the things which must be hereafter" (chap. 4. et. seq.) commences, so the church will actually be caught up between those two periods.

And further, during the terrible period of trial upon the earth culminating in "the great tribulation," we do not get one single allusion to the presence of the church upon the earth. Is it likely that God would leave the dearest object of the heart of Christ without one word of instruction how to comfort herself in these trying circumstances. Impossible!

What would you think of a father never uttering one word of counsel, instruction, or warning to a son who is about to go into wholly unknown and highly perilous circumstances? You reply, That would be a highly unnatural and reprehensible proceeding.

So we may safely conclude that if there are no instructions given us in regard to the awful circumstances of "the hour of trial" it must be because we shall never be in them.

Let Christians everywhere be found in hourly expectation of the return of the Lord to catch them to the clouds and be for ever with Himself.

Till that moment comes may our testimony to this world in the gospel be earnest and insistent, for the realization of the bright hope of the church will be the death-knell of Christendom.

A. J. Pollock.

"Who is this that Cometh?"

"Who is this that cometh?" Clothed in splendour and in light, Victor over sin, and death, and all the hordes of night?

Lo! the meek Messiah who on Calvary was slain
Cometh now in judgment and in righteousness to reign.

"Who is this that cometh?" Son of man and Son of God,
Who for our salvation once the way of suffering trod,
Who for our deliverance once bore our pain and shame;
Blessing, praise and honour be for ever to His name.

Glory! glory! glory! for He cometh to His throne!
All the kingdoms of the world He taketh for His own,
All the crowns of all the kings He weareth on His brow,
Every tongue shall hail Him Lord and every knee shall bow.
“Lo, we heard of it in Ephratah.”

Psalm 132.

IT appears from this Psalm that the pious Jesse, patriarch of Bethlehem Ephratah, used to gather his sons about him when the day’s work was done and tell them of the mighty God of Jacob and of His wondrous works of old: how He delivered Israel from the brick kilns of Egypt and brought them out of the house of bondage and gave to them the land that He had promised to their fathers, that they might be His people and that He might dwell among them. He would tell them of the Ark of the Covenant, with which the glory of God’s presence was connected, which was then as a stranger in the land, forgotten by a selfish people, who cared not for the God who had redeemed them, nor desired that He should have a house in their midst as He had purposed. Or it may be that when the older sons of Jesse followed that splendid Eliab in those pursuits to which they were given, their mother’s way was to take her youngest boy aside and instruct him in these things. However it came about, it was in his childhood’s home that David heard of the Ark and its wanderings, and of God’s desire to have a dwelling-place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. It swells out as one of the sweetest notes in this beautiful Psalm. “Lo, we heard of it in Ephratah,” he sings—striking testimony to his early training, and to the grace of God that led him to respond to it; and great encouragement to Christian parents to train their sons in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What David heard fired his young soul, and God’s thought laid hold upon him with such a mighty inspiration that he vowed there and then that God’s purpose should be his. “I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” David had glimpsed the glory of the Lord, and realized what an unspeakable favour was shown to the people amongst whom He chose to dwell, and how great a privilege it must be to dwell in His house, to behold His beauty and to inquire of Him, and this became all his desire; everything else took a second place to this. These things were his meditation while he watched his father’s flocks on Bethlehem’s grassy slopes, and they filled his soul with music as his skilful fingers swept the harp strings. May it not be that as Joseph related his dreams to his brethren and incurred their hatred thereby, so David talked to his brothers of that which filled his thoughts, and being rebuked by them turned to God and cried, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters or in things too high for me” (Ps. 131.)? For these things are hid from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes.

All the afflictions of David came upon him because of this determination of his to build God’s house. It gave him courage to meet Goliath, for God could not dwell in the land with the Philistine supreme. And when at last he came to the throne his chief thought was still to bring the Ark to Zion and prepare a place for it there. And it would appear from the divinely written history of this great king, that only on one occasion did he lose sight of this great purpose of his heart, and that forgetfulness resulted in most awful disaster to his own house, and dishonour to his name.

The incident is worth recalling as a solemn warning to all. The armies of Israel were in the field and David remained at home, and having lost sight of his great purpose, he wandered dissatisfied and restless upon the roof of his house, and was caught in the snare that the devil had laid for his feet. If his conscience had not been completely
drugged how it must have upbraided him when Uriah said to him, "THE ARK and Israel and Judah abide in tents . . . shall I go into mine house?" Strange that this Hittite, this stranger, should have spoken thus! Evidently he had realized what David's life-purpose was, and had been affected by it himself, and had made it his own, and thus he covertly rebuked the king for his forgetfulness of it.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the great antitype of David in this matter. He suffered the scorning of the great religious leaders. Four times over they derided Him in Luke's Gospel of grace because He sought out sinners and associated with them. But in this He was doing His Father's business, for these sinners whom He sought and saved were the necessary material for the house that He would build, and for this He laboured, seeking no glory or rest for Himself until He had finished the work which God gave Him to do.

All the afflictions that came upon Him until at last He passed into the thick darkness of Calvary had the great purpose in view, that God should have for Himself that habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. With an unconquerable purpose of heart He set Himself to glorify God. The Father's will controlled Him until the work was finished. Blessed, perfect, adorable, triumphant Saviour! His work shall not be in vain; His afflictions shall yield an eternal recompense when in the holy city, new Jerusalem, God will dwell for ever, and His glory, shining forth from that city in which He will dwell, will light the universe with gladness, and draw from it everlasting praise.

To whom, other than He, could the opening words of Psalm 132. apply: "Lord, remember David, and all HIS AFFLICTIONS: how he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob: Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

It is of Christ that it is written, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do thy will, O God."

He came forth from Bethlehem Ephratah, as Micah the prophet prophesied that He would 700 years before His birth. God's house occupied boyhood's thoughts, for the only incident recorded of His early days is that in which we see Him in the temple, about His Father's business. And when come to manhood, His first recorded act in Jerusalem was the clearing of the temple of those who defiled it in such a fashion that His disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."

But that material and destructible house was to be displaced by a spiritual and eternal house, a tabernacle in which God will dwell for ever, composed of living stones, and of which Christ would be alike the foundation and the builder. During His lifetime He sought and saved and prepared the material for this dwelling-place of God: such as Andrew, Simon, and Philip, the sons of Zebedee, the woman of Sychar, Mary of Magd la, Zacchæus the publican, and others who were entirely beholden to sovereign grace, for they were sinners every one with nothing to commend them to Him but their need, and the fact that the Father had given them to Him.

We have not to wait until the revelation of the new Jerusalem to know that God has got a place in which He can dwell. Ephesians 2. 19 22, tells us, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with
he saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Is this great truth of the habitation of God through the Spirit precious to us? It is something that we need to think of and meditate upon. The exceeding riches of God’s grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus has been manifested that we might have our part in this dwelling of God. The word is full of it, full in type and shadow and prophecy in the Old Testament, and then in doctrine and fact in the New Testament. If we desire to understand it the Spirit of God will unfold it to us, and in these days, when there is so much departure from the truth, and when men’s thoughts are sought instead of God’s, I believe the Spirit of God would more than ever find His delight in enabling us to follow after and to hold that which is the choicest and best. We may be, in the faith of our souls, in living contact with God’s thoughts and purpose, and intelligently in communion with Him about them.

We are saved by grace; the future, as far as our soul’s safety is concerned is secured; shall we rest satisfied with the knowledge of this and be indifferent to God’s thoughts and desires concerning us? God forbid. We must be controlled by this great purpose, to be workers together with God according to His own plans and thoughts. Are we wasting our days, or are we controlled by some great purpose, and if so what may that purpose be?

“Well,” says one, “I have purposed in my heart, like brave Daniel of old, not to defile myself with any fleshly or worldly evil.” Good, if you do not keep yourself pure you will be useless in God’s service, but more than that is needed.

Another says, “I will not only ab-
The Head of the Body, the Assembly.

WHAT can be more important today, for those who truly belong to the church—to the assembly which is Christ's body, than the right understanding of their relationship to the One who is Head of that assembly? For this, the place that our Lord Jesus Christ has, as our living, exalted Head, must be known; otherwise, we shall be in danger of falling under the influence of worldly, religious bodies, which have no place for the Head of the assembly.

When the truth was first given in all its purity, at the beginning, there was not the same difficulty as exists now. Christ had quite recently ascended as Man to heaven. The disciples had seen Him go up. He sent the Spirit to them, on the ground of the eternal redemption He had secured for us by His death and resurrection. They were united to Him and to each other by that same Spirit; and, to them, Christ was "the Beginning, Firstborn from among the dead." Since that time, religious systems have grown up, bearing the name of Christian, which in practice displace Christ's headship—even if they do not deny it in words—whilst, at the same time, they speak of the one body, the one church. These systems create difficulties which were not present when "the faith" was given to the saints.

In the midst of them, the true believer is necessarily deeply exercised to be loyal to Christ, in every relationship in which he stands to Him; and he is not left without definite instruction in the Scriptures. He is forewarned that he might be forearmed for the fight of faith. Indeed, he is distinctly told in 2 Timothy 3.1, "In the last days difficult times shall come," and the truth is given to guide him rightly through them, so that he might not be overcome by them; and, on the other hand, that he might overcome, as he keeps the faith, and remains faithful to Christ amidst that which is indifferent to His name; finding his delight in what that name means, along with others who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

1. The Assemblies.

The downgrade of the assemblies is shown in the prophecy and symbols of Revelation 2.3; where, we are told, the seven lamps represent the assemblies. Christ is not spoken of as Head of the assemblies. He is seen in their midst as the Son of man judging them, for failure had come in. We do not read of failure in the assembly, the body of which Christ is Head; we do of the assemblies. Therefore it is said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies." This formula is used seven times in the two chapters, and denotes a very serious and important breach, as similar expressions do in the Gospels. Those who have been the subjects of a real work of God's Spirit in them, and who consequently have ears to hear, are to heed now what is said to the assemblies. Truly converted souls have the ability to do this, and it is often indicated in the Word. They are contrasted with mere formalists who have ears but hear not (see Acts 28.26, 27; Rom. 11.8; Matt. 13.9, 15, 16, etc). They have the Spirit, for they have heard the gospel of God in faith, and have trusted in Christ.

They are not instructed to "hear the church," as ecclesiastics say; nor are they told to denominate themselves by the name of this assembly or that. They are to hear what the Spirit says to all the assemblies. Doubtless, those who are loyal to Christ will be found where His Name and His Word are honoured, until He comes again. Then it must not be overlooked, there are overcomers supposed in all the assemblies; and in both Thyatira and Sardis (representing ROMANISM and PROTESTANTISM) a
remnant of real souls is seen; whilst all Philadelphia (meaning "LOVE OF THE BRETHREN") remains faithful, even if feeble, till the Lord returns. Those, however, who are addressed as having ears to hear must be viewed in a distinct way, that is, as to their attitude. A true soul in any of these assemblies would be capable of taking in what is said to the particular assembly in which he is. He that has an ear to hear, however, is viewed as capable of taking in what is said to all—in communion with God as to the state of all the assemblies. He is not only living by the Spirit, but also walking by the Spirit; for the attentive ear and obedience go together. Such see that the declension which began at Ephesus, when first love was left, goes on till such a sunken state is reached at last in Laodicea, that it will be entirely cast away by the Lord; nevertheless, those who hear are maintained by the Spirit in spite of the failure of the assemblies; and He enables them to enter into their proper portion in Christ, which He has made known in other scriptures. Abraham and others illustrate how God makes known His mind to such.

Having seen the divinely marked out attitude of the individual hearer to the assemblies of Christendom, we may now turn to the other side, and see his corporate relationship to Christ and the members of His body, the assembly. As to the first, he is given by the Spirit God's mind; and as to the second, having the Spirit, he is set in the body in relation to Christ as Head, and to others as fellow members of the same body. In the first it is individual, but in the second corporate. Ruin in the assemblies is abundantly shown in Scripture, but not in the body. To speak of the ruin of the assembly as the body would be dishonouring to the Head; just as it would dishonour the Builder, the Son of Man, to say so of His assembly spoken of in Matthew 16. We need to be established in what is vital and abiding.

2. "We are Members of His Body."

It is not written, We ought to be members of Christ's body, but that "we are members." All those who have heard the gospel, and believed on Christ, have been sealed by the Spirit, and are fellow members of the one body. We are not told that such ought to have Christ as their Head, but that "He is the Head of the body, the assembly." In resurrection and ascension, having secured redemption by His blood, He is our one Head. Nor are we told that we ought to be in relation to Him as Head, for we are in that relationship, as members of His body. Neither are we told that we ought to be members of the same body as other true believers, for "all the members of that one body, being many, are one body . . . for by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free," said our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is as the truth is made good to us by the Spirit, we are freed from that which is contrary to it. The truth sanctifies.

Nearly every religious organization in Christendom speaks freely of the church; and the Papists especially contend zealously for the one body—the true church, as they say—or, the holy catholic church. When, however, you look for that which is absolutely essential to the existence of the body—when you look for the Head—for Christ the living, exalted Head of the assembly, you discover that these systems are so organized as to give no place to Him. If this discovery be correct—and who can deny it?—then it is quite evident that none of them are the body of which Christ is the Head; and if the Spirit has taught us the truth that we are members of His body, is it not grave inconsistency for us to be members of another body?

The Holy Spirit is here to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, and any true revival or recovery is to Him; not to a better
religious system than was known before, but to Christ; and even when real recovery is known and enjoyed, the same danger as existed in apostolic days is still present—the danger of “not holding fast the Head,” of whose body we are members, because of subtle influences which are always at work to turn our hearts and minds away from Him—influences that are “not after Christ,” as we are told.

The truth of which we speak was given by the Spirit through Paul. All who received the Spirit at Pentecost were baptized into one body then, but the truth was revealed after. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, does not speak of it either in the Acts or in his epistles; Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, unfolds it fully. Indeed, the administration of the truth of the mystery, which is so closely allied to it, we are told, was given to him “to complete the Word of God” (Col. 1. 24–27). Previous to this ministry, those who had received the glad tidings were looked upon as a sect in the religious system of the Jews. It was at Ephesus, where Paul laboured so much, that we find the definite breach made. After reasoning for about three months in the Jewish synagogue, he “separated the disciples,” and carried on in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19. 8, 9). His epistle to them gives the truth of Christ and the assembly, and it is there we are told, “We are members of His body” (5. 30).

This truth is always used in an inclusive sense, not exclusive. No member can say of another, “I have not need of you,” for every member is necessary; and, if, in the completeness of it, Christ’s body be His fulness (Ep. 1. 23), each member is also necessary to Him. How great is the grace that has made this true! How it bows our hearts in humility before Him! and yet fills them with thanksgiving and praise. What honour! What dignity! Members of His body, which is “the fulness of Him who fills all in all.”

that we may understand and appreciate this better. To this end we need to be edified. Gifts are given for “the edifying of the body of Christ”; and we are also to seek to build one another up in Christ as fellow-members, even if there be no distinct gift; as it is said of the body, “working in the measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love” (Ep. 4. 16, N.T.). The ministry of the gifts is needed, we are told, “till we arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”; and then, as members of the body, we are to hold the truth in love, and grow up to Christ, the Head, in all things.” There is one body, and one Spirit, and one Head; and though there are many members, they are all members of the same body.

3. The Headship of Christ.

We have before us our Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the body, the assembly; but for the proper elucidation of this, it is necessary to briefly point out His headship in other relations also; for we need not only “the knowledge of God’s will,” but also to be filled with it “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.”

As the One who is to reign, and thus represent God in supreme authority, our Lord Jesus Christ is KING. He will be above all kings, as well as over all nations, when He comes to reign, for He is “the PRINCE of the Kings of the earth.” He is never spoken of as the King of the assembly. He who is the “KING of kings” is its Head. He is also LORD as well as King. As such all dominion is His, as well as the kingdom. He is “LORD of all”; and when the time comes for Him to reign and rule in splendour and glory, we are told He will be manifested in this two-fold character; for “the blessed and only Potentate shall show the KING of kings and LORD of lords.”
Now when we speak of His headship we have quite another line of thought before us. As King and Lord, Jesus represents God in authority; as Head He represents that of which He is the Head. Some seven times Scripture speaks of Him as Head of a building, and this explains what we have just said. As the “rejected stone” He has become “the Head of the corner”; and those who come to Him during the period of His rejection are spoken of as “a building,” “Jesus Christ Himself being the corner-stone” (Eph. 2. 20, N.T.). The chief place is His; though, in grace, He takes it as belonging to the building, as Head, and that representatively, as we have said. What a precious building it must be in God’s sight to be adorned and honoured by such a Head!

Again, when the Apostle would regulate the behaviour of saints according to the divine order, he reminds them that “Christ is the Head of every man” (1 Cor. 11. 3). It is not that all men hold Christ as Head: we know they do not. There are those, however, who do; and they are set in relation to Him in this way—every one of them! That is the thought, and it is to affect each individual in his behaviour in the house of God. The Head of Christ is God. He alone could be in such an intimate and immediate relation to Him. So the woman’s head is the man. One is not without the other in the Lord, but the man is the head; and Christ is the Head of every man.

Then there are high intelligences of great dignity both in the unseen and the seen—powers and rulers of great honour and estate in the heavens and upon the earth. They too are set in very definite relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, for we read, He is “the Head of all principality and power” (Col. 2. 10). Exalted and glorious is the place which belongs to our Saviour and Lord in this connection; but, in Ephesians 1. 22, we are told of greater glory still, in which He is supreme, as the representative Head; and yet, wonderful to relate, divine grace delights to associate the assembly with Him in that illustrious exaltation. It is thus stated: “And gave Him to be Head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.” This does not speak of His being Head of the body, but of His being over “all things” as Head. It will enable us, however, to appreciate with more intelligence the great honour which belongs to the assembly, as having such an One for its Head. He who is Head of the corner, Head of every man, Head of all principality and power, Head over all things, is, in an unique and more blessed sense, the Head of the body, the assembly.

Before speaking of Him in this last relation, it should be pointed out, though the body is spoken of in Romans 12. and in 1 Corinthians 10. and 12., yet Christ, as Head of the body, is not so spoken of in those chapters. In the first it is the “one body in Christ” (ver. 5). In the second it is what the “one loaf” represents as to those who partake of it at the Lord’s table— “Because we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf” (ver. 16, N.T.). In the third the necessity of every member is emphasized (21, 22), for by “one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body”; therefore it is simply said to the saints at Corinth, “Ye are Christ’s body, and members in particular” (27). They were not the body, though they were truly of it; but, as we have said, the whole body is set in vital relation to Christ as its Head. We may now proceed to consider this.

4. Our Glorious Head.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was not the Head of the assembly before He became a man. That ought to be clear to every believer. Nor could He be so until He had secured eternal redemption for us by His death, and risen in triumph over
Having done this, He ascended on high; where, as Man, "He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is the Beginning, Firstborn from among the dead, that He might have the first place in all things." The assembly has its "beginning" in the risen Head.

There are four scriptures which speak of Him in this way—Ephesians 4. 15; Colossians 2. 19; Ephesians 5. 23; Colossians 1. 18. We will follow them in this order, for the first two are intimately connected, although each has its own setting and special teaching. In the first growth up to the Head is spoken of; in the second ministry from the Head; whilst both speak of all the body being united or connected together from Him; and also of its increase. The third scripture speaks of His being Head of the assembly as a husband is of the wife; and the last of the pre-eminent dignity of our glorious Head.

First, we see Him exalted above all heavens, in view of filling all things; from thence He gave gifts for the edifying of the body; then, from Himself, the whole body is fitted together. In the most complete sense all things are to be filled by Christ, and the body being formed for Him who is to do it; increasing meanwhile and building itself up in love, until it reaches "the measure of the stature of Christ." How important then is the ministry of Himself to this end. The more we learn of His grace and glory, as those who belong to the assembly, the more will our growth "up to Him" be furthered.

To hold fast the Head (Col 2. 19) is of the utmost importance. There is no failure with Him; and it is as true now as it was in the apostle's day—from Him "all the body" is ministered to. The natural mind may try to reason this away, and say it ought to be ministered to; but that shows unbelief, and it is the outcome of walking by sight. God says all the body IS ministered to from Him, and united together by joints and bands, and increases with the increase of God. His word is enough for faith. Moreover, no one who truly knows the Lord would question His faithfulness, or raise a question as to the perfection of His present work. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and our completeness is in Him. So great is He, the fullness resides in Him in all its infinite plentitude. This being so, we are not surprised (when we know this) to read, "And ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and authority." God's fullness—pleroma—is in Christ: we are become full—pepleromenoi—in Him, in the same glorious Person, our blessed Saviour and Lord! He is enough for God, and He is enough for us.

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

In Ephesians 5., where our relations to Him are given under the figures of the body and the bride, where both unity and union are so intimately connected, we learn that Christ is Head of the assembly as "a husband is head of the wife." How beautiful and intimate is this relationship. He loved the assembly and gave Himself for it. The assembly is not told to love Him. He loves! It is this all-sacrificing love of His which wins her love. He loves!! He has proved it by giving Himself for us! It is for us to rejoice in, and to adore Him for it. The more unworthy we feel ourselves to be, the more wonderful to us is that love; and now He is our Head as a husband. What surpassing grace! The right appreciation of this produces the lovely "subjection" to Him, which is due to the glorious Head of the assembly, to Him who is our Lord. He undertakes all direction and supply; and it is the assembly's happy and honoured place to respond in a suitable way. She belongs to Him, and He "nourishes and cherishes" the assembly, as His own body; and will present her to Himself all glorious in a coming day; having no spot or wrinkle, but holy and blame-
less; and His love for her will know no change and no end.

Finally, Colossians 1. 15-18 tells us of His unparalleled glory, of the grace and majesty of Him who is the assembly’s glorious Head. As we have seen, He took that place consequent upon His death and resurrection; but we are told who He is, that came in such deep love to make us His own—He is THE SON OF THE FATHER’S LOVE, the delight and the object of His heart; and, coming as a Man into the Creation, He has in it the chief place—in all dignity and honour—"THE FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION"; for who could take a place before Him? He must have the first place, “because by Him all things were created.” No creature could come before the Creator, however great his dignity. All the thrones, the lordships, the principalities, and the authorities, whether invisible or visible, in the heavens or upon the earth—all are “BY HIM AND FOR HIM.” He is before all and they all subsist together by Him. In glory, pre-eminence is His; in time, precedence is His; in dependence, all things subsist together by Him. Seen here on earth as the heavenly Man, He has made the invisible God Himself fully known, for He is “THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.” He could thus perfectly represent Him, for He is God. No one else but God could do so. And now as the risen Man, alive for evermore, such an one as He, and no one less, is THE GLORIOUS HEAD of the body, the assembly. We may well be found rejoicing in Him, holding fast the Head.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has many glories and dignities, as this passage shows; but immediately after the Spirit has spoken of Him as the Beginning in resurrection, the Head of the body, the assembly, just as though it were the top-stone of all He takes as man—the masterpiece of divine wisdom, grace, and power, He adds, “that He might have

THE FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS.” (N.T.)

How divinely suitable is the Spirit’s use of the word “first” as to the Lord in these verses. In the wide creation—“Firstborn”; in the new creation also—“Firstborn”; and in all things the “First place.” How worthily He adorns every sphere in which pre-eminence is His. Eternal glory to His holy Name.

Confidence in the Lord.

If you believe that the Lord is worthy of your confidence you will place all your anxieties at His own infinite discretion. He may see it best to administer your interests oppositely to what you think. Your act of committal, if true, implies your contentedness to accept whatever He may do concerning you. This is indeed divesting yourself of all anxiety. “Johnny, you have all you can carry,” said Frank to his brother, who was standing with open arms to receive the packages which his father was putting into them. “You have already more than you can carry.” “Never you mind,” said Johnny in a burst of filial confidence, “father knows how much I can carry.”

And having in this way placed all your cares in His hands, you are on the alert to crush down and sweep out of your soul the least uprising of worry. You will not be distressed by any imagining of possible events.

"PEACE! PERFECT PEACE! WITH SORROWS SURGING ROUND?
ON JESUS’ BOSOM NAUGHT BUT CALM IS FOUND.
IT IS ENOUGH: EARTH’S STRUGGLES SOON SHALL CEASE,
AND JESUS CALL US TO HEAV’N’S PERFECT PEACE."